

Sermon Series: Galatians
VGroup Sermon Study Guide for: Standing in the Gap, Galatians 2: 1-10

April 21, 2024

Helpful Tips

1. Randomly assign the scripture readings to different people in the group. This gets them into God's Word.
2. Generate conversation through questions. Let the group know you will be randomly asking people questions if someone does not immediately respond. Make this lighthearted and read the room. Some people could get very uncomfortable, and others just need a kind nudge to start talking.
3. It is ok if you do not finish the lesson. If people are reading God's Word and conversing, then do not rush through the end. If conversation is getting off track, then bring them back in and go to the next step.
4. Watch the sermon before you prepare and look at any of the background notes provided for you.

Scripture Passages: Galatians 2: 1-10 (break these verses up among the group), Galatians 1: 11 / Ephesians 2: 8-9 / Acts 8: 1-4 / Matthew 7: 24-27/ Acts 15: 1/ James 2: 10 / 2 Corinthians 5: 17/ Galatians 5: 22-23 / Galatians 5: 19-21

As the leader, watch the sermon in addition to the reading the above scripture list.

Starting the Conversation: (use the following questions to get people talking)

1. Remind the group of the Sparta battle with the Persians and how they stood in the gap so that their country could make ready for war. Ask them where, when, and how have you been asked to stand in the gap for a cause?

Have someone read Galatians 2: 1-10

Central Point:

Today we will be continuing our study thru the book of Galatians. And in our text, we will see Paul taking a stand to preserve truth of the gospel message. The message of Christ was coming under attack in the churches in Galatia, and Paul made the decision to be the one who would stand in the gap for truth.

Background:

Paul was writing this letter to the churches in the Galatian region (which is in modern day Turkey) defending who he was and the message he was teaching. He had to do this because false teachers had infiltrated the church and were making Paul and his message out to be fraudulent. The idea was to get people to quit following Paul's leadership and start following their leadership. Last week Paul defended his authority. This week we are going to see Paul defended the message he taught. And he did this by allowing his message, his preaching to be evaluated. He did this because he knew he stood on truth and he was not going to allow anyone to say otherwise.

1. **His Message Could Be Examined - Have someone read Galatians 2: 1-2**

Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. ²I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain.

Questions to ask:

1. How often do you request to be evaluated? Why or why not?
2. Do you find yourself following the “law” rather than Christ from time to time? Why?

You may remember from last week Paul’s teachings were being challenged as being man-made.

Galatians 1:1, *“Now I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel preached by me is not based on human thought. For I did not receive it from a human source and I was not taught it, but it came by a revelation from Jesus Christ.”*

What was the problem with his teaching?

Ephesians 2: 8-9, *“For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.”*

Why would people be saying Paul’s teaching was not legitimate? He was teaching salvation; he was teaching a relationship with God did not come by following the Law but by placing one’s faith in Christ. Jewish Christians especially struggled with this because they liked holding on to their special place as God’s chosen people. They wanted the Law and Jesus. It was time to bring closure to this issue in Jerusalem. All the churches that had been started originated from Jerusalem’s church. It was home base for believers.

But, was known for stoning Stephen to death.

Acts 8: 1-4, *“On that day a severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria. Devout men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him. Saul, however, was ravaging the church. He would enter house after house, drag off men and women, and put them in prison. So those who were scattered went on their way preaching the message of good news.”*

Paul understood and respected authority. So, Paul went there to allow them to examine what he was teaching; to allow them to see if he was on target in his teaching or not.

This was roughly 14 years’ worth of Paul preaching the Gospel and he was willing and thought it was important receive clarification / approval for 14 years of service. This act took humility and spiritual strength. Many professions today require years of education and practice before you can practice your profession on your own. Anyone want to go back after 14 years and ask if a “do over” is required. Paul knew the truth had to be verified for all ministry to continue unobstructed.

Questions to ask:

1. How often are you evaluated and by whom?
2. How do you prepare for the evaluation?
3. Who gets upset when they are required to be evaluated?

We live in a world of fake news. Gone are the days when I would see something on the news and automatically believe it to be true. Why is that? Because they have lied and misled. Look at the messages media and the news are pushing today. Transgenderism is normal. A man can get pregnant. Abortion saves lives. Israel is committing genocide against Hamas. It’s interesting to see that those pushing those things become upset when their claims are examined. Paul came to Jerusalem for the purpose of having his work and ministry examined by the leaders of the church so that the lies could stop. In v. 2 he presented to them the gospel he was preaching to the Gentiles. But as Christians, we can allow our faith to be examined because there is nothing to hide.

