

FOR YOU ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS

GALATIANS

gospel of grace

small group studies

CHRIST HAS SET US FREE



SERIES INTRODUCTION

As we continue our year focused on God's grace, Galatians shows us that grace is both the foundation and the message of the gospel.

Paul's letter to the Galatians proclaims an incredibly important gospel truth: salvation is by faith alone. Salvation is not gained by following laws, living out a moral code, or doing good. Christianity is not a set of religious observances. It is not a faith based on human achievement. Christianity is about what Christ has done for us by grace, not about what we have done or could do for Him. We cannot "improve" upon what God has done in Christ. Galatians calls us to trust in Christ's work on the cross and His resurrection as the only basis for our salvation.

Abraham was declared righteous because he trusted God's promises long before the Law was given. God's saving promises have always been received by faith, not earned through obedience to the Law. Those promises find their fulfilment in Christ, who redeemed us by becoming a curse for us (3:13).

In this book, the theme of freedom is also important, as it is contrasted with slavery to the Law and sin. The freedom we have in Christ is freedom from the slavery of sin and the Law, and freedom to live by the Spirit. The Christian life is not slavery to a religious system, but life in the freedom Christ has won through his death and resurrection.

The gospel of grace creates one new people. Rescued from slavery through Christ's sacrificial death, we are united in the freedom found in Christ Jesus.

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:28

SMALL GROUPS SUNDAY - AUGUST 2ND

Each year we set aside a Sunday to celebrate Small Groups, thank our leaders, invite people to join a group, and bring our leaders and groups before God in prayer.

It is also an opportunity to prayerfully ask as a group, "What is our next step?"

- Welcome new people into the group.
- Multiply by splitting into two new groups.
- Continue meeting together for another year.
- Send one or more people from the group to start a new group.
- Finish meeting together as a group.

Small Groups Sunday is also a great opportunity to establish or re-establish the goals and expectations of your group, ensuring everyone shares a clear vision of what you are seeking to achieve together and how you want to achieve it.

HIGHLIGHT EVENTS

ST PAUL'S CONFERENCE - SEPTEMBER 12TH

This day will be for our whole church community, from kids through to Seniors. We'll be starting our morning all together before heading into breakout sessions, enjoying lunch together, and finishing up around 2:30pm.

We're looking forward to having guest speakers, a fun kids program, worship, great food, and a chance for us to gather as members of all congregations under one roof.

Mark the date in your diaries, more info to come!

WHOLE CHURCH TEACHING NIGHT WITH DR DARRELL L. BOCK – JULY 28TH

Dr Darrell L. Bock is a Senior Research Professor of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary and Executive Director of Cultural Engagement at the Hendricks Center. He has authored or edited more than 45 books and has written for major outlets including the Los Angeles Times. Darrell will also be presenting at the Small Group Leaders Recharge breakfast (July 25th) and preaching all services on Sunday 26th July.

M28 TRIVIA NIGHT - AUGUST 19TH

Come along to our M28 Trivia Night where the M28 crew are fundraising for Compassion to aid the churches we'll be visiting in Masbate, Philippines. Join us with your whole Small Group or come as an individual. Register at stpauls.church/comingup or on the Church Center app.

TERM 3, 2026 SCHEDULE

WEEK #1 JULY 27th - AUGUST 2nd

- July 28th Whole Church Teaching Night on Cultural engagement with Dr Darrell L. Bock.
- July 29th Jesus Club returns for Term 3
- July 31st Crossfire returns for Term 3
- August 2nd Small Groups Sunday

WEEK #2 AUGUST 3rd - 9th

- August 5th Prayer Night
- August 8th Men's Breakfast with John North

WEEK #3 AUGUST 10th - 16th

- August 16th The Commons

WEEK #4 AUGUST 17th - 23rd

- August 18th Creative Team Night
- August 19th M28 Trivia Night – Fundraiser
- August 22nd Legacy Partners Breakfast

WEEK #5 AUGUST 24th - 30th

- August 24th Young Adults – Considering Ministry Info Night
- August 29th 45 In The Dark
- August 30th Newcomers Supper

WEEK #6 AUGUST 31st - SEPTEMBER 6th

- September 5th Hills Fair Trade Market
- September 6th Father's Day

STUDY #1

CALLED BY GRACE

NO SMALL GROUP STUDY THIS WEEK

Instead of meeting for your regular Small Group study, we would love to invite your group to attend our church-wide Teaching Night.

