



SUMMER IN GALATIANS

Welcome to the summer prayer walk! We are thrilled to be journeying through Galatians with you this summer. Over these stations you'll find passages from the first 3 chapters of Galatians (come back for chapters 4-6 during the second half of the summer) as well as some ways to meditate, pray, and incorporate these scriptures in your life!

OBTVIOUSLY, I'M NOT TRYING TO WIN
THE APPROVAL OF PEOPLE, BUT OF
GOD. IF PLEASING PEOPLE WERE
MY GOAL, I WOULD NOT BE
CHRIST'S SERVANT.

Galatians 1:10

Paul was someone, even before he met Jesus, who always passionately pursued the things he felt God cared about most. Now, before he met

Christ, he was mistaken about what that was, but nevertheless, he zealously pursued it. Paul always seemed like the kind of person who always said what he felt and did what he thought was right, no matter the consequence or what others thought about it... so it makes sense that Paul would start this sentence with the word, "obviously". I would imagine for you and me, it might be a little less obvious. Any fellow people pleasers out there? While it seems that this came naturally for Paul, if you're like me, we really need to make a conscious effort to live our lives with the motivation to honor God alone and not seek the approval of others. I'm not sure how this plays out in your life; I think it's different for each of us. Maybe it is buying stuff you think will impress people and keep up with "the American Dream". Maybe it is wrapped up in your physical appearance or accomplishments. Or maybe, for you, pleasing people is simply saying YES to everything. No matter what it is, I think we need to step back and ask ourselves, "who am I doing this for?" I also think it is important to note that Paul is not saying we shouldn't care about how people feel. This isn't permission to go around "just telling it like it is" without regard to others thoughts, opinions, or feelings...it is simply a call to make our GOAL to be more about honoring God and less about pleasing others.

DEAR GOD:

Help me to seek to honor you, above all else. Help me to see myself the way you see me, so I'll be less inclined to seek the approval of others.

Reveal to me the areas I have been more concerned with what people think of me. The desire of my heart is to be your servant and to bring you glory on earth. Grant me the power to keep pursuing that with my life.

AMEN.

I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND
THAT THE GOSPEL MESSAGE I PREACH IS NOT
BASED ON MERE HUMAN UNDERSTANDING. I RECEIVED
MY MESSAGE FROM NO HUMAN SOURCE, AND NO ONE
TAUGHT ME. INSTEAD, I RECEIVED IT BY DIRECT
REVELATION FROM JESUS CHRIST.

Galatians 1: 11-12

At first glance, it seems odd that Paul's plan to obtain validity in his message is to say,

"I've never been taught, and my message isn't

reasonable." Not usually a good thing to put on a resumé. However, if I was going to come up with a message about God that made sense to me (a human) it would most likely be based on doing good to receive a reward. That makes sense to me; it's what I was taught in school, it's how I parent, and it has great moral implications. In fact, this message (do good, work hard, get reward) is pretty much the message of most religions in the world. BUT the message of Jesus is different. And that is because, as Paul said, it isn't based on human understanding. Grace isn't reasonable. Every other message we hear is "what have you done to get to God?" but the message of Jesus is, "what has God done to get to you?" Wow! Isn't that so amazing when you sit back and think about it? No more earning. No more striving. No more feeling not good enough. Jesus' sacrifice is SUFFICIENT. Earning and striving are exhausting. Spend some time meditating on these words from Jesus. "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life...Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely + lightly."

MATTHEW 11:28-30 (MSG)

DEAR GOD:

Thank you that your ways are not my ways and your thoughts are not my thoughts. Thank you for all that you've done for me. I believe your sacrifice is sufficient for me. Teach me the unforced rhythms of grace and help me to live lightly and freely.

AMEN.

INSTEAD, THEY SAW THAT GOD HAD GIVEN ME THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES, JUST AS HE HAD GIVEN PETER THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE JEWS. AS THE APOSTLE TO THE JEWS ALSO WORKED THROUGH ME AS THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES.

