



A Study of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians

Many times we look at the congregations of the New Testament and we think of them as the cream of the crop, the best of the best, the models of what we are to be. The truth is that these congregations were much more like our congregation that we think. These congregations had blessings and challenges just like we do. The apostle Paul did as much guiding, leading and rebuking as he did motivating and complimenting the people for their faith.

As we look at these congregations we pray that God leads us to see that there is much that we can learn from the guidance and teachings that God gave them through the apostle Paul. We will also pray that our congregation can also grow through that same guidance and teaching.

Read Ephesians 2:1-3

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which *you used to live when you followed* the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

1. What is the Law concept that Paul introduces for a moment?

By nature we are dead in sins

2. What is the problem with dead people?

They can't help themselves in any way. They can't do anything for themselves.

3. In what way can an unbeliever do nothing to help themselves?

They cannot do anything to come Jesus. Can't do anything to believe.

4. Give some examples of how the normal, natural, ordinary ways of the world do not follow God?

Change God's Word, Glorify specific sins, Making some sins really bad and others not so bad, Situational ethics – sometimes it is alright to sin, Morality is based upon the way of the world and not in God's Way

5. How does verse 2 offer hope that this is not a repeat of the Law in Galatians?

You used to live when you followed this way of life

6. Comment. Any unbeliever, no matter how good or noble, stands under God's eternal judgment. **Truth. It is not a matter of good or bad, it is a matter of belief or unbelief. God's judgment is not based upon goodness or badness. It is based upon Jesus.**

Read 2: 4-7

⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

7. I have to be careful here..... BUTS are usually bad. We hate the *yeah, but*, people because the but is usually not a good thing. Is Paul's use of but here, a good thing or a bad thing? Why?

It is a GREAT thing --- it signals the change of what God has done for those who are dead in sin

8. How does Paul use the Law concept to introduce the Gospel concept?

He introduces the Law - death in sin - to introduce the life that is ours through Jesus

9. How does Paul use the themes of life and death to illustrate his point?

You were dead in unbelief, Now you are alive in Jesus

10. Just like chapter 1, who does the work?

Jesus

11. Define grace.

God's undeserved love for us

12. Comment: God either saves by grace or through works, it cannot be both.

Either God's love is unconditional, or it is not perfect unconditional love. Love that demands something in return is not unconditional, it is conditioned on the response

13. Finish the sentence: God made us alive in Christ now we....

Are forgiven, Have Heaven Looking for: He might work through us to bring this news to others.

Read 2:8,9

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

14. One of my favorite passages and, I hope and pray, is one that you have written in the front cover of your Bibles.

Underline or write the Gospel concepts in this section.

By grace, Through Faith, Not from yourselves, Gift of God
Not by Works, No one can boast

15. In Greek and Hebrew, if something is stated twice with almost the same words it is important. The more times it is said, the more important it is. How important is this salvation by God's grace alone?

It is the most important thing because Paul says it 6 times in a row.

It's almost like Paul is saying: **DON'T MISS THIS**

Read V. 10

¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

16. Now that we have faith given and worked through the Holy Spirit, what flows from the Christian heart and is seen in the Christian life? **The works of thanks**

17. Should we boast in the good works we do for the Lord? Should we lift them up to God so he can see? **No, they are not something we should boast of because they mean nothing in our salvation. They are responses to what God says.**

18. God says you were made for this. What were you made for?

1 Peter 2:8,9. ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. **You were made to declare these praises. To thank and praise God for what he has done.**

Read 2:11-13

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

19. In the Jewish religion, who was separate from God's love? Why?
Gentiles were outside of the covenant God made with his people.

20. How has God opened the gates of salvation to all people?
He has sent Jesus to die on the cross to bring all people near to him through faith.

Read 2: 14 & 15

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

21. What are the two that have been made one? **Jews & Gentiles**

22. Where were the differences recorded? How were they gotten rid of?
It was part of the Civil and Ceremonial Law that God's people were different – Jesus fulfilled those things

23. What are the two reconciliations that Jesus has made?

God and man, Jews and Gentiles

Read V 19-22.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

24. Who is the "you" Paul is talking about?

We, us, all believers

25. You were once.....

Aliens, foreigners, non-citizens, outside of the love of God

But through Jesus you are now..... **Citizens, those who belong, within the love of God**

26. How does that make you feel? **Should make you feel wonderful ~ Gospel concept**

27. How does that make you feel about those who are all around you this morning?

Should make you look at those other believers as special children of God too.

28. Reformation Question: What is this body of Christ built on?

Foundation of the teaching of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone

29. Why does it have to be built on that?

If it is not built on Christ, his teachings, then it is not the truth of Jesus

30. How is verse 22 a personal reminder?

We are built ~ we are part of this house