

THE ONE TRUE GOSPEL
The book of Galatians

Study Guide Term 4 2024

Jesus + Nothing

What are we missing? It's so easy to find us asking this question, especially when things feel like they're not working. Or maybe you feel you know what's missing and just wish others, especially those that you think can do something about it, would see.

When it comes to being welcomed by God, living a life that pleases God and receiving all the blessing that God has promised the world...Jesus is not only enough, he's everything. If you have him, you have it all, and if you think you need more than him, you'll only end up taking things away. When it comes to being righteous - right in God's eyes and living a life that's right in his creation - the book of Galatians gives us the equation: Righteousness = Jesus + Nothing.

That's so important for us as a Shore Hope church family. We are in a season of review. Are we running too many ministries and overstretching ourselves? Are we not running enough to see more people know Jesus? What should we add? What should we take away? How do we decide?

There's lots of strategic decisions we can make, but the criteria that matters and the goal of our efforts needs to be: what will lead each of us to grow in trusting Jesus, and what sort of community will people see when, together, we show and share our trust in him?

It's a good term to be studying Galatians. To be reminded of the centrality of "faith in Jesus" to all of our Christian life. And to assess all our activity in light of the unchanging truth of the gospel.

Let's keep praying for each other as we approach the year's end.

Russell, Doug, John, Joel and Chester.

Church Camp @ Home - Thank You

*How do I give advice to this many people? I won't.
The scary news is, you're on your own now.
But the cool news is, you're on your own now.*

Taylor Swift

Steve McAlpine gave us a brief taste of "Swiftology" as we started our weekend together, helping us see and feel the challenge of the "strange new world" we are in. But as he took us through Ephesians 2 and then Daniel 6, we heard God's wonderful news: this world isn't really strange or new. It's still the world created and sustained by our Lord Jesus. And he's been ready for it, with a plan for his church that is truly "Futureproof".

Thank you once again to everyone who attended, and all those that made Church Camp @ Home possible. There were heaps of fun activities and time together. And whether you were an adult hearing from Steve or one of the kids discovering "Jesus from eternity past to eternity future", God really did strengthen our hope in him. God does amazing things through his word and time with his people.

As we look to 2025, let's get talking: what are great ways to spend significant time in God's word together so that we continue to put our confidence in God, his gospel, and the work of his Spirit amongst us? Do you have thoughts? Find a leader and let them know.



Shore Hope Christmas 2024

Planning for Christmas has begun. Carolling, Christmas concerts, Christmas services, ... maybe even a Christmas games night! There's so much we can do at Christmas. But what should be our focus?

As a church family, Christmas is valuable because...

- We can take time to reflect and wonder on the incarnation and all it means for our atonement, our adoption and our glorification. As we'll be hearing this term:

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.
(Galatians 4:4-5)

- We have an excuse to spend more time together as a church family
- We have an excuse to spend more time with family, friends, and people we want to count as friends, and share with them the joy we find at this time of year in God, and his love for us
- People discover, in a natural way, how much Jesus matters to us (when they hear how we're spending our Christmas)
- We strengthen our "inviting muscles" because Christmas event invites are easy and natural to make, people are more open to saying "yes", and we're reminded that receiving a "no" doesn't bring an end to friendships

But what's the danger? Doing, and not trusting. Getting busy and forgetting to pray.

Christmas brings great opportunities as a Christian, but the most wonderful opportunity is often the one we don't take up. Make sure you stop, thank God for Jesus, and remember what it means to place your trust in him, as you feel the events of Christmas approaching.



A Guide to this Study Guide

But the sermons started ages ago!

So, it's Term 4 and you hold in your hands enough studies to take you almost to 2025! That's handy. Except everyone knows Term 4 is crazy, Christmas is coming and you were hoping to clean out the gutters before the storms hit. Do I have to do all the studies?

No. Here are some options:

1. You could jump into the studies either before or after the current sermon at church. Great.

... That's practical.

But what if you want to get your head around what has gone before?

... Glad you asked.

