

Galatians

Summer 2022 Sermon Series
Companion Guide, Volume 2



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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.

This volume is a continuation of resources covering Galatians 1-3, and like the first volume 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

Watch for weekly suggestions of helpful content to explore, and expect a typical week to have 4-5 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.

Thanks for joining us in this incredible adventure of exploration!

-HGC Staff

June 26 - Sunday Sermon, Week 7

Title:

Passage:

Sermon Notes:

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

July 3 - Sunday Sermon, Week 8

Title:

Passage:

Sermon Notes:

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

July 10 - Sunday Sermon - Week 9

Title:

Passage:

Sermon Notes:

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

July 17 - Sunday Sermon - Week 10

Title:

Passage:

Sermon Notes:

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

July 24 - Sunday Sermon - Week 11

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?

Manuscript Recap - March 27

Back in March, we took a Sunday morning to do a manuscript study of Galatians 4:1-11. Since the message from this past Sunday didn't spend much time in that section, we will take some time this week to look back at that section.

Read Galatians 4:1-11 and then listen back to the recording (location below). The service was structured a bit differently, so the recording was edited to remove the times of small group discussion. Also, the recording is approximately 35 minutes long, so feel free to take a couple days to read, listen, and reflect.

hopegrovechurch.org/sermons

Bible Study in Practice, March 27, 2022

(from our Bible as a Practice series)

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- How does the rest of Galatians (to this point) inform your understanding of 4:1-11?
- How would you respond to one or both of the Response questions from that morning?

Refresher - Paul & Galatia

In chapter 4, Paul reminds the Galatians about the circumstances that led to his arrival in Galatia. Today we will take some time to refresh on his story as well.

Paul is first mentioned in Acts 7 and his efforts against the Church are described in Acts 8. He then goes through his conversion (Acts 9), his time of formation (Galatians 1 & 2), and a time of connecting with Church leaders (Acts 11) before being commissioned and sent out.

Read or listen to Acts 13 & 14

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- Having studied more of Galatians, what stands out when reading through Acts 13 & 14?
- What do you think is Paul's intent with his reminder in 4:12-14?

Sermon Response

This past Sunday, Lisa Vaupel spoke on Galatians 4:12-20. Part of this passage is Paul's call on the Galatians to remember how they met, how their relationship developed, and more specifically how much joy they experienced in Christ.

Lisa challenged us on Sunday to think of a 'stone of remembrance,' a time when God was real to you, a time when you felt his love, or felt close to him in a certain way. What is a truth from that memory that you hold on to? How can that continue to direct and guide you in your practice of faith?

Questions for Reflection

- What is a truth from that memory that you hold on to? How can that continue to direct and guide you in your practice of faith?
- How does that memory reflect the Gospel and the good news that Christ brought?
- Who else knows your story? Who can you share it with?

Context Study - Sarah & Hagar (Part 1)

As Paul continues his argument addressing the insufficiency of the Law, he moves to the story of Sarah & Hagar to further his point. It's important to recognize that Paul's argument here is not meant to be a full explanation of the story, but rather an allegory to help his listeners draw a clearer distinction between the Law and the Spirit.

Read Genesis 16

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- What surprises you about this story?
- This story is frequently seen as an example of trying to complete God's promises through human means. How does that idea connect with Paul's use of this story in Galatians 4?

Context Study - Sarah & Hagar (Part 2)

Today we turn to the rest of the Biblical account of Sarah & Hagar. While it's by no means a full account of their relationship - and all the nuances of it - this conclusion of their story provides a good overview of larger issues brought up by the actions shown in Genesis 16.

Read Genesis 21:1-21

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- What surprises you about this story?
- Paul uses this story towards a more negative example, but in the actual account, God's provision is emphasized. How would you explain that difference?

One more note...

Genesis 25:7-18 gives one final tidbit of this story. Isaac and Ishmael come together for Abraham's burial and Ishmael's lineage is described. It serves as yet another affirmation of God keeping his promise. Tremper Longman offers this insight in the Story of God Commentary: Genesis:

God is far from hostile or even indifferent to the non-chosen; he deeply cares for all the nations of the world.

Context Study - Isaiah 54

While explaining his allegorical usage of the story of Sarah & Hagar, Paul quotes Isaiah 54. It is helpful to know the fuller content of this passage to better understand what Paul is ultimately trying to say in Galatians 4.

Read Isaiah 54

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- How does this passage further address the challenge the Galatians are facing?
- Each of the passages we've looked at this week speak volumes to God's abounding love and compassion. Why is it so important for the Galatians to hear this message? Why is it so important for us to hear this message?

An Exercise - Tracing Paul's Argument

Galatians is unique in Paul's surviving letters in that it is an extended argument against the Galatians acceptance of the requirement of circumcision. Paul addresses this controversy multiple times using several different lines of reasoning. Before getting in to the final two chapters, we want to take some time today to trace Paul's arguments throughout Galatians 1-4.

Read, or at least skim through, the first 4 chapters of Galatians, then take some time to reflect on these couple questions.

How would you summarize Paul's message to the Galatians from each chapter?

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

What topics or ideas does Paul repeat within chapters? Across chapters?

What different examples does Paul use? Which do you connect with the most and why?

What is the end result of Paul's argument so far? How does that prepare his audience for the conclusion of his argument?

Are there any questions you have about Paul's reasoning that have not yet been addressed?

