

Sermon Series: Galatians
VGroup Sermon Study Guide for: A Lacking Faith, Galatians 3: 1-9
May 5, 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 3: 1-9 (break these verses up among the group), Galatians 1: 6-7 / Ephesians 4: 13-15 / Romans 3: 10-12 / Philippians 4: 19 / Genesis 15: 2-6 / Romans 10: 9-10 / John 20: 30-31 / Ephesians 2: 8-9 / Hosea 4: 1-6

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

Discuss the Stacey Irvine, the British teenager that only ate chicken nuggets for 15 years.

She was experiencing a nutrient famine. Well, there is something like that taking place spiritually. I would be willing to say that most people (even inside the church) are experiencing a Bible famine. We know that during a famine people waste away for lack of food. It can be so bad that people die. But those who survive need nourishment; they need to be revived. What was interesting @ Stacey Irvine was she could have eaten anything she wanted. She had everything available to her to eat well. And the same thing is true here spiritually. Everything is available to us. But too many people, like Stacey Irvine, are starving themselves to death.

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

Have you starved yourself Biblically? When? Why?

Have someone read Galatians 3: 1-9

You foolish Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portray as crucified? ²I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by believing what you heard? ³Are you so foolish? After beginning by the Spirit, are you now finishing by the flesh? ⁴Did you experience so much for nothing—if in fact it was for nothing? ⁵So then, does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law? Or is it by believing what you heard — ⁶just like Abraham who believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness? ⁷You know, then, that those who have faith, these are Abraham's sons. ⁸Now the Scripture saw in advance that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and proclaimed the gospel ahead of time to Abraham, saying, All the nations will be blessed through you. ⁹Consequently, those who have faith are blessed with Abraham, who had faith.

Central Point:

Today in our passage of Scripture Paul pointed out to the Galatian church some of the deficiencies they had in their faith. And these deficiencies were making them spiritually unhealthy, making them susceptible to teaching that was not rooted in truth.

Background:

The Galatian churches were being sucked in by bad teaching. It is why Paul wrote to them in **Galatians 1: 6-7**, I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from him who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are troubling you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. The false teaching they were falling under was that a person's works was what made them right with God. They had abandoned Paul's teaching that people are saved by grace through faith. In other words, salvation rests solely on the work of Jesus for us.

1. **A Lack of Remembering - Have someone read Galatians 3: 1-5**

Paul started off Chapter 3 by calling the Galatians "foolish." The word "foolish" was referring to someone who was mentally lazy and careless. They did not allow their past experiences to inform them of the new teachings they were receiving. They heard something that made sense to them, that made them feel good, and so they adopted it. So, what were they hearing? What were they being taught? They were being taught that by performing the works of the Law they would earn good favor with God.

Questions to ask:

1. How have you battled false teaching?
2. How did you recognize the falseness?
3. Have you been a victim of false teaching? Discuss.

Ephesians 4: 13-15, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. ¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ.

That teaching was attractive, it allowed people to keep score. It allowed people to feel like they were doing something; that they were contributing. Do not let your works via the Holy Spirit confuse your desire to earn more from God than Christ has provided.

You must remember your past. What was their past? They had heard the gospel from Paul and he shared with them Christ crucified for their sins. Jesus had stepped in to pay their debt of sin because no matter what they did, they could never make themselves right with God. In v.2, Paul asked them, "*Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?*"

Romans 3: 10-12, as it is written: *There is no one righteous, not even one.¹¹ There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.¹² All have turned away; all alike have become worthless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one.¹³*

V. 5 the implication was that God will "supply" His people what they need when they place their faith in Him and His work for us. The word "supply" means to give with great generosity.

Philippians 4: 19, And my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Discuss the Taj Mahal story.

One day while he was surveying the sight, he reportedly stumbled over a wooden box, and he had some workers throw it out. It was months before he realized that his wife's casket had been destroyed. The original purpose for the memorial became lost in the details of construction. They built the Taj Mahal, but they forgot the reason for the building. They forgot what their mission truly was!

This was what happened to the Galatian church. They forgot. They forgot about the work Christ had done for them. They forgot that their works were not enough to put them in God's good graces.

2. A Lack of Believing - Have someone read Galatians 3: 6-7

Remember that the Galatian church was made up of Gentile Christians. They had not lived under the Mosaic Law before and Paul had taught them they did not need it. Why? Because they had Jesus who fulfilled the law for them. But some false teachers taught the opposite. As we'll see later on in the book of Galatians, they were teaching that circumcision was necessary for salvation. It was a work a person would do to be justified before God. So, Paul went back to Abraham. Abraham is revered in the Jewish faith. It was through Abraham that God said He would make a great nation. Now Abraham lived before the law was given. So then how was he made right before God? Look at what Paul said in v. 6. He "believed" God. What did he believe?

God had called Abraham to leave his homeland and come to a new land that He was going to give to him and his people. Here's what's interesting about that. When God told Abraham this back in Genesis 12, Abraham and his wife were in their 70s and had no children. But God promised them He would provide a son for them.

Questions to ask:

1. Abraham was asked by God for a big reason with a simple question, leave. What big things have you been asked of by God? What were or are the results.
2. What intimidates you the most the little things or the big things?
3. How do you keep your faith front and center of your life?