To save you scrambling through all the studies to play catch up, we've got two options for you. You could do either or both:

- a. Catchup Study 1. This will follow the general argument from Galatians 1-2, so you have a sense of the ideas that sit behind chapters 3 onwards.
- b. Catchup Study 2. This one focuses on an overview of the biographical information Paul gives, which is so important to the whole letter.

2. You could just start the studies church is up to in the series and chill. Between you all, your home group has probably got a sense of things from the sermons.
3. You could do all the studies. Go you! The sermons are online; you can re/listen before or after you do the studies and jog along at your own pace. (You might be out of synch with your Home Group, but that's OK. You'll manage that. You're a completionist. We hear you. *Of course* you can do the extra studies as well, you legend!)

Not in a home group? Speak to Russ. He'll fix you up with one.

Enjoy the freedom of living by grace!

Catchup Study 1: The Big Idea – Galatians 1-2

1. Read Galatians 1:6-9

- a. Why is Paul so emotional: what have the Galatians done?

- b. In your own words, (and in no more than 2 sentences!) what is the gospel?

2. Read Galatians 2:4-5

- a. How does Paul describe what the false teachers have done?

- b. What is at risk?

- c. What kind of 'freedom' is Paul talking about here?

3. Read Galatians 2:15-16; revisit Galatians 1:1-5

- a. How is someone 'made right' according to this summary of the gospel?

- b. What is the difference between the law and faith in these verses?

- c. Why is the faith 'in Christ'? See also 1:1-5

4. Is Paul just 'writing off' the Old Testament law? How does this square with Psalm 19:7 and other places in the OT that value the law?

5. Revisit your definition of 'the gospel' in question 1b and alter it if you wish. How would you rephrase this if you were talking to a non-Christian friend who didn't know any Christian jargon?

6. How do you live out your freedom in Christ in your everyday life?

7. What role does the Old Testament law play in your life?

Catchup Study 2: My Life and Times: Paul's Story

1. *Read Galatians 1:1*

- a. What does this tell you about how Paul saw himself?

2. *Read Galatians 1:11-2:2*

- a. Briefly summarise Paul's story according to this chapter.

- b. Why is it so important to him that he goes and gets his gospel 'checked out' by the other apostles?

- c. How does Luke retell Paul's story in Acts 9? What does this add to our understanding of the kind of person Paul was? (See Acts 9:1-22)

3. *Read Galatians 2:9-10*

- a. Who specifically endorses Paul and his gospel?

- b. To whom is he specifically sent or allowed to go by the other apostles? Why is that important for this letter?

4. *Read Galatians 2:11-14*

a. Describe the conflict between Peter and Paul.

b. Why does Paul see himself as being justified in the way he has acted? Is he just wanting to be right?

5. Describe Paul in one sentence.

6. How do we benefit from Paul's diligence and tenacity today?

7. On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being highest) how important is getting the gospel right to you? How can you cultivate more concern for the gospel or how do you need to support those who are charged with keeping the gospel clear and faithfully declaring it?

8. Although we aren't apostles, our story of how God worked and is working in our lives is important to us as we seek to follow Jesus. What are you most grateful for right now as you reflect on your story with God?

Study 1: Galatians 1:1-10

1. Who made Paul an apostle? How does this claim establish the validity of what Paul is writing?
2. Why might Paul be so keen to establish his authority?
3. From Galatians 1:6-7 what does Paul mean by a "different gospel"? How does Paul define the true gospel in contrast to false teachings?
4. What is Paul's attitude to someone preaching a different gospel? Who does he include in this potential group? What does this strong language reveal about the seriousness of distorting the gospel message?
5. What is the 'gospel'? Using no more than 2 sentences and in simple language, explain the gospel.
6. Paul's tone is very different to his other letters - what from 1:1-10 might account for this?

7. What are some examples of “different gospels” that might be encountered today? How does this passage help us understand how we might need to respond? What do you find encouraging and/or challenging about this example?

8. Who in our church are responsible for us receiving the true gospel? How might we contribute to this? How might we receive this as a mercy of God? Where do you find this challenging and/or how do you find this encouraging?

