

Explosive Grace

Study in Paul's Letter to the Galatians Session 1: Introduction & Greeting

I. Introductions and Prayer

- a. Introductions
- b. Teaser: Have you ever caused someone to worry because you were late getting home? When you came home safely, what was their response?
- c. Prayer

II. Knowing the Galatians

- a. Where were they?
- b. Who were they?
- c. Who were they to Paul?
- d. When were they?
- e. How would they have heard this letter?

III. Words to watch for

- a. Brothers (*adelphoi*) — not gender exclusive in their thought, *the family of God*
- b. Church (*ecclesia*) — lit. *the called out*
- c. Grace (*charis*) — related to the words for gift and joy 😊
- d. Peace (*eirene*) — in Paul's mind, carries the importance of *justice*
- e. Gospel/Good News (*euangelia*) — note angel is part of it
- f. Astonished (*thaumazo*) — as in struck and stunned, a-mazed (confused)

IV. Reading Galatians 1:1–9

V. Questions for Reflection

- a. Watch the pronouns! How does Paul link himself and the Galatians?
- b. What is Jesus' involvement in Paul's life and the lives of the believers in Galatia?
- c. Why does Paul think Jesus' sacrifice is effective?
- d. How are faith and works in tension? Can you have one without the other?

VI. Why does this matter?

- a. What are some ways our society tries to sell us on "works righteousness?"
- b. Where in our lives do we listen to society about this? What would change if we listened to God?
- c. Does it change anything that the folks who are teaching that they have to observe Jewish Law are also Christians? Can you reflect on the Christians that have challenged your faith perhaps inappropriately? How did you deal with those challenges in your life?
- d. How does God's grace change the equation for the church? For you and me? For our society?

Galatians 1:1–9

¹ From Paul—an apostle sent not by any group or individual, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead—²and all the family of God who are with me. To the churches in Galatia.

³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ Who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen!

⁶ I am shocked that you are so quickly deserting the One Who called you by the grace of Christ, and are turning to a different “good news”—⁷ which is really no good news at all. Evidently, some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to distort/twist the Good News of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a “good news” other than the one we preached to you, let them be eternally condemned! ⁹ I said it before and I will say it again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted as Good News, that person should be condemned to hell.

Translation by Rev. Doug Gray