Teaching Night: Cultural Engagement with Dr Darrell L. Bock
Tuesday 28 July, 7:30–9:30pm

We are delighted to welcome Dr Darrell L. Bock from Dallas Theological Seminary.

In an increasingly polarised world, how can we speak about Jesus in ways that build bridges rather than deepen divides? Dr Bock will help us think about engaging people with clarity, humility, and grace while remaining faithful as we share the gospel.

This is a free event, but please register your attendance.

WHOLE CHURCH EVENTS

As a church, we have a full calendar of ministries serving people of all ages and stages of life. Throughout the year, we also hold a number of whole church events that we would love our entire church family to enjoy together. To create space for these events, we occasionally take a break from our regular Small Group program.

These events are designed to encourage our church family, strengthen community beyond our individual groups, help newer members make meaningful connections, and celebrate what God is doing across the life of St Paul's. Each Small Group will need to decide which events to attend and which to miss. There is no expectation that every group or every individual will attend every event. However, where possible, we would love you to join us.

If your group is unable to attend the event, or you choose to meet as a Small Group instead, use the simplified study below.

READ GALATIANS 1:1-10

- What are the key ideas or teaching points in this passage?
- What stands out to you? What questions does it raise? What challenges or encourages you?
- What does this passage teach us about God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)?
- What does this passage teach us about humanity, both as individuals and as God's people?
- What does this passage teach you personally?
- What would a faithful response to this passage look like?

PRAYER

Spend time sharing with one another and praying together. As you pray, remember your group's link missionary and the ministries and events coming up in the life of St Paul's.

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- **July 28th** **Whole Church Teaching Night on Cultural engagement with Dr Darrell L. Bock**
- **July 29th** Jesus Club returns for Term 3
- **July 31st** Crossfire returns for Term 3
- **August 2nd** **Small Groups Sunday**

STUDY #2

UNITED BY FAITH

GALATIANS 2:11-21

FOLLOW UP FROM SMALL GROUP SUNDAY

Before you begin this week's study, take a few moments to reflect together on the future of your group. The five options below are not intended to be restrictive, but to prompt prayerful conversation about how your group can best contribute to our mission of reaching every household, every community, and every generation with the gospel of grace.

- Welcome new people into the group.
- Multiply by splitting into two new groups.
- Continue meeting together for another year.
- Send one or more people from the group to start a new group.
- Finish meeting together as a group.

If your group plans to continue meeting, take this opportunity to revisit your goals and expectations. A shared understanding of why your group gathers and what is expected of each member provides a strong foundation for a healthy and effective group.

REFLECT TOGETHER

1. What do we want to achieve each week?

What is the purpose of our gatherings? Consider attendance, preparation, participation, caring for one another, welcoming new people, and starting and finishing times.

2. What do we hope to achieve over the next 12 months?

What would you love to see God do in and through your group before next Small Groups Sunday?

3. What is our plan to get there?

What practical steps will help you move towards those goals? Who could you intentionally encourage, disciple, or train so your group is ready for whatever next step God may have by next Small Groups Sunday?

Finish by identifying one or two priorities for the coming year and commit them to God together in prayer.

WELCOME

1. Spend some time as a group sharing reflections from the teaching night and the first two weeks of teaching in Galatians.

BRIEF CONTEXT

During his first missionary journey (Acts 13–14), Paul preached the gospel and established churches throughout Galatia. As the gospel spread beyond the Jewish community, many Gentiles came to faith in Jesus.

This raised a crucial question: Must Gentile believers obey the Jewish Law, including circumcision, Sabbath observance, and food laws, to belong to God's people? Some Jewish Christians said yes, leading to a major debate in the early church (Acts 15). After Paul left, teachers promoting this view influenced the Galatian churches. Peter (Cephas), who had previously welcomed Gentiles into God's family (Acts 10–11), later withdrew from eating with them out of fear. Paul recounts this incident because it perfectly illustrates the issue now facing the Galatian churches.