9. How does Paul’s emphasis on pleasing God rather than seeking human approval help us today?

Study 2: Galatians 1:11-2:10

1. What does Paul claim about the gospel that he preached (1:11-12)?
2. How does this claim of divine revelation underscore the authority and authenticity of Paul's message?
3. How does Paul retell his conversion story in 1:13-17? What does this highlight about his authority as an apostle and his gospel message?
4. Why is Paul's visit to Jerusalem important to his integrity? (2:1-10)
5. Who affirms 'Paul's gospel' and why does it matter?
6. There are three times Paul is recorded going to Jerusalem: (Acts 9:26-30, 11:27-30, 15 and 21-28). Paul could be referring to the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15, but 11:27-30 might fit better. What detail does Paul give about the visit that add to our understanding of how the earliest church worked from Acts?

7. How does this passage relate to how Paul introduces himself in the opening verses of the letter? (1:1-5)

8. What does this section of Galatians teach us about the source of true gospel proclamation? How does this matter to our church today? What difference does this make to you personally?

9. Thinking about this passage, what expectations can we have for God's work in our life? How would you like God to be working in your life this week?

Study 3: Galatians 2:11-20

1. Why does Paul get upset with Peter? (2:11-14) What does this show us about how the gospel matters in the way we relate to other believers?
2. What does Paul's assertion mean, that "a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ" (2:15-16) Why is this important?
3. How does the law of the OT relate to our justification? (2:17-18)
4. What implications does this have for the way we read the OT law?
5. In Galatians 2:19, Paul mentions that through the law he died to the law in order to live for God. What does this mean?
6. How does 2:20 fit as a conclusion for what Paul has said in this section of his letter?

7. What does it mean to be 'crucified with Christ' in practical terms? How does this help us understand ourselves as united with Christ and having a new identity? Why does this matter?

8. What does it mean to you that Jesus 'gave' himself for you?

9. How does knowing we are justified by faith make a difference to your life?

Study 4: Galatians 3:1-14

1. Why are the Galatians 'foolish'? (3:1)
2. What is the contrast that Paul works through in 3:2-5? How does this show the difference between living under the law and living by faith?
3. How is Abraham an example of justification of faith alone? (3:6-9)
4. What does this teach us about the continuity between the Old and New Testaments in terms of how God's people are justified?
5. What does Paul mean by the 'curse of the law'? (3:10-12) How should this shape our attitude to the OT law and its role in our life today?
6. How did Christ redeem us from the curse of the law? (3:13-14)

7. How does Jesus' death for us fulfill the promise made to Abraham? What does this mean for us as believers in Jesus who have received God's blessings through faith in Christ?

8. How can we avoid losing the gospel in our thinking and living?

9. What does this passage teach us about the dangers of trying to achieve righteousness through our own efforts? Are there areas in your life where you are trying to convince God (maybe without realising it) that you are righteous all by yourself? Should you just sin instead? How might you respond to this in a way that honours Jesus?

10. Where do you struggle to 'live by faith'?

Study 5: Galatians 3:15-25

1. What analogy does Paul use to explain the unchangeable nature of God's promise? (3:15)
2. Why is it so important that God keeps his promise to Abraham in Jesus' redemption?
3. What does Paul say about the purpose of the law, and how does it relate to the promise of justification by faith? (3:19-20)
4. How does 3:22-23 highlight the contrast between living under the law and living by faith? What does it mean for believers to be heirs of the promise?
5. In Galatians 3:24-25, Paul describes the law as a "guardian" or "tutor" until Christ came. What is the significance of this role of the law in preparing God's people for the coming of Christ?
6. Why does it matter to you that God keeps his promises and the OT promises to Abraham are fulfilled in Christ?

7. Is your view of the law in line with how Paul describes it here? Do you expect the law to help you to grow in your relationship with God in Christ? How would it do that?

8. How should this passage help shape our certainty that God saves us completely in Christ? What difference does this make to your life?

9. Do you read the Old Testament? If you do, do you expect it to point you to trusting Jesus more? If not, why not? How would you like to grow in this area?

