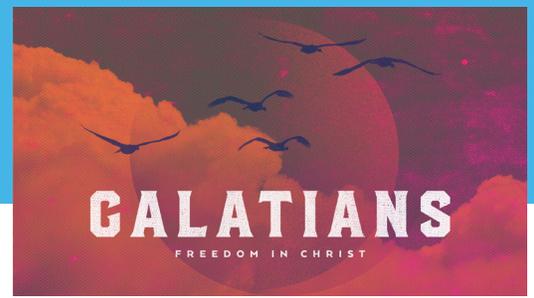


Discussion Questions

February 15, 2026



Jesus + Anything = Nothing - Galatians 1:1-9

In this opening message of our Galatians series, we looked at the Apostle Paul's frantic letter to a group of early house churches. Using the imagery of a Southwest flight plummeting toward the ocean, we saw that Paul is sounding a spiritual "PULL UP" alarm. The Galatians were deserting the grace of Jesus for a "Gospel Plus" — adding religious rules and cultural requirements to their faith. Paul reminds us that the Gospel is a rescue from the "present evil age" — the age of sin, performance, and death — into the new creation that has already begun through Jesus' death and resurrection. We cannot assist the Surgeon in saving us; we can only surrender to His finished work.

1. The sermon opened with the story of a cockpit emergency where the pilots were "flying blind" until an alarm sounded. Have you ever had a moment, spiritually, where you didn't realize how much danger you were in until someone or something sounded a wake-up call?
2. Read Galatians 1:1-5
Paul packs enormous theology into his greeting. What stands out to you about how he describes Jesus' work in verse 4, particularly the word "rescue" and the phrase "present evil age"? How does viewing the Gospel as a rescue mission change the way we see our salvation compared to a self-improvement plan?
3. Read Galatians 1:6-7
Paul says the Galatians are "deserting the one who called you." He doesn't say they're changing their theology, he says they're abandoning a person. Why does that distinction matter?
4. The phrase "so quickly" in verse 6 echoes Exodus 32:7-8, where Israel made the golden calf right after their Red Sea deliverance. Why do you think Paul reached for that particular Old Testament moment? What does it reveal about how people tend to respond to God's rescue?
5. Read Galatians 1:8-9
Paul pronounces a double curse on anyone, even himself or an angel, who preaches a different gospel. Why do you think Paul was this intense? Is he being mean, or is something deeper at stake?

What would be modern equivalents of this today?
6. The sermon mentioned that we often try to create "Gospel 2.0" by adding things to Jesus (e.g., Jesus + Politics, Jesus + Wellness, Jesus + Financial Success). In your own life or in our culture, what is the most common "Plus" you see added to the Gospel? What temptation do you face to "help God" save you?
7. The sermon used the image of a patient on an operating table trying to grab the scalpel to help the surgeon. Why is it so hard for us to simply "surrender" and let God do the work? Why does our pride prefer to "assist" in the surgery?

8. Read Galatians 1:10. Paul uses the word “still,” “If I were still trying to please people.” That word suggests he remembers what it felt like to chase human approval. Where in your own life do you feel the pull to perform for the approval of others, and how does the gospel speak to that pressure?
9. James quoted Dallas Willard: “Grace is not opposed to effort; grace is opposed to earning.” How does that distinction land for you? What does it look like practically to do the “rehab” after surgery, pursuing spiritual growth and obedience, without turning it into a way of earning God’s approval?
10. Paul suggests the antidote to this performance trap is the Holy Spirit. James encouraged a discipline of praying “Come, Holy Spirit” when the pressure hits. What does it look like practically to rely on the Holy Spirit when falling into any kind of performance trap or shame cycle?

Galatians 1:1-9 (NLT)

This letter is from Paul, an apostle. I was not appointed by any group of people or any human authority, but by Jesus Christ himself and by God the Father, who raised Jesus from the dead. All the brothers and sisters here join me in sending this letter to the churches of Galatia.

May God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. Jesus gave his life for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live. All glory to God forever and ever! Amen.

I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ. Let God's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed.

**Galatians 1:6 (NLT)**

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you...

Galatians 1:1 (NIV)

Paul, an apostle, sent not from men nor by a man but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead...

Galatians 1:3-4 (NIV)

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age...

Galatians 1:6 (NIV)

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel...

Exodus 32:7-8 (ESV)

Go down, for your people have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf...

Galatians 1:6 (NIV)

..the **one who called you** to live in the grace of Christ...

Galatians 1:6-7 (NIV)

[you] are turning to a different gospel, which is really no gospel at all.

John Stott

"The popular view is that there are many different ways to God and that the gospel changes with the changing years... But Paul insists there is only one gospel and that this gospel does not change. Any teaching that claims to be 'another gospel' is no gospel at all... The message of the false teachers was not an alternative gospel; it was a perverted gospel."

Galatians 1:8-9 (NIV)

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

"under God's Curse" = anathema

"devoted to destruction"

Jesus + anything = Nothing

Salvation is not a partnership or a group project. It is a rescue.

We don't assist Jesus, we must surrender.

Dallas Willard:

"Grace is not opposed to effort, Grace is opposed to earning."

Galatians 1:10 (NIV)

Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

- Do not let your feelings or desires shape truth, instead let the truth of Scripture shape our desires."

- If you have to "adjust" Jesus to make Him vote like you, Act like you, or agree with you, That is not the Gospel. That is just a mirror.

What is my Gospel Plus?

Pray, "Come Holy Spirit"