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THE HEART OF GALATIANS

MICRO-GROUP STUDY 2021



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF EDMOND

7 CORE PRACTICES & VISION



GATHER

- 1 SHARE who you are
- 2 CARE for one another



GROW

- 3 READ and PRACTICE scripture
- 4 PRAY together



GO

- 5 INVEST in people
- 6 SERVE community
- 7 CREATE and SEND leaders

NEW LIFE,
through **JESUS,**
for **EDMOND**
and the **WORLD.**

“TEN COMMANDMENTS”

To Get the Most from Your Small Group

1. Read the Scripture lesson beforehand and pray before you read it asking the Holy Spirit to speak with you.
2. Attend regularly; make being there a priority.
3. Read and pray about the questions beforehand.
4. Be fully present in the group (put your phone aside).
5. Trustfully and truthfully share who you are.
6. Keep what is shared in the group in the group; don't share outside the group.
7. Listen to what others have to say.
8. Write down the prayer requests and pray daily for the others in your group.
9. Do something together to serve your community.
10. Invest in someone in your group, cultivate a friendship.

THE PURPOSE OF A SMALL GROUP

There is a lot of misunderstandings about small groups. People think that small groups are places where people sit around and are forced to bear their soul or hold hands and sing kumbaya.

Nope.

The purpose of small groups is to cultivate relationships that share the power of the Holy Spirit. Small groups at First Presbyterian Church exist to share the power of the Holy Spirit expressed through our 7 Core Practices. Faith is not taught. Faith is caught. And it usually happens through relationships. That's not to say teaching is not important. I would be the last one to say that! But I know a lot of people who have had great teaching who don't know Jesus. I know fewer who have immersed themselves in Christian community who don't know Him. I really don't know a Christian whose faith impacts their daily life who cannot name at least 3 or 4 important relationships that changed their world.

We are asking you to be a part of a micro-group (meaning a small group of 3-4 people) because we think it is a great way to grow in Christ. And it is really no more complicated than allowing yourself some time and space to form a Holy Spirit infused and empowered relationship that cultivates our core practices at First Pres. It takes no expertise, just a little bit of time and faith the size of a mustard seed.

"It is as though an orphan, brought up by faceless bureaucrats in a threatening institution, were to meet for the first time the parents she never knew she had.

What emerges from this, as the positive side of the point about the dark forces being overthrown, is the idea of a new humanity, a different model of the human race. If Jesus had defeated the powers of the world in his death, his resurrection meant the launching of a new creation, a whole new world. Those who found themselves caught up in the "good news" that Paul was announcing were drawn into that new world and were themselves, Paul taught, to become small working models of the same thing. As I think of Paul launching this new venture, the image of the tightrope over the volcano doesn't seem to go far enough. He was inventing, and must have known that he was inventing, a new way of being human."

- N.T. Wright

"Man instinctively regards himself as a wanderer and wayfarer, and it is second nature for him to go on pilgrimage in search of a privileged and holy place, a center and source of indefectible life..."

- Thomas Merton

LESSON #1

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Galatians 2:15-21

This week our question is “Who Am I?” We are told in no uncertain terms that although we are sinners, that Jesus lives in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Just as Jesus was crucified for our sin, by His work our old, sinful self is crucified so that we might be made righteous and live lives of righteousness. We are not made to continue to sin but to live in newness of life.

1. Do you define yourself as sinner or saint? Why? What does Galatians promise about our justification (being made right with God)? Does it come through our works or through our faith in Jesus? (Galatians 2:15-16)
2. Is anyone ‘justified by the works of the law’? (Galatians 2:16) What kind of legalisms (defining ourselves and others by obedience to the law) do we accept and endorse in our life? How do we allow those legalisms to define ourselves and others?
3. What does it look like for Christ to become ‘a servant of sin’ in our life? (Galatians 2:17) How do we use God’s grace as a license for sin rather than a vessel to build our relationship with God?
4. Is there a sin in your life that lingers or any place where you tend to live by the power of the flesh instead of by ‘faith in the Son of God?’ (Galatians 2:20) How does this choice impact your identity and your life? What is

LESSON #2

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Galatians 3:1-9

This week our question is “What Am I?” In Galatians we are told we are sons and daughters of Abraham, meaning that we are people who are justified by faith and we are vessels by which God blesses all the nations. To turn to the works of the flesh now rather than a dependency upon Jesus to seek our purpose as a blessing is a foolish act, done out of vanity.

