

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 9th, 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: No Other Gospel

Scripture Reading: Galatians 1:1-24; Acts 9:1-19; Ephesians 2:8-9

Sermon Focus: Paul is upset, and it shows! What has provoked his passionate letter to the churches in Galatia? Paul planted the churches in that region. And not long after, his work and the fragile faith of these Gentile Christians are being threatened by a "good news" that is different than the one he gave them. In the first message of our series, Pastor David shares historical context, guides us through chapter 1, and invites us to embrace God's gospel of grace that makes centered-set community possible.

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 1:1-24 aloud in your group. This is how the Christians in Galatians would have received Paul's letter; someone would have read the letter to the church. As you listen, can you hear Paul's tone? Why is he so upset? And what is your initial reaction to his words?
2. For the Galatians, their unity and freedom in Christ was being threatened by a "different gospel" than the one Paul had preached to them—a gospel of God's grace rather than the bounded, law-based approach of those other missionaries. What do you make of this other gospel that was leading the Galatians astray? Also, is there a "different gospel" alive in America today? If so, what is it?
3. Think back to the images of bounded, fuzzy, and centered-set communities? The Galatians were being led to believe that they should be a bounded-set church in personal and corporate church practice? What is attractive about being in a bounded community? And why is it ultimately unhealthy and not conducive to the sort of church community that Christ wants for his people?
4. Think back to the slide that compared the gospel of Jesus with the false gospel? Which gospel did you grow up hearing? Which gospel are you believing now? How is God calling you to believe and live into the gospel of Jesus?
5. Being "bounded" in our thinking and church practice isn't just a conservative fundamentalist problem. It's a human problem. You can find bounded thinking among theological and political liberals as well. So, ask yourself, is there any bounded-set thinking in me that distorts my view of God and leads to fear, judgmentalism, belittling those I don't like or agree with, and excluding others?
6. Read Ephesians 2:8-9 silently to yourself and then have someone read it aloud. How do you think it is that we can so freely receive the grace of God for ourselves but not be so willing to extend it to others? Are there ways that God is inviting you to show more grace to people in our church? Be specific.
7. Do you think Grantham is more reflective of a bounded, fuzzy, or centered-set church community? How can we become *more* centered-set? And finally, take the time to pray over this and the things that have come up in conversation.