Study 6: Galatians 3:26-4:7

1. How does this spiritual unity in Christ affect our understanding of identity, equality, and inclusion within the body of Christ? (Galatians 3:26-29)
2. How does this new identity help us in our understanding of our relationship with God?
3. What is the significance of being adopted as sons and daughters in Christ?
4. How does the metaphor of 'guardians and managers' in 4:1-3 help us understand the transitional role of the law before the coming of Christ?
5. How does the presence of the Holy Spirit affirm our adoption and relationship with God? (4:6-7)
6. What does it mean to you that you can call God 'Father'? How do passages like Luke 11:9-13 help us to understand this better?

7. What practical implications does being united in Christ have for how we view and treat others in the church, regardless of their background or status? Identify a group of people within the church that you struggle to treat as your brothers and sisters in Christ. Think of three concrete ways you can change in this area (this can be as small as 'making eye contact'). Write out a two sentence prayer asking God to change you in this area and for the kind of help you might need to put these things into practice.

8. What practical implications does our adoption in Christ have for how we approach God in prayer? How would you like to grow in your prayer life this month? How can your group support you in this?

Study 7: Galatians 4:8-20

1. What does Paul mean in 4:9 by “weak and miserable forces”? What does this tell us about the kind of false teachings that the Galatians were embracing?
2. What does Paul fear in verse 11? What does this reveal about his concern for the Galatians?
3. How did the Galatians first receive Paul and his message? (4:12-14) Why (according to verses 8-11) have they shifted their attitude towards Paul and his gospel?
4. How does 4:15-20 highlight the importance of personal relationships and accountability in the life of a church community
5. What metaphor does Paul in 4:19 to talk about how he worked hard to bring the gospel to the Galatians? What does this reveal about his emotional and spiritual investment in them?
6. How can do you know if you are becoming legalistic or shifting towards false doctrine? What might give it away? What is the best way to respond if you discover this in yourself? In someone else?

7. What can we learn from Paul's approach to addressing the concerns of the churches he founded?

8. Should our spiritual care for our brothers and sisters feel difficult? How does Paul's example shape our expectations?

9. Describe your most difficult relationship at church. Why is it difficult? How are you praying about this - what do you most want God to do with this relationship? How might your group support you as you work towards this outcome?

Study 8: Galatians 4:21-31

1. Read Genesis 16:1-4 and 21:7-9. Who were Hagar and Sarah; Ishmael and Isaac?
2. How does Paul use the allegory of Hagar and Sarah, and what are the key lessons he draws from this comparison? How does this allegory help us understand the distinction between the old covenant and the new covenant in Christ? (4:21-23)
3. What does Paul contrast in verses 24-26? How does this distinction between the two Jerusalems highlight the nature of Christian freedom and the inheritance of those who are in Christ?
4. What does it mean for believers to be children of the "free woman" and how does this impact our understanding of our spiritual inheritance?
5. Read Isaiah 54:1. What does this passage in Isaiah mean in this passage in Galatians?

6. How do the two children treat each other in verse 29? How does this historical reality reflect the ongoing tension between those who adhere to the law and those who live by the Spirit?

7. What lessons can we draw from the two children about the nature of spiritual conflict and how we should respond to opposition or persecution? What does this have to do with being adopted in Christ?

8. How does the identity as 'children of the promise' in verses 30-31 shape our understanding of our role and responsibilities as Christians?

9. What is your freedom in Christ? What is your inheritance in Christ? How would you answer these questions to a non-Christian friend who didn't understand Christian jargon?

10. What does this passage mean for how you live out your identity and freedom in Christ? How does it matter to you?

Study 9: Galatians 5:1-12

1. What does Paul mean by the 'yoke of slavery' in verse 1?
2. How does adding the works of the law to the gospel compromise the message of salvation in verses 2-4?
3. What does this passage teach us about the sufficiency of Christ's work?
4. How does Paul describe the relationship between faith, love, and salvation in verses 5-6? What is an example of 'faith working through love'?
5. Why is love so important to God?
6. In Galatians 5:7-10, what does Paul mean by a "little yeast"? What does this teach us about false doctrine?

