

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
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
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
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

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 4

Questions

- 1) How have you encountered the freedom won by Jesus as described in verses 1-7?
- 2) What are the difference Paul highlights between his genuine Christ-focused ministry and that of the false teachers in verse 8 – 20?
- 3) What do you think Paul means by ‘until Christ is formed in you’ in verse 20 and how does that apply to our lives?
- 4) Why is it so important we understand that we are children of the promise as Paul explains in verses 21-31
- 5) In what ways are we facing persecution as is described in verse 29?