

Galatians

Summer 2022 Sermon Series
Companion Guide, Volume 1



Contents

Sermon Notes	4
Bible Project Video Notes	10
Galatia - Geography & Culture	12
Context Study - Acts 13	13
Context Study - Acts 14	14
Video - Acts 8-12	15
Context Study - Acts 11	16
Background - Jewish Education	17
Background - Paul's Testimony	18
Context - Dietary & Association Laws	19
Character Studies - Peter (2 parts)	21
Word Study - Justified	23
Context - Law (3 parts)	24
Context - Covenants (2 parts)	27
Context - Abraham (3 parts)	29
Reflections	32

At Hope Grove Church, one of the ways we strive to live out our values is to be a church that is in the Word. We are excited to practice that this Summer by taking a longer look at Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia. Because we want this to be a growing practice for us all, we've developed this guide to be used outside of Sunday.

As with our companion guides from last Summer, this booklet includes:

- Space for sermon notes each week
- Studies from other passages from the Bible that help us better understand what Paul was writing and why he was writing it
- Other resources that better explain the context and message of the letter to the Galatians

Unlike last Summer, the resources are not connected to a specific day. Instead, we will provide weekly suggestions of specific resources to look at each day to develop more familiarity with Galatians. Expect a typical week to have 5 recommended resources that each take 10-20 minutes to explore. The hope is that this all works together to build a much richer understanding of not only Paul's letter to the Galatians, but of the bigger picture of life in the early Church.

As always, it's our hope that this regular time spent encountering the Word of God will be not only an awesome individual experience, but will be a blessing for our church as well.

We are really excited to walk through Galatians with you this Summer.

-HGC Staff

May 8 - Sunday Sermon, Week 1

Title:

Passage:

Sermon Notes:

How am I being invited to respond to this message in the days and weeks ahead?

May 15 - Sunday Sermon, Week 2

Title:

Passage:

Sermon Notes:

How am I being invited to respond to this message in the days and weeks ahead?

May 22 - Sunday Sermon - Week 3

Title:

Passage:

Sermon Notes:

How am I being invited to respond to this message in the days and weeks ahead?

June 5 - Sunday Sermon - Week 4

Title:

Passage:

Sermon Notes:

How am I being invited to respond to this message in the days and weeks ahead?

June 12 - Sunday Sermon - Week 5

Title:

Passage:

Sermon Notes:

How am I being invited to respond to this message in the days and weeks ahead?

June 19 - Sunday Sermon - Week 6

Title:

Passage:

Sermon Notes:

How am I being invited to respond to this message in the days and weeks ahead?

Video Resource - The Bible Project

If you've been around Hope Grove Church for awhile, you know that content from The Bible Project is frequently used. Like other book overviews, their video on Galatians is quite helpful for understanding the bigger picture of the letter. Watch the video through the link below and then take time to reflect and respond.

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/galatians/>

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- What themes do you want to keep in mind when studying Galatians?
- If you have watched this video before, what new information did you learn this time?

Galatia - Geography & Culture

Background

In the first century, Galatia was a province of the Roman Empire located in modern-day Turkey. Prior to its incorporation into the Roman Empire, the region had experienced several centuries of changing political and cultural influences. A brief history of the region, along with helpful maps, can be found here:

<https://www.timemaps.com/encyclopedia/history-anatolia/>

How and why did Jews settle in Galatia?

As far back as the Assyrians in the 8th Century BCE, residents of conquered countries were forcefully relocated to other areas of the conquering empire for a variety of reasons including reducing cultural identity, expanding economic and scientific expertise, and punishing dissenters.

Initially, the larger pockets of Judaism outside of Judea were located in Egypt and Babylon, but we can conclude that groups of Jews were settled throughout the Middle East and Eastern Europe by the time of the Persian Empire.

By the time that Christianity started spreading through the Roman Empire, synagogues had already been established in many key cities of the region. On Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13 & 14), Paul and Barnabas started their ministry in Antioch (Acts 13:14) and Iconium (Acts 14:1) by teaching at the Synagogues. The same process is described in several other cities on later missionary journeys.

For a map outlining the journey of Paul and Barnabas through Galatia on their first missionary journey, check the back of most any Bible. An internet search will also turn up several results that will prove helpful for visual learners.