7. How does Paul's defend his preaching of the cross and his reaction to those who trouble the church? Why does he not just let everyone believe their own thing?
8. How does legalism show up in your life? How can you push back against it?
9. In what ways do you show love to the people God has placed in your world? Would they recognise this as love? How do you want to grow in loving others?
10. Give an example you have come across of false teaching. How does that teaching lead people away from Christ?
11. How does pointing out false teaching synch with loving others? What can we learn from Paul on this issue?

Study 10: Galatians 5:13-26

1. What does Paul mean by 'freedom' in this passage?
2. How does Paul balance his teaching on Christian liberty with the responsibility to serve one another in love? (v13) Can you think of an example where you've seen this tension done well? Or poorly?
3. What does 'love' have to do with 'law' and 'gospel'? (verse 14) How does this relate to Jesus' teaching? (Matthew 22:37-40)
4. How is our relationship with the Holy Spirit described in verses 16-18? What does this mean in our daily lives?
5. List all the 'works of the flesh'. What do you notice about these characteristics? Are there any that surprise you (or don't seem to fit)?
6. List all the 'fruit of the Spirit'. What do you notice about these characteristics? Are there any that surprise you (or don't seem to fit)?

7. How do you know you are 'in step with the Spirit'? How does this passage help us to understand this more and put this into practice in our lives?

8. What are some practical ways we can check that our freedom in Christ is used to fulfill the law of love rather than to indulge in sinful desires? Are there ways you are moving away from love and just doing whatever you want to do?

9. Which 'works of the flesh' do you need to turn away from in your life? How might you do that practically?

10. Which 'fruit of the Spirit' do you most need to cultivate in your life? How might you do that practically? How might you pray about that specifically?

11. What are some obstacles that keep you from being in step with the Spirit? What would you like to do about these?

Study 11: Galatians 6:1-10

1. How should the church handle things when someone sins? (6:1) What do you think about this?
2. Why is it necessary to respond to sin within the church?
3. What does verse 2 mean? Restate this verse in our own words.
4. How does bearing each others burdens affect our church community? How does this relate to verse 1?
5. What is Paul encouraging us to do in verses 4-5? How does verse 6 fit in with this?
6. What is the emphasis of verses 7-8? What are examples of sowing to the Spirit and sowing to the flesh? Paul seems to have covered this in chapter 5, why might he return to it here?

7. What does verse 9 reveal about how perseverance works?

8. Why are the church family so important when it comes to us choosing how we do good? What does this have to do with verse 6?

9. What does it mean practically for you to carry your own load?

10. What are some specific ways we can support each other in bearing burdens?

11. Where have you become cynical and lethargic about doing good? Are there people you just don't bother with anymore? Are there issues you've given up? How can you deal honestly with negative results and still not get weary of doing good? How is God calling you to repentance in this issue?

12. This passage encourages us to connect practically with our church family. How are you going with doing this? How would you like to grow in this?