Word Study - Freedom

After spending so much time discussing slavery, Paul turns to a discussion of freedom. It's an important idea that contrasts with his argument in chapter 4, and it is worthwhile to explore the word in other New Testament contexts.

Read

- 2 Corinthians 3:12-17 (1-17 if you have time)
- James 1:19-27 (some translations may use 'liberty' instead of freedom)

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- After reading these two passages, how would you define 'freedom'? How is the term understood by New Testament authors?
- With that in mind, how is Paul using the idea of freedom to further advance his argument with the Galatians?

Context Study - Leviticus 19

In Galatians 5:14, Paul quotes Leviticus 19 in his summary of the Law. The same passage is quoted elsewhere in the New Testament, and today we will look at the full passage to get a better idea of the context.

Read Leviticus 19:1-18

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- How does this passage help us better understand Paul's reasoning in Galatians?
- How is the whole Law fulfilled by Leviticus 19:18?

A Refresher on the Law in Scripture

A few weeks ago, we spent a couple days looking at how the Law is discussed in other places in the New Testament and in doing so got a better understanding of how those in the early Church understood the Law. Today we have one more resource to consider when exploring how the Law was treated in the first century.

Craig Blomberg, in his entry for Matthew in a Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament spends considerable time exploring how rabbinic writers interpreted Leviticus 19:18 and similar commands. Multiple writers found in the Dead Sea Scrolls address the command to 'love your neighbor as yourself,' often in ways that attempt to justify anger and vengeance.

The rabbinic literature likewise expands on the positive models of Exodus and the Hebrew Scriptures. Hillel summarizes the laws as a kind of a negative Golden Rule: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor; that is the whole Torah, while the rest is commentary." But the rabbis never formulate as sweeping and positive a love-command with respect to one's enemies as Jesus does (in Matthew 5:48). It is particularly telling, given the hundreds of early Tannaitic parables (Rabbinic teachings from 10-220CE), and given the fact that almost all of Jesus' stories find at least a partial parallel within the rabbinic Haggadah, that no parallel of any kind to the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-38) appears, with its dynamic of being treated lovingly by one's most hated enemy.

Craig Blomberg
Commentary on the New Testament
Use of the Old Testament, p.29

Questions for Reflection

- Why do you think there are so many records of other religious teachers wrestling with Leviticus 19:18 (and similar commands) and arriving at compromised conclusions?
- How might this relatively common practice have impacted the Galatians?

Video Resource - Law

The more we understand how Biblical authors understood the Law, the better equipped we are to approach scripture. The Bible Project has put together a video that provides an excellent overview of the Law and how it was intended to bless and guide.

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

Notes

Questions for Reflection

- How does this video further inform your understanding of what Paul was writing to the Galatians?

- What was the ultimate purpose of the Law? How was it misunderstood, both by the Biblical audiences and by modern audiences?

Reflection - The Role of the Spirit in the Law

Yes - we are still exploring the Law. As you've probably gathered in reading Galatians, Paul has a lot to say about the Law, and it's important for us to be well-versed in how New Testament writers understood the challenges and benefits of the Law for the Church.

N.T. Wright's book After You Believe is an incredible resource for further study on what a life in freedom might look like and how that reconciles with the Law. In addressing the continual need to give attention to the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5 (much like earlier God-lovers had to attend to the Law), Wright states:

...the conduct which Paul expects the Spirit to produce will not come by the Spirits' bypassing the mind, the will, the conscious choice of young Christians. They have to crucify the flesh. They have to be transformed by the renewal of their minds. Then, when they are 'led by the Spirit,' they will not be 'under the law'; but they will not be living in the romantic ideal of spontaneous, unreflective behavior either, any more than they will be blindly following a list of arbitrary rules. They will be discovering the true meaning of human 'freedom' (5:1, 13), the meaning for which humans were made in the first place, the meaning to which the Jewish Law pointed, but which they can attain only through dying and rising with the Messiah. They will be truly 'free,' walking on the high road that leads to that full authenticity which is the goal of Christian living. And the road consists of the Spirit-led practice...of the Christian virtues.

N.T. Wright, *After You Believe*, page 198

Question for Reflection

- In your study of Galatians, how have you grown to appreciate the relationship between the Law and the Spirit?

The Wrap-up - Galatians 6

As Paul wraps up his letter to the Galatians, his tone shifts to something more pastoral and encouraging, providing instruction to the Galatians on how to ultimately respond to his letter.

Read Galatians 5:16-6:18

Notes

Questions for Reflection:

- How is this section an expected and necessary conclusion to Paul's challenges in the rest of Galatians? How are you encouraged and challenged?

- Is there anything else that you find noteworthy in Galatians 6?

Context - 2 Corinthians 5

As with most writers, Paul carries some similar themes across much of his recorded work. The more you spend time with a particular author, the more likely you are to notice it. Today we turn to 2 Corinthians, another letter to a church that was facing serious challenges and divisions.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Notes

Questions for Reflection:

- How does this passage reflect the larger principles that Paul is teaching in Galatians?
- Are there other places in scripture where you see these themes? How do they challenge you in your practice of faith?

Reflection - Galatians 4

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 5

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?

Final Reflections - Galatians

To conclude our time in Paul's letter, we want to take one more chance to reflect.

How does Galatians fit in to the bigger story of scripture?

How have you been challenged by Paul's argument against the Law? How have you grown in your appreciation for the Law because of our time in Galatians?

How are you being called to respond to Galatians?