Context Study - Acts 13:13-52

The letter to the Galatians is written to the churches Paul and Barnabas started during their travels through the region. Those travels are described in Acts 13 & 14. To develop a better understanding of the context of the letter, we'll look more closely at the story of that trip.

Read Acts 13:13-52

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- How would you summarize the conflict between Paul & Barnabas and the Jewish leaders?
- What do you think prompted the Jews to shift from excitement to jealousy?

Context Study - Acts 14

Acts 14 provides further background information for the book of Galatians. This chapter continues the narrative of Paul & Barnabas' journey through the region of Galatia with a strong focus on the opposition they encountered while preaching the Gospel.

Read Acts 14

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- What differences do you notice between Paul & Barnabas' process in Acts 14 versus Acts 13?
- How would you explain the mindset of those who are opposed to Paul & Barnabas? Why do you think they are putting up so much resistance?

Video Resource - Acts 8-12

Understanding Galatians requires understanding what was happening in the early Church. Today we'll look at another video from The Bible Project that gives an overview of a few characters and themes in Acts 8-12.

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/gospel-acts-2/>

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- Were there any 'aha' moments for you while watching this video?
- How did this video expand your understanding of the dynamics of the early Church?

Context Study - Acts 11

So much of Galatians is connected to the larger story of tension in the early Church, which is why we are spending so much time looking at Acts. Acts 10-11 give the account of a vision Peter has regarding ritual cleanliness and his response to that vision. It's profitable to study the entire account, but today we will look specifically at the latter portion of the story.

Read Acts 11:1-18

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- How are different groups receiving this message from Peter?
- How would you respond if you were asked to let go of a centuries-old practice that was instituted by God and is deeply connected to your religious and cultural identity?

Background - Jewish Education Process

In Galatians 1:14, Paul says that he was 'advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age...' To better understand the stark contrast between Paul and those who were in opposition to him, today we will take a look at the typical educational process in ancient Israel.

Navigate to the URL below to find a thorough article about the religious education system in ancient Israel. It's an article we also looked at last Summer and is written with Jesus' instruction in mind, but the same would have applied to Paul, especially since he was, by his own account, an exceptional student.

<https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/rabbi-and-talmidim>

Questions for Reflection

- It took direct intervention from God to move Paul past all that he was taught growing up. What are the implications for those who were in opposition to his work in Galatia?
- How does this help us better understand the dynamics at work in Galatians 1?

Background - Paul's Testimony

Paul frequently shares his conversion experience and subsequent calling to verify his credentials to his audience. One example is in Galatians 1.

The document at the URL listed below, while somewhat academic in nature, provides a great overview of Paul's broader conversion story as portrayed in Acts and how it informs his bigger purpose for God's Kingdom.

Repetition For A Reason, by Timothy Churchill

<https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/239230.pdf>

Question for Reflection

- What insights does this article give us that shed light on Paul's attitude toward the Galatians?

Context - Dietary & Association Laws

Jews in the first century had a complex system of laws surrounding their diet and their interactions with non-Jews. These laws had developed over centuries in response to various factors. The topic as a whole is incredibly complex, but below are a few points to help us make better sense of what is happening in the early Church.

The dietary laws given to the Israelites in Leviticus 11 are seemingly the only restrictions that come from what we would consider Biblical sources. God presents an extensive list of animals that are labeled either as clean or unclean, ultimately pointing to the repeated desire for the Israelites to be holy as He is holy.

The reason a particular creature is called either clean or unclean has puzzled commentators throughout the ages. Yet the purpose of these laws is clear: to help Israel, as God's holy people, see the difference between ritual cleanness and ritual uncleanness. Seeing these differences in the ritual realm would constantly remind the people that they need to make such distinctions in the moral realm as well. Further, obeying these good laws expresses Israel's devotion to the Lord: just as God separated the Israelites from the other nations, so they must separate clean from unclean foods. This is why the restrictions can be removed in Acts 10:9-28, when the Jew vs Gentile distinction is no longer relevant in defining the people of God.

ESV Student Study Bible,
Footnote on Leviticus 11:1-47

As with many commands from the Old Testament, over the years the focus on holiness was lost and replaced with strict adherence. Other commands were added on to what God passed down so that the risk of breaking the initial laws was minimized. That is how the rules for associating with non-Jews came in to being.