Study 12: Galatians 6:11-18

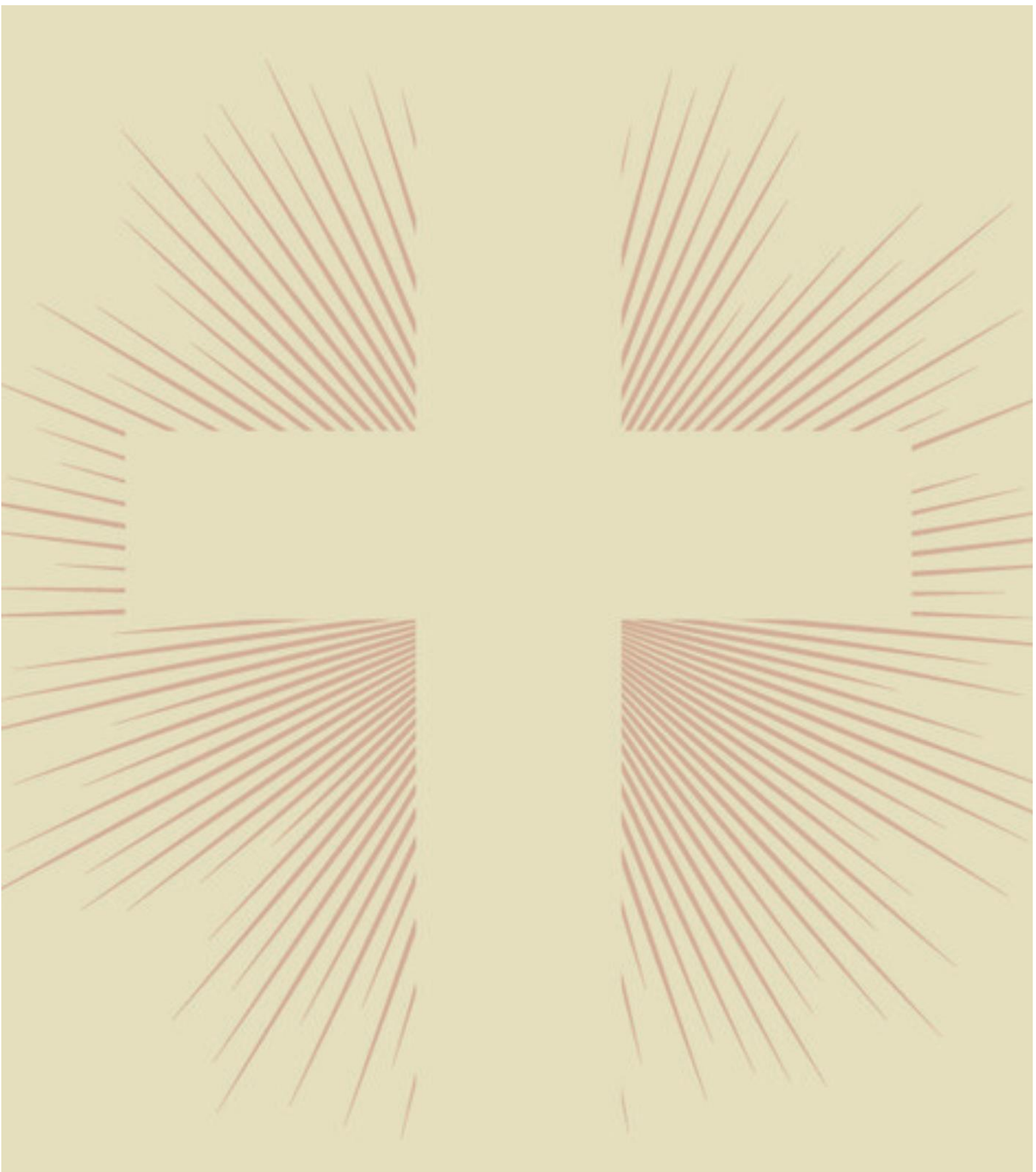
1. What does Paul note about his writing in verse 11? What does this tell us about the seriousness of the issues he is addressing? Why does he care so much?
2. What do verses 12-13 teach us about the dangers of legalism and the motives behind promoting religious practices?
3. How does his focus on the cross in verse 14 contrast with the emphasis on legalistic practices?
4. Why might Paul land on 'new creation' rather than faith as a resolution to the circumcision debate?
5. What does Paul mean about the 'marks' in verse 17? What do they symbolise in the context of Paul's ministry and suffering?

6. How can Paul's example of enduring hardship for the sake of the gospel challenge and encourage us in our own walk with Christ? What kinds of hardships does trusting in Jesus bring to your life? (Big or small) How can your group help you as you manage these situations?

7. What does it mean to boast in the cross? How should this affect our understanding of the gospel and our daily lives? When do you or have you 'boasted in the cross'?

8. From the book as a whole, how does the new creation (and our new identity within it) reshape our whole perspective on 'religion'?

9. Choose one thing that you've learned from the book of Galatians, that you still want to be remembering in 10 years. Why is this important to you? How do you want to remind yourself of this?



S H O R E
H O P E
A REDLANDS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH