

No Other Gospel: *an 8-Week Study of Galatians*

The Story Houston's Fall 2020 Discipleship Season

Session Two: The Gospel of Favoritism

Introduction

Welcome to our Fall 2020 study of Paul's letter to the Galatians! For eight weeks, we're exploring the words written by the Apostle Paul 1,950 years ago in the year 50 AD. This letter, called *Galatians*, may be the earliest of Paul's thirteen letters that are included in the Bible, and if so, that would make Galatians the oldest book in the New Testament.

Our learning each week is broken down into three categories: First, we'll spend twenty minutes learning about the CONTEXT of Galatians. Second, we'll spend twenty minutes exploring the particular CONFLICT that Paul is addressing in that week's reading. And third, we'll discuss the CORRECTION Paul offers the Galatians to get back on track.

This course has three requirements:

1. Do the work. Read the assigned readings. Write your answers in the Study Guides.
2. Listen to *The Story at Home Podcast* for more in-depth teachings on Galatians.
3. Ask questions. Ask the teachers on Wednesday nights. Ask your Group leaders and fellow members. Ask God in prayer.

Review

What circumstances led Paul to write *Galatians*?

This Week's Text

Read Galatians 2:1-21 twice, once silently and once aloud, making notes of any words and phrases that you're not sure about, and writing down any questions that immediately come to mind.

Context

What was Paul's chief complaint about the circumcision group/Judaizers?

In verses 16 & 17, Paul says the word “justified” four times. What does he mean by being “justified”? (see also Romans 3:24-36)

How do we walk the balance of believing what Paul is saying and that faith without works is dead? (see also James 2:26)

Read Luke 18:9-14. What does Jesus say about justification and righteousness?

Conflict

The conflict in this week’s passage is found in two actual, face-to-face conflicts. The first one is found in Galatians 2:1-10, and the second is found in verses 11-14.

Conflict #1 - Galatians 2:1-10

Who were Paul’s adversaries in this conflict?

Who were “James, Cephas, and John”? Why is this confusing to some New Testament readers? (see also Matthew 4:18-22, Matthew 17:1, Acts 12:1-2)

From Paul’s perspective what were the points of disagreement between Paul and his adversaries?

Conflict #2 - Galatians 2:11-14

In this case, Paul’s conflict is with Simon Peter (aka “Cephas”). Why was Paul upset with Peter? (see also Acts 10 and 11)

In both of these cases, Paul is concerned about *favoritism* infecting the Church. What is favoritism? Who did Paul suggest were “playing favorites”?

Usually, when the New Testament authors write about “works of the law,” we think of the Jewish Law (Torah) found in the Old Testament. But Paul writes plenty about the “works of the law” to his Gentile audience in Galatia. How could Gentiles have fallen prey to a devotion to the law? (see Romans 2:14-15)

Why is favoritism so contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Can you think of a time when favoritism infected the Church? What was the result?

Why might the idea of no favoritism be dangerous to religious people?

Correction

What was Paul’s solution to the conflict created by favoritism within the Church?

What did Paul mean by verse 18? How have you been tempted to “rebuild what you destroyed” after coming to Jesus?

In verse 20, Paul says he was crucified with Christ. What does that mean? (see also Romans 6:1-4)

When you think about your life before Jesus compared to now, what parts of your “old self” died in your baptism? What parts of your “old self” still remain?

*I do not set aside the grace of God,
for if righteousness could be gained through the law,
Christ died for nothing.*

- Galatians 2:21