1. How did you first come to faith in Jesus? Tell the story. Did you do anything to deserve your salvation? Is your salvation an act of works or an act of faith? (Galatians 3:2)
2. Who do you consider the Holy Spirit to be? Is He God? (Matthew 28:19, 1 John 5:6-8). What role does the Holy Spirit play in your life? What role does the Bible say He should play? (John 14:16)
3. How does our faith count as righteousness? (Galatians 3:6, Romans 4:1-5) Do we need to act on that faith or just simply have an intellectual conviction? What did Abraham do? Did he act or simply have an intellectual conviction? (Genesis 22:9-14)
4. What does it mean to be a ‘son of Abraham?’ What is the one quality we must have? (Galatians 3:7) How does this unite us with the Jewish people? What is the quality we share? (Galatians 4:28) Are you living as a free person or as a slave?

LESSON #3

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:10-14

This week our question is “How Do I Live?” What does it mean to ‘live by faith’ rather than living by the law? If we live by the law, we end up cursing ourselves and denying that Jesus is taking the curse for us by dying on the cross and we deny God’s blessing for our life.

1. Is it possible for anyone to keep the law perfectly? (Romans 3:23, Psalm 14:3) How does our inability to keep the law, despite our good intentions, curse us?
2. Since we cannot keep the law and “the righteous live by faith” does this set us free from following the law and live just however we like? What happens we keep on sinning despite receiving grace? (Hebrews 10:26-27)
3. What happens when we seek to follow the law not to justify ourselves but out of simple obedience to Jesus? (1 Samuel 15:22, John 15:10-11) How does it impact our life to abide in the Father’s love? What happens to fear, anxiety, loneliness and anger when we dwell in the Father’s love? What does this tell us about the fruit of obedience?
4. How did Jesus redeem us from the curse of the law? (Galatians 3:13, 2 Corinthians 5:21) Why should our obedience be caught up in Christ’s sacrifice for us on the cross? Can we receive the Holy Spirit in His fullness without a reliance upon Jesus’ work on the cross? (John 14:16-18)
5. What is the blessing of Abraham? (Genesis 12:1-3) How does this bless-

LESSON #4

Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Galatians 3:19-29

This week our question is "Where Do I Belong?" We spend so much time in our life trying to find the place where we feel accepted, embraced and at home. Many of us never find it. However, when we find our identity in Christ, we discover the place we call home and we find community, where we are not judged by where we come from or what we can do but where we are received and loved as we are.

1. Does following the law, or our other achievements, give us life? (Galatians 3:21) Why are we so prone to believe it can? Why does our trust in our own goodness and righteousness so often determine where we feel like we belong? Is that right?
2. Why did Scripture 'imprison everything under sin'? (Galatians 3:23) How does our inability to follow the law create faith? How does the law serve as our 'guardian?' (Romans 7:12)
3. How does the law point us to Jesus? And how does having faith in Jesus lead us to community? Have you ever had a poor experience looking for belonging and community outside of Jesus? Has the community of

LESSON #5

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Galatians 4:1-7

Our final question in our Galatians study is "Where Am I Going?" We can easily have a lot of anxiety about the future because of our uncertainty about how life is going to turn out. Galatians addresses this directly with the promise that we are an heir of God, a son of the king and we can expect the fullness of His grace to be poured out into our life.

1. How does Paul make a distinction between a child and a son of God? What is the difference? Do we usually consider mature adult sons or daughters to be children? What is Jesus' intention for our life? (Ephesians 1:6) What do you hope the completion of this good work in your life looks like?
2. What marks mature followers of Jesus (sons and daughters of God) rather than children? (Ephesians 4:12-14) Why does our understanding of God's Word and His character play such a great role in our Christian maturity? Where would you rank your understanding? What does your life reveal about your understanding?
3. Who do we receive in our hearts when we are adopted by God as sons? (Galatians 4:6) How does this receipt of the Holy Spirit change us and help us to know God's Word? (Romans 8:26-27). What does it mean for us to cry out to God "Abba, Father?" Is "Abba, Father" an expression of intimacy or distance? Does God feel intimate to you? How?
4. What does Galatians promise that sons of God become? (Galatians 4:7) What does an heir receive from their Father? Can they expect their Father



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