

WEEK 3: CHAPTER 3

ABOUT THIS SERIES

In our *Galatians* series, St. Mark is walking verse-by-verse and chapter-by-chapter through Paul's letter to the Galatians to discover how an ancient manuscript like Galatians gives us timeless truths for today. Your group will go deeper into the series by learning about the cultural and scriptural context to Paul's letter.

ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray for your group | <input type="checkbox"/> Read through the Discussion Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean meeting area | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean bathroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Crack front door |

OPENING (5 MIN)

After a general welcome, say: To get us started today, let's ask a quick question—

HAVE ANY OF YOU EVER BEEN IN A BAD CONTRACT YOU COULDN'T WAIT TO GET OUT OF?

After a brief discussion, say: As we get into Galatians 3, Paul goes into the background and specifics of the covenant of righteousness by faith that God made with us.

We'll talk all about that in a minute, but first, let's pray.

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Host, lead the group in prayer.

KEY VERSES (5 MIN)

After a prayer, say: Let's bring everyone up to speed with key verses from Galatians 3:

CAN SOMEONE READ ALOUD THE FOLLOWING VERSE I CALL OUT, AND I'LL READ THE SUMMARY:

VERSE	SUMMARY
Vs. 3	Paul goes back and addresses the teaching of some Jews who became Christ-followers in Galatia that were confusing the Galatians and telling them they needed to follow all of the Jewish Laws to be God's people.
Vs. 6	This is the first of many times Paul cites how Abraham was righteous by faith and not the works of the Law. It's the Gospel (where God does the verbs) not the Law (where we do the verbs.)
Vs. 17	Paul points out that God's Law through Moses came after God's covenant of righteousness by faith through Abraham.
Vs. 26-27	Paul tells us we were (passive) clothed with the righteousness of Christ when we were baptized (passive). In other words, if we are passive in baptism, God is the active agent. Baptism is not a work we do for God (Law), it's a work God does for us (gospel)!

WHICH OF THESE KEY VERSES INTRIGUES YOU THE MOST, AND WHY?**THE OLD COVENANT (15-20 MIN)**

After a discussion, say: When Paul is writing to the Galatians, he knows there are Jewish-converts gathered with them in the living room who are trying to add something to the gospel. So, Paul makes an argument of "righteousness by faith" from the life of Abraham. Let's read a bit of this backstory together.

CAN SOMEONE READ GENESIS 15:1-6 ALOUD FOR US?

After the reading, say: After God promised to do this for Abraham, he could've doubted God. But Abraham believed and, in response, God views a sinful Abraham him as righteous. And what's true for Abraham is true for you and anyone you've ever laid eyes on. A point the Apostle Paul makes in Galatians.

CAN SOMEONE READ THIS APPLICATION IN GALATIANS 3:7?

WHAT SORT OF REACTION DO YOU HAVE TO THE IDEA OF BEING A CHILD OF GOD (AND RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPARTED TO YOU) SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE GOD?

IN CONTRAST, LEGALISM IN ANY RELIGION GIVES YOU A WAY TO BE IN CONTROL OF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS BY WHAT YOU DO. WHY IS THIS SO APPEALING TO PEOPLE?

After a discussion, say: In Galatians 3:15 Paul writes, “To give a human example, even with a man-made covenant, no one cancels it or adds to it once it has been signed.” He’s referring to the moment when God “signed” or “ratified” this covenant in Genesis 15.

LET’S READ ABOUT THIS MOMENT. CAN SOMEONE READ GENESIS 15:7-12 AND THEN 17-18 ALOUD FOR US?

After the reading, say: In ancient times when they didn’t have pen and paper around to sign, they would seal a contract or covenant with the shedding of blood. Here, God makes a covenant with Abraham and seals it with the shedding of blood. This, of course, points to a another covenant that God makes with us.

CAN SOMEONE READ MATTHEW 26:26-28 ALOUD FOR US?**HOW DOES IT CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK OF TAKING THE LORD’S SUPPER AS ENTERING INTO A NEW COVENANT WITH GOD?****HOW DOES THIS CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK OF THE CROSS OF JESUS?**

After a discussion, say: May the new covenant God has established with you by the shedding of his own blood fill you with a heart of gratitude.

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT AND PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)

Before we get to our prayers, though, two quick announcements:

One, Prosper the City is going to be coming up after Easter, so just prepare your calendars now for some more Small Group meetings in late April and May.

Two, every Small Group is going to sponsor one of the prayerwalks this summer. We’ll help plan routes, plan Scripture, and bring refreshments for our particular week. So be looking at which of your Wednesday evenings this summer would be good for that.

Let’s close things out with prayer—

To start our prayer time, we’ll pray against any gossip in the church for the sake of Christ and the unity he won for us.

ARE THERE ANY PRAYER REQUESTS TODAY?

Host, after taking prayer requests, close the group in prayer.