Galatians 2:7-8

God gives different appointments to

different people. Peter was tasked with

telling Jewish people the message of Christ, and Paul

was tasked with sharing the same message with the Gentiles (basically

everyone else). Now, they didn't always agree (as seen in the very next verses) but

they appreciated the role each other played in the mission of spreading the Gospel of Jesus.

Isn't it so great how unique and different we all are? God has shaped and equipped each one

of us differently so we can reach different types of people because there is room for everyone

in God's family.

How do you think God has equipped you? Who has God called and shaped you to share the message of Jesus with? Sometimes the answer is obvious...the people right in front of you! The other parents at your kids' school, your co-workers, your surfing or golf buddies, the other regulars at your favorite coffee shop. Other times, God burdens our hearts for a specific group of people. Is that the case for you? Maybe it's teenagers or kids? Maybe it's the poor or those down on their luck? Those who need to be shown a little dignity? Perhaps it's an entire country that God has laid on your heart. We all have an audience and we all have influence.

DEAR GOD:

Who have you put in my path or on my heart that you want me to reach out to? Break my heart for the people you love. Is there a specific group you'd like me to start praying for? I am here and I am willing to be used for your glory and to spread your message of love to the world.

AMEN.

MY OLD SELF HAS BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST. IT IS NO LONGER I WHO LIVE, BUT CHRIST LIVES IN ME. SO I LIVE IN THIS EARTHLY BODY BY TRUSTING IN THE SON OF GOD, WHO LOVED ME AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME.

Galatians 2:20

What a rich and powerful passage of scripture. If you've been around church a while, these words from Paul are probably pretty familiar. Although they are well-known words, we can spend a lifetime wrestling with them and working out what they mean in our lives. As we read it, this verse gives us three pictures of what it means to live our lives with Christ:

WE LIVE A SURRENDERED LIFE.

When we choose to follow Jesus, we choose to leave our old selves behind. And while there is so much freedom in that, there is also an element of sacrifice. We choose to think of ourselves less and choose to live for God's glory.

WE LIVE AN EXCHANGED LIFE.

Jesus loves you and gave himself for you. Anything we "give up" in our life with Christ pales in comparison to life we've gained through this great exchange. We are new. We are loved. We are made whole. We get the power of Christ living in us.

WE LIVE A TRUSTING LIFE.

Because of His love and sacrifice, He has proved himself trustworthy. We get to live our lives in a way that isn't about following the rules, but about acknowledging God's way as the best way and choosing to follow Him.

DEAR GOD:

Thank you for loving me. Thank you, Jesus, for taking my place and for giving yourself up for me. I know it's a debt I could never repay. Remind me that my old self was crucified with you...that I no longer am bound to who I used to be. Remind me that you are living in me and help me to trust you all the days of my life.

AMEN.

HOW FOOLISH CAN YOU BE? AFTER STARTING
YOUR NEW LIVES IN THE SPIRIT, WHY ARE YOU
NOW TRYING TO BECOME PERFECT BY YOUR
OWN HUMAN EFFORT?

Galatians 3:3

Wow. Paul is really cutting to the heart of the matter here! It may seem harsh to call the Galatians foolish, but think about it this way:

Imagine you are Spiderman. (stick with me) You really need to get up to the roof of a skyscraper. Maybe there's someone who needs your help...or maybe there's just a really swanky rooftop restaurant up there. No matter the reason, you are Spiderman, so how do you get up there? Do you take the stairs? Um, NO! That would be foolish!

That is essentially Paul's point here. We have been given an incredible power when we received the Holy Spirit. It is even better than shooting webs out of our wrists. The Holy Spirit has the ability to transform our lives. In fact, He is working on your heart right now as you're reading this! We have already been declared righteous through what Jesus has done for us, so we don't need to take matters into our own hands anymore. Stop taking the stairs! Rely on the Holy Spirit to change you from the inside out! After all, changing our behaviors in order to be more perfect is only a temporary solution. You don't need new behaviors, you need a new heart, and only the Spirit can do that. "And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart."