READ GALATIANS 2:11-21

REFLECT

2. What is happening in verses 11-14? Why does Paul believe Peter's actions are "not acting in line with the truth of the gospel"?

3. V15 seems harsh at first. How do verses 16-17 help us understand what Paul means? What is he trying to teach, and what misunderstanding is he correcting?

4. Paul repeats "works of the law" three times in verse 16. What does he mean by "works of the law" in the context of Galatians? Why is it so important to Paul that we are not justified by "works of the law"?

5. What does v18 mean?

6. In verses 19–21, how does Paul connect what happened to Jesus with what is now true of those who trust in him?

7. How should these verses shape the way we see ourselves and our relationship with God?

8. Peter's actions suggested that some Christians belonged more than others. How does justification by faith challenge that way of thinking?

RESPOND

9. Although very few of us would add circumcision to the gospel, what things are Christians tempted to treat as evidence that someone is "really" accepted by God?

10. Peter's actions preached a different message from the gospel he believed. Where might fear, pride, or a desire for approval lead us to communicate something different from the gospel we profess?

11. Who might you need to intentionally welcome, honour or pursue this week because the gospel has already made you one family?

PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include your group's link missionary and what's ahead in the life of St Paul's.

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- August 5th Prayer Night
- August 8th Men's Breakfast with John North

STUDY #3

PROMISE BEFORE LAW

GALATIANS 3:1-14

WELCOME

1. Spend some time as a group sharing reflections from Sunday's teaching.

READ GALATIANS 3:1-14

REFLECT

2. Remembering last week's study, what is the "bewitching" Paul is referring to in verse 1?

3. Paul appeals to both Jesus (v1) and the Holy Spirit (v2-5). What argument does Paul make from the work of Christ, and what argument does he make from the work of the Spirit?

4. Why does Paul repeatedly appeal to the Galatians' experience of receiving the Holy Spirit? What does he want them to realise?

5. Paul cites Abraham as an example. What point is he making through Abraham's faith? (Genesis 15:6)

6. How do God's promises to Abraham help explain why Gentiles, including us, can belong to God's family through faith? (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18)

7. Putting these passages together, what do they teach us about God's role, our role, and the place of the Law in belonging to God's family?

8. It can be difficult to read Paul describing the Law, which is part of our Bible, as a curse. What does he mean?

9. What does it mean for Jesus to become a curse for us?

RESPOND

Study Note

Throughout chapters 1-2, Paul has shown that we are made right with God through faith in Jesus, not by works of the Law. He now builds on that argument: if we begin by the Spirit, why would we try to continue by our own efforts?

10. Where are you tempted to maintain your relationship with God by your own efforts rather than depending on the grace of Christ?

11. If we are not made right with God or sustained by keeping the Law, what place does obedience have in the Christian life? Where are you following the Spirit's leading, and where are you resisting him?

12. What would it look like for dependence on the Spirit, rather than confidence in yourself, to shape the way you live as a Christian? Which of these would you like God to grow in you?

PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include your group's link missionary and what's ahead in the life of St Paul's.

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- August 16th The Commons

STUDY #4

SONS AND HEIRS BY GRACE

GALATIANS 4:1-7, 21-26

WELCOME

1. Spend some time as a group sharing reflections from Sunday's teaching.

READ GALATIANS 4:1-7

REFLECT

2. In verses 1-2 Paul uses the imagery of an underage heir who must wait until the time set by his father. How does this illustration help explain God's people before Christ, and why does that matter for Christians today?

3. What do God's actions in verses 4-5 reveal about His character?

4. Paul describes what God has done for us using two legal pictures: redemption and adoption. What does each picture help us understand about God's saving work? Why is it significant that God does both?

5. Paul says God sent "the Spirit of his Son" into our hearts. What difference does the gift of the Spirit make to the relationship between God and His children?

6. Paul says believers become "sons," highlighting an incredible change in status. Why doesn't he say "sons and daughters"? How should women understand this language?

7. **Optional:** Looking back through verses 1-7, identify the actions in the passage. Which actions belong to God, which belong to the Spirit, and which describe believers? What does this reveal?

