

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

Instructor: Antipas Desai

Time: Saturdays 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM ET

Class Size: No limit on the number of participants

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Paul's epistle to the Galatians is the most severe of his epistles. In no other epistle does he call the recipients of his epistles "foolish." In no other epistle does he publicly rebuke two of his fellow apostles, and subtly implicate a third. In no other epistle does he refer to certain brothers as "false," smuggled in to "spy out" the "freedom" that others enjoyed in Christ. In no other epistle does he call these ones "dogs." Who were these people? How did they exercise such a strong influence on the churches? What provoked Paul's ire? Join us as we embark on a nine week journey to diagnose the spiritual malady that afflicted not only one church, but a cluster of churches, that threatened to pervert the true gospel of Jesus Christ, and reduce the Christian faith to a sect of Judaism. The epistle to the Galatians is a catalyst that determines the direction and continuity of the Christian faith. It is the first of the four seminal epistles of Paul (Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians), known as the "heart of the divine revelation." Without Galatians, we would not have the adequate revelation of the church (Ephesians). Nor the proper experience of Christ (Philippians), nor the proper revelation of the headship of Christ (Colossians). If Paul's epistle to the Romans gives us a clear definition of the law and faith, and their respective roles, his epistle to the Galatians goes deeper to lead us into the condition of churches which had begun by the regeneration of the Spirit through faith in Christ, and had been "bewitched" into attempting to live the Christian life by their own works, and the disastrous consequence of living a life of the flesh.

This is a one year (two semester) course, each semester (Fall and Winter) comprising nine weeks. Having examined the first three chapters during the Fall Semester, we will examine the last three chapters during the Winter Semester, with a recap of the first three chapters.

SYLLABUS (WEEK BY WEEK)

Following the chapters in the Epistle to the Galatians:

Week 1: Chapter 4:1-7: No longer children, or slaves, under the law, but sons and heirs, having received the Spirit of sonship, or adoption.

Week 2: Chapter 4:8-20: The labor and birth pangs of the apostle, that Christ be formed in the sons of God and heirs through the promise.

Week 3: Chapter 4:21-31: Two women, two covenants and two sons, the constant contention between them, and the resolution.

Week 4: Chapter 5:1-9: Standing fast in the freedom for which Christ has set us free, through faith operating through love, and believing and obeying the truth.

Weeks 5: Chapter 5:10-18: The freedom in Christ, not to indulge the flesh, but to serve one another through love, walking by the Spirit and being led by the Spirit.

Week 6: Chapter 5:19-26: The works of the flesh versus the fruit of the Spirit; living and walking by the Spirit and the crucifixion of the flesh with its passions and lusts.

Week 7: Chapter 6:1-6: The manifestation of the walk of the Spirit: the restoration of the fallen believer, bearing one another's burdens, bearing one's own burden, the sharing of all good things with him who instructs in the word.

Week 8: Chapter 6:7-13: Sowing unto the flesh versus sowing unto the Spirit; the consequent reaping of such a sowing, demonstrated either in a boasting of the flesh, or in a boasting of the cross of Christ, through which the entire world has been crucified to us, and we to the world.

Week 9: Chapter 6:14-18; The new creation, walking by the new creation, and the Israel of God.

COURSE OBJECTIVE

As believers in Christ, we begin our Christian life by being born of the Spirit and justified by faith in Christ alone. However, all of us still tend to seek to attain God's standard of righteousness by our own efforts. We fail to realize that Christ has already done all the work necessary, and that we have been justified, once for all, through faith in God's Son. God's good pleasure is to reveal His Son in us, not to give us an outline of how to improve our Christian life, or how to be a holier and more righteous Christian. Many of us fall into this trap. This course will endeavor to unlock the secret of living a life of the Spirit, and no

longer a life of trying to be a “good brother” or a “good sister,” or trying to do all the “right things.” This does not mean that we are passive, waiting for the Lord to do everything. On the contrary, Galatians unveils a living according to the Spirit, and a function according to vision and burden, which strives to please the Lord, and not man or the church. Our living is not even a living to please the church, or satisfy any systematic standards imposed by ourselves or any institution, but rather solely unto the Lord and for His good pleasure.

RESOURCES

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, The Bible

STRUCTURE

Lecture with a 10-15 minute question/discussion period

HOMEWORK

Participants will be expected to invest 30 minutes each week in reading assigned verses and giving short answers to assigned questions. Group work is encouraged. Some questions may ask participants to share their thoughts in the discussion period, thus facilitating group discussion.

The timing and content of this class has been specially considered in view of participation of saints from Africa. For those from Africa who wish to join, please register through the church in Accra or the church in Kampala. Even though this class has been designed with Africa in view, all saints from everywhere are welcome to join them. All other registration is still through this website.