

The Portrait

Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Small Group Notes

Introduction

Galatians is a letter written by the apostle Paul around A.D. 48 to the churches of Galatia, he writes this in response to a crisis that has hit the area. The churches in the area were started through Paul's apostolic ministry (for more information read Acts 13:13- 14:23) but within a short space of time after Paul left had been visited by false teachers. These false teachers began to preach a different gospel built around the need to be circumcised. This resulted in many believers placing their faith in circumcision rather than God and also created division within the church between those who had and those who hadn't been circumcised. So Paul writes this letter to show to the churches that the gospel he proclaimed is the genuine good news of God and their only hope is found in Christ alone.

Key themes

The title of this series and the artwork to go with it emphasises that this book focuses in on Jesus Christ and his work on the cross. The issues for the Galatians was they had lost sight of the incredible message of the gospel that we are saved not because of our works but because of his, that he who knew no sin became sin for us and died on a cross dealing with all our sin and through his resurrection giving us new life. The heart of this series is to journey through the book of Galatians and see how the portrait of Christ crucified is essential for us as Christians living in East Kent in 2016 and how we can learn to be those that live in the goodness that he has won for us.

Top Tips

We are trying something a little different during this series when it comes to our small group notes, we are going for more a bible study focus rather than on the content of the preach from Sunday. We will still be looking at the same scripture but wanted to try and approach it with a different lens on our small group evenings. So as we give this a go we thought it could be helpful to share some helpful tips as you lead through the word

- 1) Make it a priority
 - a. Our heart is that the looking at and applying the word of God is a central part of our small groups time together. Please do try and make this a regular weekly part of your time together as a small group.
- 2) Read the passage
 - a. Why not encourage your small group to read the chapter before they come along to small group and note down any thoughts or questions that they think of. This will help the time to be a much more fruitful and useful tool for the group.
- 3) Listen to the sermon
 - a. Although we aren't basing our small group study around the Sunday preach it will still be a very useful thing to have heard it before you meet as a small group especially if you are leading through the word.

- 4) Facilitate a discussion
 - a. The aim of unpacking the word is small group that is allows everyone to share their thoughts and discuss the word of God. Your role is bring everyone into the study and help them feel like their voice is wanted, valued and needed.

Chapter I

Questions

- 1) What in Paul's greeting to the churches in Galatia (Verses 1-5) strikes you as interesting, encouraging or confusing?
- 2) What does verses 6-9 tell us about Paul's view of the importance and centrality of the gospel?
- 3) What modern day equivalent 'different gospels' do we encounter today?
- 4) Read verse 10, what struggles do you face when it comes to pleasing man or God?
- 5) Why do you think Paul needed to defend himself and his message (verses 11-24) and what can we learn from these verses?