

Getting Started

Take a few moments to share a blessing from the past week. Where did you see the hand of God in your life?

Word

1. Look at **1:6-9** from last week. Remember that Paul is upset because some are proclaiming to the Christians in Galatia a different "gospel," a "perverted" gospel. This week we begin to discover the nature of this different gospel.

2. Read the passage a paragraph at time:

1:10-12 Given what you read in 1:6-9, what is Paul's point in these verses?

1:13-17 Paul writes about part of his faith story. What do you learn about Paul here? (You can read more about when God revealed Christ to him in Acts 9.) Notice Galatians 1:16. Paul's calling was to preach to the Gentiles about Jesus.

1:18-24 Remember, the church in Jerusalem was predominantly Jewish Christians. They were beginning to struggle with the Gentile "question." Are Gentiles now part of God's Kingdom? They were, of course, but for a Jewish Christian this was not necessarily an easy adjustment of thinking. They were accustomed to believing that Gentiles were outside of God's chosen people.

2:1-10 Fourteen years later, Paul makes another trip to visit the "mother" church to make sure his ministry to the Gentiles (the "uncircumcised") was not in vain. What was the reaction of the church leaders in Jerusalem to Paul's ministry?

2:11-14 What was the "hypocrisy" of Cephas (Peter) that so upset Paul? Why was eating, or not eating, with Gentiles an issue?

2:15-21 The theme of "justification" is introduced here by Paul. We are "justified," that is, accepted by God, not because of good works but through faith in Jesus Christ. After talking about this paragraph discuss the paragraph on the other side of this insert by Scot McKnight on the significance of justification.

Share Invite the people in your group to share any blessings or concerns they have from the past week.

Prayer Pray for each other in sentence prayers.

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October 15, 2017

Galatians: Paul's Letter of Freedom

Galatians 1:10-2:21

Sermon Notes

1. Before Paul encountered Jesus Christ, what was his life like? After Christ appeared to him, what became his calling?
2. Paul is upset with Peter (Cephas) for not eating with Gentiles. Why was this an issue?
3. What is "justification"?

"The hardest implication of grace to accept is perhaps that there are no other grounds of acceptance with God other than Christ in God's Spirit. We are not accepted on the basis of our physical appearance, our financial status, our family history, our social standing, our athletic talents, our rhetorical skills, or our religious deeds and piety. We are accepted by God's grace through Christ. And here is where it is hardest: *we have a hard time treating others in a way that is consistent with the way God treats us.* God deals with us in a way that is consistent with who we are in Christ; we, on the other hand, add rules and tests for accepting others. I maintain that life in God's grace is hardest when it comes to living with and accepting others. And one facet of this difficulty is learning to live in God's freedom in such a way that other's approval of disapproval is not the motivating force in our decisions. May God, in his grace, grant us the freedom to live in the Spirit."

Scot McKnight, in *Galatians: The NIV Application Commentary*

People you want to pray for:

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