



Session 1

Big Idea:

Galatians overview.

OPENER

The apostle Paul formerly the persecutor of Christians known as Saul is writing a letter to a region that he had previously visited and planted churches on one of his journeys. You can read the historic account of these early churches in chapters 13 and 14 of the book of Acts. The people in these churches were non-Jewish in ethnicity which plays a large role in what unfolds in this book.

The book of Galatians is an epistle or letter, keep in mind when reading a letter, you are getting one-half of a conversation that is occurring. If you listen in, you can understand what is going on the other side as well.

Read: Galatians 1:1-10

Questions:

What stands out to you in this passage?
Why do you think Paul uses such strong language?

Paul opens with a standard greeting identifying himself as the author, and almost immediately we see him attack some major issues that have popped up in the churches in this region. He accuses them of turning from Christ.

In the next section, Paul goes on to validate what he had originally told these churches. That he had received a message from Christ directly.

This was no secondhand news they were getting about how to live in right relationship with God.

The people who have come and undermined Paul's message are well-regarded and well-trained in the Jewish religion.

Read: Galatians 2:7-10

Here we see Paul make his case that when he discussed including those outside the Jewish faith with the other leaders of the church they were in complete agreement. You can find that story in Acts 15. The summary of the meeting they held said "It is my (James acting as the head of the church following Jesus in Jerusalem) therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the gentiles (Non-Jewish people) who are turning to God."

To further his case Paul shares a time he disagreed with Peter (Cephas).

Read: Galatians 2:11-16

Questions:

What difficulties do you see this church having in the first few chapters?

Discuss the implications of verse 16 for the community.

In the next few chapters, Paul makes a case that the gospel of Jesus, that his good news, is built on grace. That Jesus did for us what the law could never do. He points out that if we try to depend on Jesus and the law, we are acting like Jesus is not enough on his own.

Read: Galatians 3:1-6

Questions:

What does it look like the Galatian churches are believing in this passage that Paul is trying to correct?

What is Paul challenging them to believe?

Read: Galatians 3:7-8

Here we can see that Paul is going back to the founding father of the nation of Israel, Abraham, and saying God made a promise way back to him. See Genesis 12:3, 18:18, 22:18.

For hundreds of years the Jewish people were very proud of the fact that through a mighty act of deliverance, God had formed them as a nation and given them the law to live by. These were good rules that helped them flourish and live in accordance with reality. The law gave them strength and stability, and a reliance on God all of which were beautiful things. The downside was that it also proved that no one could fully live up to the high standards of the law.

Read: Galatians 3:15-29

Question:

What is Paul's argument here?

Paul summarizes his argument in the opening verse of chapter 4.

Read: Galatians 4:1-7

Paul points out that the law is good, and like a tutor, it shows us how to live. But Jesus is the one who through his spirit adopts us into God's family.

In wrapping up his argument in chapter 5 Paul encourages the people to stand firm in Christ and not be fooled into trying to add anything else. Concluding with how to live by the spirit.

Read: Galatians 5:13-26

Question:

What are some of the differences you notice between the two lists Paul puts forward?

In chapter 6 Paul goes on to show the importance of not letting your Christian family head down the wrong path. He calls the church to self-correct back to the gospel in love for each other.

Read: Galatians 6:1-10

Spend a few minutes with your community discussing some major takeaways from the book of Galatians.

What is one I will statement you can develop from what you have learned? Make it concrete, simple, and achievable.