



INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS

In the classic 1982 film, Rocky 3, starring Sylvester Stallone and Mr. T, Rocky (played by Stallone) who is known as the “Italian Stallion” is at the top of his game in the world of boxing, or so he thinks. As the film begins, we see that Rocky is defeating opponent after opponent as he defends his championship belt only there’s a problem: the promoters are choosing his opponents for him and therefore the fights are a joke.

In comes Clubber Lang (played by Mr. T) who has been noticing Rocky’s fights and how pathetic they were; how easily Rocky was defeating his opponents and honestly not contending for his championship. To Clubber Lang, Rocky needed a real fight with a real opponent. In what was a harsh defeat and tragic scene, Rocky loses his belt to Clubber Lang while at the same time experiencing the death of his trainer, Mickey Goldmill.

As the story unfolds, one of Rocky’s former opponents and now friend, Apollo Creed (played by Carl Weathers) comes to Rocky to offer him a rematch against Clubber Lang along with the offer to also train Rocky. Apollo’s argument toward Rocky is that he’s lost “the eye of the tiger.” That is, he has lost his foundation, his identity and Apollo is going to help him get it back. He’s going to teach him what it actually means to contend.



WHY GALATIANS?

Just as Rocky needed an Apollo Creed to help him get the “eye of the tiger back,” the Galatian Christians needed Paul to get back to the centrality of the gospel and salvation in Christ alone through faith alone. Galatia was a Roman province that consisted of several churches and Paul is writing to a set of churches. You can think of it as if Paul is writing to the Rio Grande Valley, not one particular city or church, but a group of them.

Paul helped to plant the churches in Galatia (Acts 13 & 14) and at the writing of this letter we learn that Paul is surprised to hear (1:6) that the Galatian Christians are at a place of transition where it appears as though they are turning away from the message of the gospel in Christ Jesus and turning toward different gospel of a different nature; one that is being preached to them (Acts 15:1-5). And rather than contending for the gospel (Jude 3-4), the Galatian Christians are simply giving in.

The letter to the Galatians demonstrates a tone of passionate and righteous anger in addition to pastoral urgency with need to protect the gospel of Jesus Christ. And much like Apollo Creed’s training of Rocky where he presses the urgency of the situation and wastes no time in pulling punches because of what’s at stake, the Apostle Paul does the same toward the Galatian Christians.

As we look to our day, the church is in danger of losing “the eye of the tiger,” as it were. This letter from the apostle is incredibly relevant to our church for several reasons. First, in a time where there is a mixture of political and social division, there are different gospels that are being preached that promise further or better enlightenment than what the gospel of Jesus teaches. Therefore, Christians, due to discouragement or desperation, turn toward different experiences rather than contending for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Second, as the last year and a half has exposed our idols to a great degree, it has become evident that Christians in the church do not know how or what it means to walk in the Spirit (5:1). Though the Holy Spirit indwells in the Christian, many believe that it means they have a license to sin or abuse Christian freedoms. Instead, it shows their lack of maturity, misunderstanding of the Holy Spirit, and of transformational grace. As a result, rather than being rooted in Jesus through the Holy Spirit, Christians walk in hypocrisy; that is, their identity in Christ and their activity as Christians is disconnected.



And finally, we are preaching through Galatians because at the heart of the letter is the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Those who came to be known as Judiazers were persuading the Galatian Christians to add to their faith by observing the works of the Mosaic law. In essence, they were preaching that Jesus alone was not sufficient and therefore in order to truly belong to Him, they needed to add on further works of holiness. Our context is no different where we are persuaded by different gospels that promise a richer experience and holiness with God. And rather than standing firm on the sufficiency of God's grace by faith alone, Christians sadly embrace a life of spiritual exhaustion by trying to do more things in order to be loved by God that at the end, they are spent, discouraged, and isolated.

GALATIANS THROUGH THE FALL SEMESTER

Paul reminds the Galatian Christians, and in effect reminds us, that we are saved by the grace of God for us in Christ and it is this same grace that sustains us. In other words, we must recapture our understanding of grace in order to contend, in order to have "the eye of the tiger." The reformer, John Calvin said it this way, "we must always take care of the main articles of the gospel. He who attacks them is a destroyer of the gospel." By grace we contend for our faith because this *is* the hill that we will fight for, always.

My hope and prayer throughout our time in Galatians is that we would grow a passionate fervor for the gospel of Jesus Christ and that our understanding of the person and work of Jesus would fundamentally shape how we live in the Valley. My desire is to see our church contend for the gospel more than our interests and hobbies. And in areas of secondary importance, my desire is to engage and filter culture through the lens of the gospel, not taking culture and filter the gospel through it.

I hope that this series is both fruitful and beneficial for our church and over the next few months, that we would grow together, to know and love Jesus more.

For His glory,

Pastor Marco



MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

What Is A Missional Community?

Missional Communities are small gatherings of people that meet weekly for friendship, accountability, study and prayer, laughter, and occasionally tears.

Missional Communities (MCs) serve as the main vehicle of discipleship, care, and mission at Storehouse Community Church and we believe that the mission of MCs is to be a family of disciples on mission for the glory of God.

