

Galatians: Faith Formation in Centered-Set Community

Small Group Discussion Questions

Join our congregation for worship in-person or online at 10:30 am each Sunday via our [Grantham Church YouTube Channel](#). If you ever miss a message, the sermons are always posted to the recent sermons page at our website and at the Grantham Church Podcast the following day, along with the sermon slides and small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

Sunday, March 23rd, 2024



Series Focus: The Apostle Paul wrote a passionate letter to the churches in Galatia that has the potential to lead us to more profoundly experience the liberating work of Jesus in and through Christian community. Paul wrote, “My children—I seem to be in labor with you all over again, until the Messiah is fully formed in you!” Join us for Lent 2025 as we explore this letter to better understand the problem that provoked Paul to write it, and as we seek to gain new insights by using the concept of bounded, fuzzy, and centered-set churches as a lens for interpreting and applying Galatians to our lives.

Sermon Title: Belonging to Christ Through Faith

Scripture Reading: Genesis 12:3,15:6; Galatians 3:1-29; Ephesians 2:8-9

Sermon Focus: In Galatians chapter 3, Paul further explains the purpose of the law of Moses, how God’s covenant works, and how all disciples of Jesus can become children of God through faith in Christ. All of this is in keeping with Paul’s efforts to encourage these believers to embrace the gospel of God’s grace and move away from bounded thinking to a centered-set practice of community. In the third message of our series, Pastor David invites us to see how we can all belong to Christ and be one in him.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group. Use the following questions to help *guide* your small group discussion:

1. Begin by having someone read Galatians 3:1-29 aloud in your group. Paul moves from narrative to more instruction and responding to the arguments that were likely made by the Jewish agitators to convince the Galatians to join them in being bounded. What do you hear Paul saying? What is his main message about the law of Moses vs. the gospel of God's grace in Christ?
2. Paul contrasts bounded groups, whose identity is derived from circumcision and the works of the law, with the centered group, whose identity is derived from faith in Christ. If Paul was going to write a letter to our American context today, what are some bounded groups he would list? What are different ways he would complete this phrase: their identity is derived from _____?
3. What are ways that you have felt the *pull* of bounded thinking in your own life and to turn the way of Jesus into a bounded group within the church?
4. How do you think you individually can increase a centered-group identity in Jesus and decrease a bounded group identity? And what might that look like at Grantham Church with our church family, which is diverse generationally, politically, and socio-economically? Who are the people and what are the issues that we might be tempted to be bounded in our thinking?
5. Read Galatians 3:28 aloud again. What kind of people or groups are unlikely to sit together at the same table at our Fellowship Meals? Based on that, imagine a re-write of Galatians 3:28 that Paul might send to Grantham Church. Who are the different people and groups he might mention in his list?
6. Pastor David has said before that he looks out and sees various groups of people spread out in the sanctuary (e.g., long-time Grantham/BIC members, One80 folks, academics, college students, etc.). As you look around the sanctuary on Sunday morning, have you considered what it might say about you and our church when you think about *where* you sit and *who* you sit with in worship? Is it possible that this tells us we need to be more intentional with being a centered church where our identity and friendships are rooted in Christ? Do you think our own comfort keeps us from broadening our relationships?
7. What is God saying to you through this message? How is the Holy Spirit inviting you to respond? Have each person respond with a sentence or two before you close in prayer for an increase of centered-set community at Grantham Church.