

Series: Book of Galatians: Grace Abounds

Message: Galatians 1:1-10 | The Gospel & it's Counterfeits



Looking for helpful resources as you study the book of Galatians?

Bible
Project



Free
Commentary



Read

In your group, read the passage out loud, with each person reading a verse.

Recall

Sermon Big Idea: If we lose the purity of the Gospel, we lose the power of the Gospel.

Head: Grasping the Text

Goal: To grasp the theological concepts and historical context of Paul's letter.

1. **Divine Authority:** In verse 1, Paul emphasizes that his apostleship is "not from men or by man, but by Jesus Christ." Why was it crucial for Paul to establish this "defensive shield" of authority before addressing the crisis?
2. **The Customization Problem:** The sermon began with the analogy of looking at how we customize and tailor so many aspects of life, such as diets, playlists, phones, technology, etc., to fit our preferences. In what specific ways were the Galatians trying to "customize" the Gospel if you just read Paul's opening concern in 1:6-10?
3. **The Overlap of Ages:** The sermon describes the "Already/Not Yet" framework of the Messiah's kingdom. In 1:4, the concept of the "present evil age" refers to the current world system dominated by sin, Satan, and spiritual darkness. It's characterized by moral decay, worldly philosophies, and a spiritual blindness to God. Read 2 Corinthians 4:4 to see how Paul describes this time. Yet, the believer has hope, because through the resurrection of Jesus, the first fruits (1 Cor. 15:20) of the "next age" have already come. How does understanding that we live in the "overlap" of the present evil age and the coming age help explain why we still experience suffering even though Christ has won, yet also victory and hope?

4. **The "Plus" and "Minus" Mentality:** *"If we lose the purity of the Gospel, we lose the power of the Gospel."* How does adding human effort (Gospel Plus) or removing difficult truths (Gospel Minus) fundamentally change the "substance" of the message?

Heart: Grasping the Internal Transformation

Goal: To reflect on motivations, emotions, and your relationship with God.

5. **Righteous Anger:** Paul is "shocked" and "astonished" (v. 6) rather than thankful. Have you ever felt a "righteous alarm" when you saw the truth being distorted? Does the purity of the Gospel matter as much to you as it did to Paul?
6. **The Burden of "Monkish Discipline":** Martin Luther described working himself "to death" trying to earn God's favor. Have you ever felt spiritually exhausted by a "Jesus plus works" mentality? What does that "unsettled" feeling tell you about your heart's trust in grace?
7. **Allegiance Check:** Verse 6 speaks of "turning away" as a change of allegiance, like a soldier joining the enemy. Where do you feel the strongest "pull" to change your loyalty from Christ to the "customized" values of modern culture?

Hands: Grasping Your Next Step

Goal: To move from hearing the Word to living it out. What temptation must I avoid? A promise to claim? An example to follow? A command to obey? A person to move toward? A new discipline to develop that will help you love God with your heart, soul, mind, strength, and to love others?)

8. **Identifying Counterfeits:** The sermon lists modern "remixes" like the *Therapeutic Gospel*, *Prosperity Gospel*, or *Nationalism Gospel*. Which of these do you encounter most often in your news feed or social circle? How can you practice "spotting the poison" this week? (guide below)
9. **The People-Pleaser Test:** In verse 10, Paul asks, "Am I now trying to win the favor of people, or God?" Think of a specific situation at work or in your family where you are tempted to compromise your values to "win likes." What would it look like to act as a "slave of Christ" in that moment instead?
10. **The "Small Drop" Audit:** If even a small drop of poison contaminates the water, what is one "small" addition you've made to the Gospel (e.g., *"God loves me because I had my quiet time today"* or *"I*

am a better Christian because of my political views")? How can you "purify" your motivation this week?

Field Guide: Identifying Gospel Counterfeits

The Big Idea: If it depends on your performance, your identity, or your earthly comfort rather than Christ's finished work, it is "no gospel at all" (Galatians 1:7).

The Counterfeit	The "Formula"	The "Hook" (Why it's tempting)	The Poison (Why it's dangerous)
Therapeutic Gospel	Gospel + Self-Help	It promises to make me feel better, reduce stress, and improve my "best self."	It treats Jesus as a life-coach rather than a Savior; it focuses on my feelings rather than my sin.
Prosperity Gospel	Gospel + Wealth/Health	It promises that if I have enough faith, God is obligated to give me financial and physical ease.	It turns God into a vending machine and leaves people feeling abandoned when they suffer or face poverty.
Nationalism Gospel	Gospel + Political Identity	It links the Kingdom of God so closely to a specific nation or party that they become inseparable.	It confuses earthly power with spiritual power and makes "enemies" out of those Christ called us to love.
Social Justice Gospel	Gospel + Activism	It suggests that our work for justice is what saves us or validates our standing with God.	While justice is biblical, making it the <i>source</i> of salvation turns the Gospel back into a "works-based" religion.
Moralistic Gospel	Gospel + "Being Good"	It feels safe and controllable. If I follow the rules, God has to love me.	It leads to either pride (if you succeed) or despair (when you fail). It's the "monkish discipline" Luther hated.