EZEKIEL 36:26

DEAR GOD:

Thank you for removing my stubborn heart and replacing it with a tender heart. Continue to work on it, that I might become more like you.

Remind me when I fall back into trying to become perfect by my own human effort. Help me to listen to your Spirit and follow your leading.

AMEN.

WHY, THEN, WAS THE LAW GIVEN?
IT WAS GIVEN ALONGSIDE THE PROMISE TO SHOW PEOPLE THEIR
SINS. BUT THE LAW WAS DESIGNED TO LAST ONLY UNTIL THE COMING OF
THE CHILD WHO WAS PROMISED... IS THERE A CONFLICT, THEN, BETWEEN
GOD'S LAW AND GOD'S PROMISES? ABSOLUTELY NOT! IF THE LAW
COULD GIVE US NEW LIFE, WE COULD BE MADE RIGHT WITH GOD BY
OBEYING IT. BUT THE SCRIPTURES DECLARE THAT WE ARE ALL
PRISONERS OF SIN, SO WE RECEIVE GOD'S PROMISE OF FREEDOM
ONLY BY BELIEVING IN JESUS CHRIST. Galatians 3:19,21-22

Why was the law given?

Before the promised coming of Jesus, the law

(Jewish rules and cultural customs) is what made the Jewish people holy.

The word "holy" means set apart. The law is what set the people of God apart from the rest of the world. The world knew the Jews were the people of God by how they followed the law.

However, as we know, it also pointed out how much the people constantly fell short of God's glorious standards. When Jesus came and offered a whole new way to be right with God, it should have been obvious to anyone with humility that they needed a new way. That the law was never going to give them new life. After all, we all were prisoners of sin. If we are honest in the deep places of our hearts, we know this.

It is interesting now, that Jesus says in John 13:35, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." What a great new way to be set apart. Another great exchange. From the law to love.

DEAR GOD:

I know I couldn't live up to the standards of the law. Thank you so much for freedom. Thank you for lifting the weight off my shoulders. I could never create a new life on my own. Thank you for making a new way and for lifting me out of the bondage of sin.

AMEN.

FOR YOU ARE ALL CHILDREN
OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS. AND
ALL WHO HAVE BEEN UNITED WITH CHRIST IN BAPTISM
HAVE PUT ON CHRIST, LIKE PUTTING ON NEW CLOTHES.
THERE IS NO LONGER JEW OR GENTILE, SLAVE OR
FREE, MALE AND FEMALE. FOR YOU ARE ALL ONE IN
CHRIST JESUS. Galatians 3:26-28

What great news! We

are all children of God! We have been

UNITED with Christ. The truth found in these verses not only

changes how I relate to God, but also how I relate to others. Because of what

Christ has done, not only am in right standing with God, but I also no longer have to walk

through life alone. I now have family...and is an incredibly amazing and diverse family! Since I

have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes, I have brothers and sisters who look different,

think different, and act different than me, yet we are united by the grace of God through faith

in Jesus. I'm not sure what your earthly family looks like...Maybe it was a life-giving group of

people where you learned how to love and belong. Or maybe it is a source of heartbreak and

pain. No matter what your earthly family looks like, you don't need to go through life alone.

You weren't meant to do that! God wants you to be a part of his family! We may not look alike,

and we may not always get along, but we have been adopted into this royal family and there is

room for you at the table! So pull up a chair and dig in.

DEAR GOD:

Thank you that you don't want me to go through life alone. Thank you for my spiritual family. Thank you that you call me a daughter or a son. Help me to see others the way you see them. Help me to welcome in those who are different than me. Knit our hearts together and bring oneness to our family!

AMEN.