READ GALATIANS 4:21-26

8. Who do Hagar and Sarah each represent, and what contrast is Paul building between them?

9. How does this illustration reinforce everything Paul has been saying about slavery, sonship, and God's promises? Why is this so important for the Galatians?

10. How does this chapter build on Paul's picture of God's grace? What does it add to the picture he has been developing?

RESPOND

11. Paul describes believers as God's children who, by the Spirit, cry "Abba, Father." Does this describe the way you know and relate to God? Why or why not?

12. When you fail as a Christian, do you instinctively respond more like a slave or like a beloved child? What does each response look like?

13. If you truly believed you were God's beloved child and heir, what difference does that make to the way you live? Consider how it might shape areas such as your sense of security, your prayers, your obedience, your relationships, or the way you face both success and suffering.

PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include your group's link missionary and what's ahead in the life of St Paul's

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- August 18th Creative Team Night
- August 19th M28 Trivia Night – Fundraiser
- **August 22nd Legacy Partners Breakfast**

STUDY #5

FREEDOM IN THE SPIRIT

GALATIANS 5:1-13

WELCOME

1. Spend some time as a group sharing reflections from Sunday's teaching.

READ GALATIANS 5:1-13

REFLECT

2. Why does Paul say that if the Galatians accept circumcision, Christ will be of no value to them?

3. Paul says believers "eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope." If Christians are already justified, what is Paul talking about?

4. Paul uses the images of a race and yeast. What warning is he giving the Galatians?

5. Paul begins and ends this section by speaking about freedom (vv1, 13). What kind of freedom is Paul describing, and what misunderstandings is he correcting?

6. Paul places this statement at the centre of his argument: "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (v6). How does this statement help explain what Christian freedom looks like?

RESPOND

7. "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." If someone looked at your priorities, what would they conclude counts most to you?

8. What is one relationship or situation where God is calling your faith to be expressed through loving service?

PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include your group's link missionary and what's ahead in the life of St Paul's.

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- August 24th Young Adults -Considering Ministry Info Night
- **August 29th** **45 In The Dark**
- August 30th Newcomers Supper

STUDY #6

BEAR AND BLESS ONE ANOTHER

GALATIANS 6:1-10

WELCOME

1. Spend some time as a group sharing reflections from Sunday's teaching.

READ GALATIANS 6:1-10

REFLECT

2. Paul calls those who live by the Spirit to restore those caught in sin "gently," while watching themselves. What does this teach us about restoring others?

3. Paul says carrying one another's burdens "fulfils the law of Christ." Why? How does this connect with what Paul has just taught about freedom and faith expressing itself through love? **Optional:** Read Matthew 22:34-40 and John 13:34-35. How do these passages help explain what Paul means by "the law of Christ"?

4. Paul warns against thinking too highly of ourselves, yet says we may "take pride" in our own work (v4). How should we understand what Paul means by "take pride"?

5. Paul briefly tells those who receive instruction to share all good things with their teacher (v6). Why do you think Paul includes this instruction here? What does it reveal about life in a gospel-shaped community?

6. Paul uses the image of sowing and reaping. What does this teach us about the direction of our lives? How does this illustration encourage believers not to grow weary in doing good?

7. Paul says to do good to everyone, "especially to those who belong to the family of believers." Why do you think Paul includes that priority rather than simply saying "everyone"?

RESPOND

8. Is there someone in your life whom God may be calling you to gently restore? What might restoring them gently look like?

9. Whose burdens are you carrying in a way that has genuinely cost you time, energy, or resources? If no one comes to mind, why might that be? Where might God be inviting you to begin?

10. Where are you becoming weary in doing good? How does this passage encourage you to keep going?

11. Imagine a church where people gently restore one another, carry each other's burdens, persevere in doing good, and generously serve one another. What would that kind of community look like? What is one step our group could take towards becoming more like that?

PRAYER

Spend some time sharing and praying for one another. As you pray, remember to include your group's link missionary and what's ahead in the life of St Paul's.

WHATS ON THIS WEEK

- September 5th Hills Fair Trade Market
- **September 6th Father's Day**