Each MC is unique and shaped by the people who attend and the city they meet in. And at the heart of each MC is a desire to gather as family and friends, grow in our relationship with Jesus, and go into our cities on mission.

Why Should I Join A Missional Community?

The Bible teaches us that God is relational, personal, and invested which, in turn, means that we are created for friendship and community. MCs are more than a weekly event, but a time to grow and cultivate a relationship with God and others.

Where Do Missional Communities Meet?

MCs are strategically planted throughout McAllen and its surrounding cities in an effort to engage our city and community. Whether meeting at a home, local coffee shop, or college campus, we desire to see every aspect of our cities blessed by God's people.

How Do I Get Connected?

There are two ways that you can get connected. You can visit our Connect desk on Sunday and our volunteers will help you through the process or you can visit storehousemcallen.com/communities to learn more and sign up!



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. [Praying Like Paul: A Call to Spiritual Reformation by D.A. Carson](#) - "God doesn't demand hectic church programs and frenetic schedules; he only wants his people to know him more intimately. The apostle Paul found that spiritual closeness in his own fellowship with the Father. *Praying with Paul* calls believers to reject superficiality and revolutionize their lives by embracing a God-guided approach to prayer. By following Paul's life-shaping principles, we can hear God speak to us today."
2. [How Does Sanctification Work? By David Powlison](#) - "Scripture portrays the dynamics of sanctification in a rich variety of ways. No single factor, truth, or protocol can capture why and how a person is changed into the image of Christ. Weaving together personal stories, biblical exposition, and theological reflection, David Powlison shows the personal and particular ways that God meets you where you are to produce change."
3. [Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification by Thomas Schreiner](#) - "In *Faith Alone*, Schreiner looks at the historical and biblical roots of the doctrine of justification. Protestants place ultimate and final authority in the Scriptures, acknowledge the work of Christ alone as sufficient for redemption, recognize that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, and seek to do all things for God's glory."
4. [Wretched Saints: Transformed by the Relentless Grace of God by Noel Heikkinen](#) - "'The truth of the gospel of Jesus is that I am nothing more than a wretch and so much more than a saint.' In *Wretched Saints*, Heikkinen reveals the rough and beautiful side of grace so clearly that readers face up to the scars of sin--and have a renewed, startling realization that God's incredible gospel is true."
5. [The Acrostic of God: A Rhyming Theology for Kids by Jonathan Gibson](#) - "Catechism can be fun! The *Acrostic of God* is a joy to listen to, and a wonderful tool to help kids absorb eternal truth about God. Gibson writes that this book shows God as He is, not "just to know about Him more in our brains, but to know Him as the God of glory who reigns.'"



THEMES FOUND IN GALATIANS

1. Justification by Faith Alone

Martin Luther wrote that the doctrine upon which the church is the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And to a large degree, this is one of the main themes and doctrines of our faith that is being threatened in Galatians as Judiazers are making efforts to persuade the Galatian Christians that there needs to be an addition to faith in Christ via circumcision (Acts 15:1-5). When we add to the word of God, not only do we blur the line of what He has revealed to us in Scripture but we proclaim something that isn't there and call it gospel.

2. Spirit Transformation and Bearing Fruit

The mark of a Christian is that they bear fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). And in order to bear fruit, one's heart must have been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. As a Christian abides in Christ and depends on the Spirit, their walk (that is, how they live) bears much fruit (John 15). Further, bearing fruit is how to distinguish someone who knows Jesus from someone who does not. In short, there is no such thing as a Christian who does not bear fruit.

3. The Centrality of the Gospel

Passionately, Paul addresses the Galatians by saying, "who has bewitched you, foolish Galatians!" and this line comes directly from a heart that is both passionate and urgent. The Galatians were quickly turning toward another gospel, a false gospel and what was being forsaken was the gospel of Jesus Christ. Similarly, in our day and in our context, many Christians are being persuaded and lured away from the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Dr. Steven Lawson said it best, "the greatest threat to the church is never persecution from the outside, but carnality and compromise from the inside." If the gospel is not about Jesus then it is not the gospel. In a time of political division, a global pandemic, the popularity of deconstructionism, and secularization, what is at stake is not our programs or buildings, but the gospel of Jesus Christ and whether Christians actually know Jesus or not.



DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK ONE

GALATIANS 1:1-10

DISCUSSION

::: Looking only at verses 1-4. What does it mean to be a Christian?

::: Paul says that he is “astonished” that the Galatians are “deserting” the grace of Christ (v.6). Why do you think this is such a big deal to Paul? Can you imagine yourself ever making this kind of statement to another believer or group of believers?

::: Paul says that the gospel being preached to the Galatians is a different and distorted gospel (v.7). Do you ever notice the gospel being distorted? Where do you see this, and what does it look like?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | DISCUSSION

::: What is the gospel of Christ?

::: Who was teaching things different from Paul?

::: Why is it hard for some people to believe and follow Jesus?

PRAYER

Spend some time thanking God for Jesus Christ and what He has rescued you and delivered you from. Confess to God the ways in which we have subtly added our own works to the saving work of Christ.



DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK TWO

GALATIANS 1:11-24

DISCUSSION

- ::: Paul's conversion and commitment to share the gospel caused others to worship God. How have you been encouraged by someone else's growth and transformation?
- ::: Paul shares the details of his conversion saying that he was set apart, called by God's grace, and that God was pleased to reveal his Son to him. Paul says this took place in order that some purpose might be accomplished. What was it? Why does Paul say God chose to bring him the gospel?
- ::: Compare Galatians 1:15-16 to Romans 8:28-30. What circumstances did God use to make the truth of Christ clear to you? How would you currently describe God's purpose for your life?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | SCRIPTURE MEMORY & STUDY TOGETHER

- ::: Where else in the Bible does God say he's set us apart or loved us before we were born? Remind each other of God's great love and saving grace through these verses each day.

::: *"But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me..." Galatians 1:15-16a*

PRAYER

Give thanks to God for how he has worked in your life. Ask him to continue to reveal himself to you through his word and to provide you with a passion for proclaiming the gospel with accuracy and power.



DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK THREE

GALATIANS 2:1-10

DISCUSSION

::: Who are these "false brothers" (v. 4-5), and how are they recognized? Who should be on alert to protect the local church from these types of individuals? And what should be the response to the false brothers?

::: God entrusts Peter and Paul to take the gospel to specific groups of people (v. 7). To whom has God entrusted you to share the gospel with? What are some ways in which you can reorient your life toward this calling? As a group?

::: "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you love yourself" or "your truth" are common cultural beliefs surrounding us. Consider these statements, and others like it, in light of this passage. How should we respond?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | DISCUSSION

::: What are important things to notice in someone who says they follow Jesus? *Example: They say that God did the saving work in their heart.*

::: What can we ask or tell others when they are forcing you to do more things to be right with or more accepted by God?

PRAYER

Pray that we would be a community of believers marked by a passionate proclamation of the gospel that is also consistent by the way in which we live. Pray for compassion as we encounter those who disagree with the teachings of Jesus. Pray for boldness as we respond to those who hate Jesus and the church.



DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK FOUR

GALATIANS 2:11-21

DISCUSSION

- ::: We know and believe that justification comes only through faith in Jesus Christ and not by works. But in what ways are you tempted to trust in your works instead of in Christ alone?
- ::: Why is it difficult to confront a brother or sister in Christ who is out of line with the gospel or living in hypocrisy? What are some specific principles of biblical confrontation from this passage?
- ::: What are the old areas of your life that have a tendency “to rebuild” themselves? What does that say about our life apart from Christ?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | SCRIPTURE MEMORY & SINGING TOGETHER

::: *“Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus,”*
Galatians 2:16a

::: [New Creation](#) can be sung together, affirming our sin has been paid for by the greatest sacrifice, through Christ Jesus.

PRAYER

Ask God for guidance in what areas of your life he wants to work in next. Ask him for the strength to walk by faith rather than resorting to old ways. Confess your sin to one another; put sin to death by bringing into the light. Accountability is the byproduct of confession; do not neglect preaching the gospel to one another.



DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK FIVE

GALATIANS 3:1-14

DISCUSSION

::: Paul zooms out to remind the gentile Galatians that God includes them in the family of faith (v. 8-9). How does this reality affect our awe of God? Our relationships with brothers and sisters? Our urgency in evangelism?

::: Paul talks about "the curse of the law" (v.10-13). Reread these verses along with Romans 3:19–20. Who falls under this curse? Why are those that "rely on the works of the law" cursed?

::: Paul sets an example of the importance of basing our beliefs on God's Word. Where do you look to find truth outside of God's Word? What's the danger of relying on these things as opposed to God's Word?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | SCRIPTURE MEMORY & STUDY TOGETHER

::: *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us--" Galatians 3:13a*

::: Read Genesis 12 and 15 together. Discuss how God made the gospel promise with Abraham and how he believed God by faith. Remind each other that, as believers of Jesus, we are counted as righteous because of what Jesus has done, and now have the promised Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead (v.14).

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer thanking God that, like Abraham, we are justified by our faith. Take some time in confession and repentance for areas in your life where you try to continue "in the flesh" and surrender those to Christ's lordship.



DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK SIX

GALATIANS 3:15-29

DISCUSSION

- ::: What purpose does the law serve? How is the promise received? What is the promise? Look back at Galatians 3:14
- ::: To be in God's covenant family, we must believe by faith in Christ and 3:3 reminds us that we cannot add to faith. What are some ways that you are tempted to add to faith or trust in what you are doing to merit something?
- ::: The law only temporarily serves to enlighten us of our sin and keep us from it, but also serves as a foreshadowing of the coming of Christ. How would you communicate what Paul is saying to someone who still believes that if they "follow the rules," they will be right with God?.

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Thank you God for keeping your promises. All that you have planned to bring sinners back in a relationship with you, You've done it! I'm so glad I can believe by faith in Your son Jesus. He was the only One able to obey You without sinning. And in Jesus, I can be Your son/daughter who is free from the penalty of sin. Help me to keep following You, God.

PRAYER

Spend some time thanking God for Jesus in removing the curse of the law by becoming a curse for you.