After the Israelites repeatedly turned away from God and towards the gods of other nations, rabbis became concerned about the extent of fellowship with non-Jews - despite God's repeated indication that his blessing should be for all nations (Genesis 12:1-3 and Isaiah 49:5-6 as examples).

continued on next page...

The Book of Jubilees, a non-canonical work that some Christian and Jewish traditions find value in, is a primary source for the association rules that are apparent in Galatians.

Jubilees 22:13-18 (written approximately 150-100BCE)

13 May the Most High God give thee all the blessings Wherewith He has blessed me And wherewith He blessed Noah and Adam; May they rest on the sacred head of thy seed from generation to generation for ever. 14 And may He cleanse thee from all unrighteousness and impurity, That thou mayest be forgiven all the transgressions; which thou hast committed ignorantly. And may He strengthen thee, And bless thee. And mayest thou inherit the whole earth, 15 And may He renew His covenant with thee. That thou mayest be to Him a nation for His inheritance for all the ages, And that He may be to thee and to thy seed a God in truth and righteousness throughout all the days of the earth. 16 And do thou, my son Jacob, remember my words, And observe the commandments of Abraham, thy father: Separate thyself from the nations, And eat not with them: And do not according to their works, And become not their associate; For their works are unclean, And all their ways are a Pollution and an abomination and uncleanness. 17 They offer their sacrifices to the dead And they worship evil spirits, And they eat over the graves, And all their works are vanity and nothingness. 18 They have no heart to understand And their eyes do not see what their works are, And how they err in saying to a piece of wood: 'Thou art my God,' And to a stone: 'Thou art my Lord and thou art my deliverer.'

For a devout Jew, moving past these rules to a life with no restrictions on diet or fellowship would be challenging, and we see that play out in Galatians 2. Similar cultural and social tensions are present throughout the New Testament and the early Church.

Character Study - Peter

Galatians 2 contains a story of a tense interaction between Paul and Peter, and you're probably aware that it's not the first time in the New Testament that Peter is painted in a poor light. Because there's so many different stories about Peter that show many different sides of his character, it's helpful to take a closer look at him.

What do you remember about Peter? How would you describe his character?

Read

- Matthew 4:18-22
- Matthew 16:13-23
- Mark 14:66-72
- John 13:1-11

Questions for Reflection

- How do these passages expand your perspective on the character of Peter?
- How might these passages help us better understand Peter's mindset in Galatians 2?

Character Study - Peter (Part 2)

Peter's background is extensive enough that we could study it for the entire summer, but since we are focusing on Galatians, we will take just one more day to look at how his character, flaws and all, contribute to the overall message of Paul's letter.

Read

- Acts 4:1-22
- Acts 10:9-33 (or through 11:18 if you have an extra 5 minutes)

Questions for Reflection

- How do these passages expand your perspective on the character of Peter, especially considering his proximity to Jesus after the resurrection?
- How would you explain the apparent differences between Peter's character portrayed in these passages and in Galatians 2? Why do you think Peter struggled with this hypocrisy?

Word Study - Justified

Occasionally it's helpful to take a deeper look at a word or phrase that is so embedded in Christian-ese that we can forget the depth and richness of the word. Because of that, we're taking some time today to look at the use of the word 'justified' in scripture to give a better understanding.

Outside of Paul's letter to the Romans, Galatians has the highest occurrence of the Greek word 'dikaioo' (2:16 & 17; 3:8, 11, & 24; 5:4).

Read

- James 2:21-25
- Luke 16:14-15
- Romans 3:20-30

Questions for Reflection

- Do you see a significant difference in how the word is used by James, Luke, and Paul?
- Based on how the word 'justified' is used in these passages, how would you define it?

Context - Law in the Gospels

The Law was an understandably important part of Jewish life in the first century. It had been studied and expanded upon for several hundred years in an effort to better align with what God expected of his people (as we saw in the entry regarding dietary and association rules).

Since Galatians has a heavy focus on what the Law means for Christians in the early Church, it would be helpful to examine other passages in the New Testament that address the connection between Law and faith.

Read Matthew 5:17-48

Questions for Reflection

- What does this passage show us about Jesus' understanding of the Law?
- How does this perspective on the Law show up in Galatians?

