

# FOUNDATIONAL

## THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church  
Galatians 3.15-29 | October 10, 2021

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### I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our series *Foundational*, engaging one of the – if not, the – earliest letter written in the Christian Scriptures. In the verses before us in this study, Paul continues to reveal how Jesus' life, death, and resurrection fulfills the promises of God spoken to Abraham 2,000 years prior.

### II. Connecting with One Another

Think back to a time when you were promised something. Did you receive it?  
Did it occur the way you thought it would?

### III. Study the Text

#### a. Read **Galatians 3.15-18**.

Paul continues to clarify that the good news of grace is not something we must earn, but is instead a gift from God. In these verses, he uses "an example from everyday life." What is his example?

#### b. In **Galatians 3.1-5** Paul offered a *personal* argument, in **3.6-14** he gave a *Scriptural* argument. In a way, his example in **3.15-29** is a *logical* argument. He is "reasoning with his readers on the basis of what a covenant is and how a covenant works." The word "covenant" could also be translated *will*. As in, a "last will and testament." Reread **verses 15-18**, inserting "will" every time you see "covenant."

How does that help you understand Paul's "logical" argument?

#### c. According to these verses, why doesn't obeying the law save us?

#### d. Read **Galatians 3.19-25**.

This may seem like a confusing passage. What do you think Paul is seeking to communicate?

#### e. If the giving of the law did not add to or subtract from the promises given to Abraham, why was it given?

#### f. What evidence do you see in our world today that everything is "under the control of sin"? (**verse 22**)

#### g. In **verse 23**, we read that "we were held in custody under the law, locked up." This passage includes two similar Greek words: *phroureō*, which means "to protect by military guards," and *sungkleiō*, which means "kept under restraint."



Why do you think Paul says that we were “in custody” and “locked up” under the law? How does this relate to being “under the control of sin”?

h. How does understanding the demands of God’s law help us realize our need for forgiveness in Jesus?

i. Read **Galatians 3.26-29**.

How does your translation render verse 26? Does it say “children” or “sons”?

Many translations include the word “sons,” which seems chauvinistic or patriarchal. But this is not the case. While it is obviously the case that we are God’s “sons and daughters” (**Isaiah 43.6**) and His children (**Ezekiel 16.21**), Paul intentionally uses the word “sons” here. Why? Because Paul is intending to speak about inheritance, which, in Paul’s day, was reserved for sons.

In other words, “Paul was actually being very counter-cultural for his day. According to 3.28 the full rights of a son, including the full inheritance, are granted to all who belong to Christ, regardless of whether they are male or female.”

j. A number of passages use the metaphor of clothing (see, for instance, **Isaiah 64.6** and **Colossians 3.8-15**). But for the Galatians, **verse 27** carries an even deeper meaning. When Roman children came of age, they would remove childhood garments and instead wear the toga of an adult citizen.

What, then, does our “adulthood” imply about being clothed by faith in Christ versus obedience to the law?

k. You may have heard before how first century Pharisees would pray every morning, “I thank Thee, God, that I am a Jew, not a Gentile; a man, not a woman; and a freeman, and not a slave.” Sadly, it is true. People would actually pray that!

Into this culture, Paul boldly writes **verses 28-29**. How have such barriers been broken down in Christ? How should that affect our relationships with one another in the church? How should that impact our relationships with others outside the church?

#### IV. Pray

a. Thank God for your “new wardrobe” in Christ!

b. Ask God to reveal the ways you try to earn His grace.

c. Pray that the Holy Spirit would empower you to live each day from your new identity in Jesus.

#### V. Digging Deeper

a. Engage the passages Paul quotes in verse 16: **Genesis 12.7, 13.15, and 24.7**.

