



SERMON STUDY GUIDE

“Experiencing Grace”

For the sermon preached on 10/20:

“Grace Alone”

From the text:

Galatians 1:1-10

How to use the Groups Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture—study that leads to practicing “the way of Jesus”

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method. In summary, this method stresses “**Observation**” (what the reader can see from the text), “**Interpretation**” (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and “**Application**” (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group. It’s recommended that you rephrase the questions to match your voice and have an understanding of the interpretive questions as you prepare to lead and facilitate.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the LC Team

In our series, “Experiencing Grace,” we are diving into the book of Galatians. In this epistle, we see Paul teaching his readers of the utmost importance of the concept of grace (which makes it a fitting text on our year’s theme).

Paul visited the southern part of Turkey during his second missionary journey, and founded sets of these Christian faith communities. In the years since, he has discovered that some of these churches have allowed bad theology and false teachings to undermine the gospel he was preaching. And so he writes to them in hopes of setting them straight.

1 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— ²and all the brothers and sisters with me,

To the churches in Galatia:

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

⁶I 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— ⁷which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸But 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! ⁹As 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!

¹⁰Am 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.

Galatians 1:1-10

O – There’s a good bit to unpack in the introduction alone. As you re-read the passage in your own Bible or on a device, note what jumps at you and what tone do you feel Paul is taking with his friends in the Galatian churches? (Give your group a few minutes time to read the passage before moving to the questions.)

O – In verses 6-7, why is Paul so astonished by the Galatians and what does he accuse them of being guilty of?

Bridging the context:

The setting of these Galatian churches is central south Turkey during the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius (early 50’s A.D). Most of the region worships one or other of the local gods or goddesses while some have started to worship the emperor himself. In addition, there is also a significant minority of Jews, with their own synagogue. Combined with the Roman imperial cult and the pagan idolatry and wickedness, those trying to adhere to the rules of Moses are looking to add to their numbers in any way possible. So new converts to Christianity are a desirable target for them. And they swoop in and add contrary teachings to what the Apostle Paul had taught them. *

I – After 5 short verses of introduction, Paul jumps right in to the point of his message and he pointedly tells them that they have deserted the true gospel, they are confused, and that the gospel has been perverted. Why do you think Paul has chosen to take on this forceful approach?

(It's so important that we understand Paul as he likely saw himself – he identifies himself as an apostle, whose definition is literally "sent one" and he is certain that he has been sent by God. Secondly, he sees himself as their spiritual guide and guardian and they are off the track and under serious attack by false teachings. And so he must get their attention immediately).

I/A – Pastor Bryan brought up that the language of verse 4 is the idea of Jesus rescuing us from our sins. Bryan used the illustration of the young soccer team in Thailand that was rescued. Have you ever been rescued or been a part of a rescue? And what comes to your mind as you think of rescue?

A – The central point of these 10 verses is Paul calling out that someone has deceived you and altered the original message of Christ's gospel to you. In so many words, he chides them that in the future, do not to listen to anyone who says contrary, even an angel from heaven! This sets up two questions for us: First, as you came to Christian faith, were there any wrong teachings that you tripped over? How did you realize they were untrue and how did you find your way back. Second, how can we insure that we don't fall into the trap of false teachings?

A - Bryan finished his message by telling a story of how a stranger showed him grace after he backed into his nice car. How have you been shown a similar moment of grace and how can we be ready to show others the grace of Jesus in our everyday lives?

* Paraphrased from: Wright, T. (2004). Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians (pp. 4–5). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

- a. Please note that not all these questions might be able to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your group the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your group.
- b. Complement these questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.

- e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.