Context - Paul & The Law

The Law was an understandably important part of Jewish life in the first century. It had been studied and expanded upon for several hundred years in an effort to better align with what God expected of his people (as we saw in the entry regarding dietary and association rules).

Since Galatians has a heavy focus on what the Law means for Christians in the early Church, it would be helpful to examine other passages in the New Testament that address the connection between Law and faith.

Read Romans 7:1-8:8

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- How would you summarize Paul's understanding of the Law? What is the connection between the Law and death? The Law and life?
- Where do you see this reasoning present in Paul's appeal to the Galatians?

Context - Law in the New Testament

The Law was an understandably important part of Jewish life in the first century. It had been studied and expanded upon for several hundred years in an effort to better align with what God expected of his people (as we saw in the entry regarding dietary and association rules).

Since Galatians has a heavy focus on what the Law means for Christians in the early Church, it would be helpful to examine other passages in the New Testament that address the connection between Law and faith.

Read

- Hebrews 8:1-7
- Hebrews 10:1-18

Questions for Reflection

- What do these passages communicate about the Law?
- The author of Hebrews uses quotes (Psalm 40:6-8 and Hosea 6:6) that seem to show that, even in the Old Testament, the Law was seen by some as insufficient. How would it have been possible for people, especially teachers, to miss this idea?

Context - Covenants

Covenants are incredibly important throughout scripture and are foundational for Paul's letter to the Galatians. We could take weeks studying the depths of each Covenant found in scripture, but the following two resources provide an excellent overview:

Video:

<https://bibleproject.com/bible-studies/covenants/>

Blog Post:

<https://bibleproject.com/blog/covenants-the-backbone-bible/>

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- What new information did you learn through these resources?
- How do these Covenants impact Paul's response to what the Galatians are experiencing as they grow in their faith?

Context - Covenants (part 2)

The Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants are of particular importance in Galatians. Other resources focus more on the Abrahamic Covenant, so today we wanted to focus a bit more on the Mosaic Covenant (aka The Law).

Read

- Exodus 19:1-6
- Exodus 24

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- What was the original reason for this Covenant being established? How has the purpose of the Mosaic Covenant been lost by the time of the New Testament?

- How is the loss of purpose addressed by Paul in Galatians?

Context - Abraham in Genesis

In Galatians 3, Paul refers to Abraham several times to support his argument for the importance of faith over the Law. Because of that, it is helpful to look at Abraham as portrayed in Genesis and also how he is addressed elsewhere in scripture.

Read

- Genesis 12:1-9
- Genesis 15
- Genesis 17:1-14

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- What promises does God make to Abraham in these passages? What expectations does God have for Abraham?

- How do you see these promises of God reflected in Galatians? How is Paul addressing them?

Context - Abraham in non-Pauline Epistles

In Galatians 3, Paul refers to Abraham several times to support his argument for the importance of faith over the Law. Because of that, it is helpful to look at Abraham as portrayed in Genesis and also how he is addressed elsewhere in scripture.

Read

- Hebrews 11:8-22
- James 2:14-26

Questions for Reflection

- What do these passages show us about the prevailing perspective on Abraham from New Testament writers?
- What similarities or differences do you see between these perspectives on Abraham and how Paul addresses Abraham in Galatians?

Reflection - Galatians 1

Because there's a lot of information to process, we want to take time after each chapter to reflect on what's been discussed so far.

How do you see Galatians (so far) fitting in to the bigger story of scripture?

Are there any resources that you would like to explore more to deepen your understanding of Galatians?

How are you being called to respond to Galatians so far?

Reflection - Galatians 2

Because there's a lot of information to process, we want to take time after each chapter to reflect on what's been discussed so far.

How do you see Galatians (so far) fitting in to the bigger story of scripture?

Are there any resources that you would like to explore more to deepen your understanding of Galatians?

How are you being called to respond to Galatians so far?

Reflection - Galatians 3

Because there's a lot of information to process, we want to take time after each chapter to reflect on what's been discussed so far.

How do you see Galatians (so far) fitting in to the bigger story of scripture?

Are there any resources that you would like to explore more to deepen your understanding of Galatians?

How are you being called to respond to Galatians so far?

Stay tuned for Volume 2!

