

the Royal

MAKING SENSE OF THE BIBLE

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Pet. 2:9

Week 27 Letters, Chapter 2

Pastor Miles continues our sermon series in the epistles by looking at Philipians 2. This week in our small groups we will follow a similar format as we did last week.

What we will focus on this week are the following:

1. Examining the 5 epistle observations as stated by Pastor Miles in the bulletin this week.
2. Review the sermon text of Philipians 2, by looking at the Read, Reflect, and Respond he filled out for us during the Sunday Sermon. Discuss the concept of "working out our salvation".
3. We will continue in our "Read, Reflect, and Respond" by using Galatians 1 as our text. We will look specifically at verses 6-10, where Paul reminds the Galatians of the importance of the "true gospel", which is the only gospel.

The hope is that we would all be challenged in our understanding of what the gospel truly is. In our culture, we have the tendency to make the gospel mean different things to different people. And these definitions are often accepted as being correct. But Paul makes it extremely clear that there is only one correct answer as to what the gospel is. This should create stimulating conversation as most people may have different answers but at the end of the night after studying Galatians we would all have the same answer. Have a great study.

Isn't it fun studying Scripture!!!!

In Him,

Rock Church Small Group Team

Part 1: Opening/Recap Weekly Challenge/Small Group Sermon Discussion

Opening

- Open in Prayer
- Worship (optional)
- Recap Week 26 Homework
- Small Group Sermon Discussion

Recap Week 26 Weekly Challenge

1. Recite **1 Thess. 1:5**.
2. Discuss experiences practicing them Study.

Small Group Sermon Discussion

1. Review the 5 Epistles Observations

1. Epistles make up 21 of the 27 books of the New Testament (NOTE: All New Testament books are epistles except for the four gospels, Acts and Revelation).
2. Epistles were letters written to either a group or an individual for a specific occasion.
3. Epistles were written to address issues in the 1st century church.
4. Epistles usually address one of four issues:
 - Behavior needing correction.
 - Warning against false teachings.
 - Misunderstanding between author and audience.
 - Encouragement.
5. Epistles cannot mean to us now what it did not mean to them then.

2. Review Philippians 2 from the sermon as a group.

READ (Phil. 2:12-13) **Discovery:** Paul encourages the Philippians to train themselves by relying upon and using the benefits of their salvation.

REFLECT: The more we train ourselves to live like Christ, the more we will actually become like Him.

RESPOND: Establish a Spiritual workout plan.

- A. Increase your **Spiritual Flexibility** by training yourself to **turn** your attention on others instead of yourself. *Philippians 2:3*
- B. Increase your **Spiritual Strength** by consistently **lifting** the interests of others above yours. *Philippians 2:3*
- C. Build up your **Spiritual Endurance** by increasing the length of time between your **complaints**. *Philippians 2:14*

Part 2: Read, Reflect, and Respond – Galatians 1

Read Galatians 1

The context of epistles is generally simple to understand. By doing simply pre-observation methods, we can determine the who, what, why, when, and where of every epistle. Just like we learned in the sermon review section, most of the New Testament are letters to a group of Christians, or individual, during the 1st century. As simple as getting the basic context is to do, it is equally important we get as much information as possible to make sure we are clear of the author's intent of every letter. Epistles are so crucial for modern-day Christians to teach us biblical truth, but they were not written to us, so we have to be diligent in finding out who the author wrote it to and for what purpose. Below we will look at Galatians 1. We will briefly examine the context of the letter, so that when we read the letter through, certain terms and concepts make a little more sense:

Galatians 1 Pre-observation

- ▶ The epistle was written by Paul around 48-49 AD. Though written to the Galatians, which particular group of Galatians he wrote to is often disputed. There were cultural Galatians that lived in Northern Asia Minor, and then there were a more political group of Galatians in and around Central Asia Minor. My many reputable scholars account, it was probably written to the group in Southern and Central Asia Minor, of whom Acts tells us he was more acquainted with (cf. Acts 13-14, 16:1-5).
- ▶ After Paul evangelized the Galatians, it was apparent that after he departed, religious activists were coming in behind him and telling the Galatians that the gospel Paul taught was not sufficient for salvation (cf. Gal. 1:6-7).
- ▶ The main reasons for Paul to write to the Galatians are the following:
 - Paul was not an inferior Apostle, Paul explains his conversion and gives basis for the authority given to him from Christ Himself (cf. Gal. 1:10-12).
 - The result of justification by grace through faith is the only true spiritual freedom (cf. Gal. 5:1). This was the heart and soul of Martin Luther's position in leading the Reformation against the Catholic Church in the early 1500's.
 - The Judaizers were teaching that true salvation was through circumcision, and Paul was explaining that is not the case. In fact, it is noticeable in the language of the letter, that Paul is very agitated by this heresy (cf. Gal. 5:4-15).
- ▶ Paul gives clear evidence of those that are truly in Christ, by the "fruit" they produce. This is commonly known as the "Fruit of the Spirit". They are clearly defined and separated by the deeds of the flesh (cf. Gal. 5:16-26).
- ▶ Galatians 1 as a group.

Paul uses this first chapter to defend his position as a true Apostle, and defend the gospel. The following questions are focused around verses 6-10.

Reflect Galatians 1

1. How do you define the gospel?

2. How does Paul define the gospel?

- ▶ Consider the answer Paul gives in Gal. 2:15-21

Part 2: Read, Reflect, and Respond – 1 Thessalonians 1 (continued)

Respond Galatians 1

1. According to Paul, the Galatians were being taught a false gospel. He stated that if anyone teaches a false gospel (human or angel) they should be accursed (v. 8). Consider the questions in the "Reflect" section: Have you ever been taught a false gospel? If so, how did you respond to it?
 - ▶ Note: False gospels are found in the definition of world religions, philosophies, and world views that deny the person and work of Jesus Christ. This could even be affirming His birth and not His death. A false gospel denies even the smallest detail of the redeeming work of Jesus in its entirety.
 - ▶ Based on the above definition of a false gospel, everybody has experienced a false gospel. Some may even be experiencing and believing a false gospel currently.

2. How can we make sure we are following the true gospel, and not fall prey to false gospels?
 - ▶ Consider Gal. 3:1-14, and 5:16-26.

Part 3: Weekly Challenge

- ▶ **Scripture Reading Guide:** Go through the devotions that correspond with each day. These are given to everyone in their lesson plan every week. (November 15 – November 21)
- ▶ **Scripture Memory:** “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. **Galatians 1:10 (ESV)**”
- ▶ **Bible Study Tool:** Navigate through www.blueletterbible.com and discover the great resources available for free for your personal gain.
- ▶ **Spiritual Formation Practice:** Each week we will introduce a “spiritual discipline” that each person can try to adapt to their personal devotion. This week is the **Discipline of Study.**

The discipline of study has been repeated week after week because in order to understand anything in its entirety, the discipline of pursuing it has to become an essential habit. Scripture is no different, and studying the various parables is even more crucial to study. Author’s intent of writing a historic document is always hard to grasp, but is possible to get to a clear understanding of.

So for the “Letters” and even to the end of the Royal series, we are going to really focus on study. We really want to challenge you to grow in the study and knowledge of the Word, so we can grow closer to Him.