Genesis 15: 2-6, *But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what can you give me, since I am childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"* ^(a) ³ *Abram continued, "Look, you have given me no offspring, so a slave born in^(a) my house will be my heir."* ⁴ *Now the word of the LORD came to him: "This one will not be your heir; instead, one who comes from your own body^(a) will be your heir."* ⁵ *He took him outside and said, "Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them."* *Then he said to him, "Your offspring will be that numerous."* ⁶ *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

Righteousness was credited to Abraham's account because he believed what God said. We see the true meaning of belief here in that Abraham trusted God was going to keep His Word. He lived in faith that God was going to do what He said. That is what it means to believe! And that belief is that justifies us before God. Paul said as righteousness was credited to Abraham's account for believing, the same thing happens to those who believe in Christ and His work for us.

But the Galatians had a lack of belief in Christ's work for us. They started believing they needed to supplement what Jesus did.

Discuss the driving the new car analogy.

But how strange would it be if instead of driving the car, I got out of the car and started pushing it? How strange would it be if I thought, "I need to save some money, so instead of putting gas in it, I'll just push it myself"? Often that is what we do when it comes to our faith. Instead of relying upon; believing on the work and power of Christ, we try to live off our own energy and strength to get ourselves to God by living under our own power. But all that happens is the harder we try, the more we fail... the more exhausted we become and we fall short.

Romans 10: 9-10, For this is the statement of the promise: At this time I will come, and Sarah will have a son. ¹⁰ And not only that, but Rebekah conceived children through one man, our father Isaac.

John 20: 30-31, Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,¹⁰ and that by believing you may have life in his name.

3. **A Lack of Knowing - Have someone read Galatians 3: 8-9**

The Galatian churches were basically being told that to be accepted by God would require them to follow Jesus and the Mosaic Law. Basically, they had to become Jewish to become a Christian. And many of them were falling for that teaching. Why was that? It was a lack of knowledge on their part.

V. 8, Paul gave them a history lesson from Scripture. The lesson came from Abraham, the father of the Jews. How was Abraham justified by God? By having faith, by trusting that God would be true to His Word. He was not made righteous by following the law (it had not been given yet). He was made righteous by faith. That it was the same way the church and you would be justified by God...through faith.

The good news of Jesus was for everyone, not just a specific group of people. At the end of v. 8 Paul quoted Gen. 12: 3 saying that all people would be blessed thru Abraham.

Questions to ask:

1. We have a track record of faithful people accepting God's call, starting with Abraham as an example. He did not know what was going to happen. Does your knowledge and logic get in the way of your faith? Why?

Ephesians 2: 8-9, For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— ⁹ not from works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

That is incredible news. But a lot of people miss out on this news because they do not know it! The Galatian church really did not have an excuse here. Paul taught this when he started the church.

But the people either did not listen or did not believe it. Apparently, many them thought they needed to take matters into their own hands. The same thing is true today. It is amazing how many people still believe they can make themselves right with God. This is a common refrain I hear, "I'm going to be good with God because I've done more good things than bad things." I am all for that, but that does not make one right with God. If it did, then why in the world did Jesus pay for our debt of sins on the cross, when we can do that? This is where lack of knowledge is destructive.

Hosea reminds me of the day we are living in right now.

Hosea 4: 1-6, *Hear the word of the LORD, people of Israel, for the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land: There is no truth, no faithful love, and no knowledge of God in the land! ² Cursing, lying, murder, stealing, and adultery are rampant; one act of bloodshed follows another.*

³ *For this reason the land mourns, and everyone who lives in it languishes, along with the wild animals and the birds of the sky; even the fish of the sea disappear.*

⁴ *But let no one dispute; let no one argue, for my case is against you priests.*

⁵ *You will stumble by day; the prophet will also stumble with you by night.*

And I will destroy your mother. ⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Because you have rejected knowledge, I will reject you from serving as my priest.

Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your sons.

The #1 bestselling book, even to this day, is the Bible! But just because people have a Bible doesn't mean they know what's in the Bible. And it is abundantly clear that we live in a biblically illiterate society. Paul saw what was happening to the churches in Galatia. He saw their faith was lacking. He saw their faith was being placed in the wrong things. And he knew if they didn't correct their course, the church would lose all its influence and power. The light of the church would dwindle and darkness would take over.

I do not think there is any doubt we see a lacking faith all around us today. Our nation's leaders will not condemn Hamas for attacking and killing over 1,200 Jews, taking over 200 as hostages and sexually abusing the women. Higher education touts' sexual perversion as normal. We have churches across the nation that support abortion and the idea of gay Christians. A massive tide of godlessness is sweeping over us to a point where it is easy to feel hopeless.

How do we stop the tide? Start with you. Every one of these deficiencies can be dealt with by taking God's Word seriously and trusting it to the point where you live out what it says. As a church, we are going to put our faith into practice by teaching what Scripture says. We do this on Sundays. We do this in our V Groups and in our student and children ministries. It is time for some of you to get involved.

We are going to put our faith into practice this fall as we're going to expand our facilities. This will create more space for us for worship, for our children and student ministries and for Village Christian Academy. It will enable us to expand our reach in this community in all those areas. You will be challenged to exercise your faith during this process.

Announcements:

Need Volunteers for the Following: Sign Up at website/ click events

Village Open – May 13 (Columbia Country Club)

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

WinShape Camp – June 3-7 (Blythewood)

Village Kids Week (Downtown)

Upcoming Events to Attend: Go to website/ events for information

Legacy Lunch – May 16
Fireflies Night – May 19
Graduation Recognition Sunday – May 26