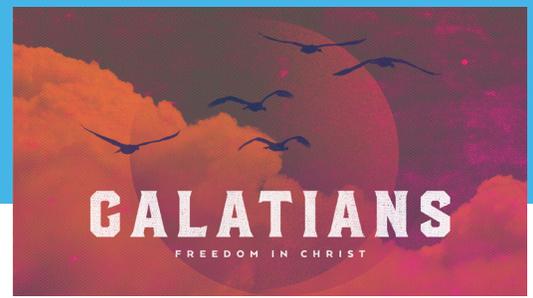


Discussion Questions

February 22, 2026



Galatians 1:11-24 - Ambushed By Grace

In week three of our Freedom in Christ series, we dive into Galatians chapter 1 verses 11 through 24, where Paul uses his own life as undeniable evidence that his Gospel came directly from God. Before encountering Christ, Paul was not a failure. He was the zealous, highly accomplished top performer of his generation. However, he was trapped in a False Story, an echo chamber that justified violent holy hate in the name of protecting God's honor. On the Damascus Road, God interrupted Paul's life not just with new information, but with new sight, proving that grace is not just for the undeserving, but for those who actively deserve the exact opposite. The sermon challenged us to examine the false narratives we might be living in today. Whether the Performance Story, the Tribe Story, or the quiet belief that God is disappointed in us, we are called to let the Spirit shatter those lies with the truth that God actively delights in us.

1. In the sermon, the movie Tangled was used to illustrate living in a "False Story" that feels safe but is actually a prison. Have you ever believed something about yourself or the world for a long time, only to realize it wasn't true? What was it like when that story fell apart?

2. Read Galatians 1:13–14. Paul describes himself as "zealous," which in his first century context carried violent connotations of being a culture warrior protecting God's honor. How does understanding this background change how we view his actions, and what does his story reveal about the danger of letting your community's definition of faithfulness go unquestioned?

3. Read Galatians 1:15–16 and compare it to verses 13–14. Notice the shift in the subject of the verbs from "I was persecuting... I was advancing..." to "God set apart... God called... God was pleased... God revealed." Why is that shift so important, and what does it tell us about how real transformation actually happens?

4. Paul says God "was pleased" to reveal His Son in him, meaning God took actual joy in saving someone who was actively trying to destroy the church. Why do we so often default to the quiet false story that God is merely tolerating us or is disappointed in us, rather than believing He delights in us?

5. The sermon described three "False Stories" we can get trapped in: the Performance Story (my value comes from what I produce), the Tribe Story (my identity comes from who I am for or against), and the Disappointment Story (the quiet belief that God is tired of me or I've used up my welcome). Which of these do you find yourself drifting toward most, and what are the warning signs that you're getting trapped in it?

6. Paul was living in an echo chamber that told him his hate was holy. We see this same “us vs. them” dynamic everywhere today. Is there someone in your life, or a group in our culture, that you have quietly written off as an enemy? What would it look like to cultivate a Kingdom imagination and start praying for them, just as Stephen prayed for Paul?

7. Read Galatians 1:23–24. The early churches didn’t praise Paul for turning his life around. They glorified God, because the transformation was unexplainable otherwise. As we close, what false story is the Spirit trying to shatter in you right now, and what would it look like to let Him?

Galatians 1:11-18,22-24 (NLT)

11 Dear brothers and sisters, I want you to understand that the gospel message I preach is not based on mere human reasoning. 12 I received my message from no human source, and no one taught me. Instead, I received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ.

13 You know what I was like when I followed the Jewish religion - how I violently persecuted God's church. I did my best to destroy it. 14 I was far ahead of my fellow Jews in my zeal for the traditions of my ancestors.

15 But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvelous grace. Then it pleased him 16 to reveal his Son to me so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles.

When this happened, I did not rush out to consult with any human being. 17 Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went away into Arabia, and later I returned to the city of Damascus.

18 Then three years later I went to Jerusalem to get to know Peter, and I stayed with him for fifteen days...

22 And still the churches in Christ that are in Judea didn't know me personally. 23 All they knew was that people were saying, "The one who used to persecute us is now preaching the very faith he tried to destroy!" 24 And they praised God because of me.

Galatians 1:11-12 (NIV)

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is NOT of human origin. I did NOT receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ."

Galatians 1:13-14 (NIV)

For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers."

Galatians 1:14 (NIV)

I was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Galatians 1:15-16 (NIV)

But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me, so that I might preach him among the Gentiles...

Galatians 1:16 (NIV)

..by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me"

Galatians 1:15 (NIV)

But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace...

Arthur Pink

Grace is not just for the undeserving. It is for those who are thoroughly ill-deserving and Hell-deserving.

Galatians 1:16–19 (NIV)

I did NOT immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles, only James, the Lord's brother.

Galatians 1:23–24 (NIV)

They only heard the report: 'The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.' And they glorified God because of me.

Paul says...

"My life is the evidence of the reality of the Gospel"

The Performance Story**The Tribe Story**

- We feel more and more certain and become less and less like Jesus.
- Who have you stopped seeing as someone made in the image of God and started seeing as just an obstacle or an enemy?
- Is there a hardness that you have justified because you are on the right side?
- Paul's story tells us that holy hate is still hate.

The "God is Disappointed" Story**"It pleased Him"**

What false story is the Spirit trying to shatter in you?