Ask someone to read Matthew 7: 24-27

Discuss the speeding analogy.

That was Paul. He was not speeding. The gospel he was preaching had been given to him by Christ. So, he knew he was not outside Christ's teachings. He was confident he was teaching well. Therefore, he was not afraid to have his work examined. If you are not speeding you are not likely to get a speeding ticket. If you stay in the Word you will know the Truth.

Matthew 7: 24-27, "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it did not collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. And its collapse was great!"

2. His Message to be Challenged - Have someone read Galatians 2: 3-5

³ Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. ⁴ This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. ⁵ We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

Question to ask:

1. What is a legalist?
2. Why did Paul bring Titus along with him to Jerusalem?

Titus, was a Greek, which meant he was a non-Jew, a Gentile. According to the false teachers, to be accepted by God Titus would have to follow the Law; he would have to be circumcised. But he was not. This issue was what really set off the false teachers in the church because they believed following the law was a prerequisite for salvation.

Acts 15: 1, Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved."

Paul taught the opposite. He taught Jesus was enough for salvation. Why? Jesus came and fulfilled the law because man cannot do it. Man can never do enough to fulfill it because we're sinful, because no one's perfect and if you're going to live by the law then God will demand perfection.

James 2: 10, For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

That's why a perfect Savior was needed to fulfill the law on our behalf. Paul's contention was it was foolish to think human works and efforts could bring justification. And his teaching was backed up by Scripture. He allowed them to take his teaching to task, he wanted their false teaching to be exposed and crushed.

Recall the sand castle analogy with the group.

2 Corinthians 5: 17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[a] The old has gone, the new is here!

When he saw the bully coming, he did not get upset or angry. As a matter of fact, he was looking forward to the bully challenging his work. He did and, needless to say, he felt very content after the bully's first kick because it wasn't him who was crying. False teachers are bullies and they came in full force against Paul's teaching. Part of their thinking was when people found out he had a Gentile with him who hadn't followed the law of circumcision, it would create a rift in the church.

Questions to ask:

1. Do you support the false teaching in the public schools or do you speak up for Christ? Please give an example.
2. Do you live by the rule that consenting adults can do as they please?
3. Are you teaching your children God's word or letting the world tell them what is truth?

Our faith continues to be challenged today by false teachers. The false teachers today tell us our faith is outdated; it is not keeping up with the times. They tell us that as long as adults are consenting, regardless of their gender or marital status, all sex is good.

Questions to ask:

1. What aspects / topics in your life are you being silent for the world's way? Why?
2. Can you be passive and serve Christ?

3. **His Message Was Verified – Have someone read Galatians 2: 6-10**

Recall the Figi Islands primitive society analogy.

6 As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. 7 On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised,^[a] just as Peter had been to the circumcised.^[b] 8 For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. 9 James, Cephas^[c] and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. 10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

The chief then leaned into the face of the young man and added, “Had we not listened to what you call the nonsense of the missionaries, I assure you that your head would have already been smashed on that rock and your body would already be baking in that oven.” Life transformation is the verification of the power of the gospel. When the pillars of the church saw the evidence of changed lives in the Gentiles, we are told they gave Paul the “right hand of fellowship.”

What is the fruit of the Spirit?

Galatians 5: 22-23, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

What is not produced in the life of a believer?

Galatians 5: 19-22, The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Questions to ask:

1. How was your life with the acts of the flesh prior to accepting Christ?
2. Are there still struggles in your life from your old ways that we need to pray with you for resolution?

This is so important for us to understand. We constantly lament the condition of our world. We are desperate for God to change things, to get us back on the right track. Don't you want that? But to see it happen begins with us, with the church, holding firm to what God says, to what His Word teaches.

In a nutshell His Word teaches us that He sent His Son to reconcile us to God. And when we put ourselves under His leadership, we live differently; we live with the power of the Holy Spirit inside us.

Christians to live with power, to live and make a difference will require us holding to the truth. It is what Paul did and why his work still resonates today. His message could be examined. He allowed his message to be challenged. And his message was verified.

Announcements:

Baby Dedication – May 5

Village Open – May 13

Baptism – May 19

Graduation Recognition Sunday – May 26

Last Week Luau at Roy Lynch Park – May 29, Downtown Campus

WinShape Camp – June 3-7