



A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

**THIS BOOK
BELONGS TO:**



MARINERSCHURCH

INTRODUCTION



Jesus invites us to receive and rest in His grace, yet the pull to live exhausted lives in a world that applauds our constant striving, earning, and achieving is strong. Just like us, the book of Galatians was written to a group of people who were being pulled from resting in the grace of Jesus. The Apostle Paul passionately calls the people back to trusting Jesus alone, not adding anything—even good works—to the grace of God. For if we add to God's grace, we abolish God's grace in our lives. Every Christian should study the book of Galatians in their lives. It is a book that shouts the heart of the Christian faith—the gospel.





NOTE FROM ERIC

The book of Galatians in the Bible is a masterpiece.

Galatians is a letter written 2,000 years ago from the Apostle Paul to a real group of people who lived in Galatia. The letter beautifully describes the abundant grace and freedom Jesus still offers us today. In an exhausted world, it reminds us of God's inexhaustible grace. On wearisome days, it reminds us that Jesus is our rest. On days when we feel the pressure to earn our standing in this world, it reminds us that Jesus has already secured our standing and our identity.

Martin Luther, the famous reformer, loved the book of Galatians so deeply that he compared his passion for the book to the passion he had for his own wife, Katherine. He wrote: "The epistle to the Galatians is my epistle. To it I am, as it were, in wedlock. It is my Katherine."

I hope that you will say of the book of Galatians: "This is mine. It has refreshed me."

A team of talented creative volunteers from Mariners Church worked together to create this beautiful book to enhance your personal study of Galatians. I'm so grateful for the faithfulness of these volunteers who are using their gifts and talents to make much of Jesus. Within these pages, you'll find resources, original content, and inspiring stories to guide you. You'll also find opportunities to go deeper in your faith to follow Jesus, grow together, serve one another, and change the world.

The book of Galatians is a masterpiece, and we get to walk through the Scripture together! I encourage you to use this book each week to take notes on the weekend sermons, with your Life Group as you study and connect together, and for your personal time of devotion and prayer with God.

In Christ,
Eric Geiger
Senior Pastor

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ARTWORK BY : DAVID HARRINGTON

NOTE FROM THE VOLUNTEER EDITORIAL TEAM

Welcome to an *Invitation to Rest!* Yes, that's right. We are inviting you to find rest, to be still, and to restore and replenish your spirit by going through the book of Galatians.

Our hope is that when you spend time following this book, your heart will be stirred and awakened by these creative pieces so that you may fully understand and accept God's love and mercy, that your faith will grow week by week as you journey through this teaching series.

As a volunteer-led editorial team, we were tasked with many duties, while leading and working alongside a group of other volunteers who

generously contributed their creative gifts and talents to this publication. This project presented all of us an opportunity to glorify our Heavenly Father who has given us so much grace and freedom, even when we don't deserve it. What a blessing it is to know that is the God we are serving!

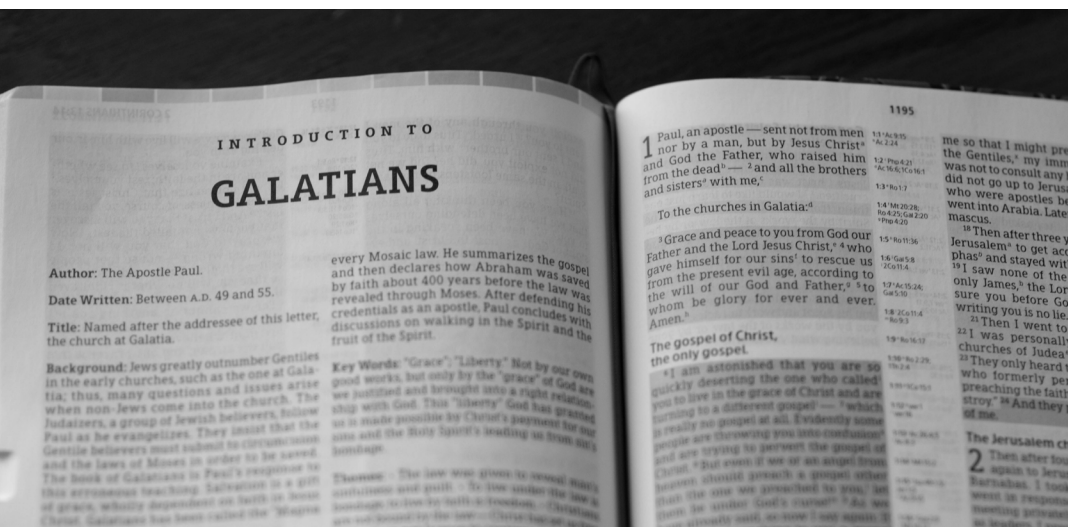
Even if you weren't a volunteer (don't worry, there is always next time), we encourage you to make this book your own. Write as much as you want on the pages. Draw in the margins. However you want, express how God has shown grace in your life.

This is only the beginning of YOUR book. We can't wait to hear what story you will have at the end.

With thanks and gratitude,
The Mariners Creative Arts Editorial Team

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book was created for you. It's filled with resources, original artwork, stories, and creative written pieces to enhance your own personal study of Galatians throughout our teaching series, *Invitation to Rest*. This book is meant to travel. Bring it with you to weekend services to take notes and follow along with messages. Take it to your Life Group gathering to go deeper into Scripture with others. Use it in your own time with the Lord as you process the wisdom and teaching of Galatians. We pray it inspires and encourages you in your own walk with the Lord every day.



Here is a breakdown of the different elements to guide you:

SERMON NOTES

- + Each week there is space for you to take notes during the weekend message. It's a great way for you to follow along each week of the series and record how God is speaking to you through His Word.

LIFE GROUP CURRICULUM

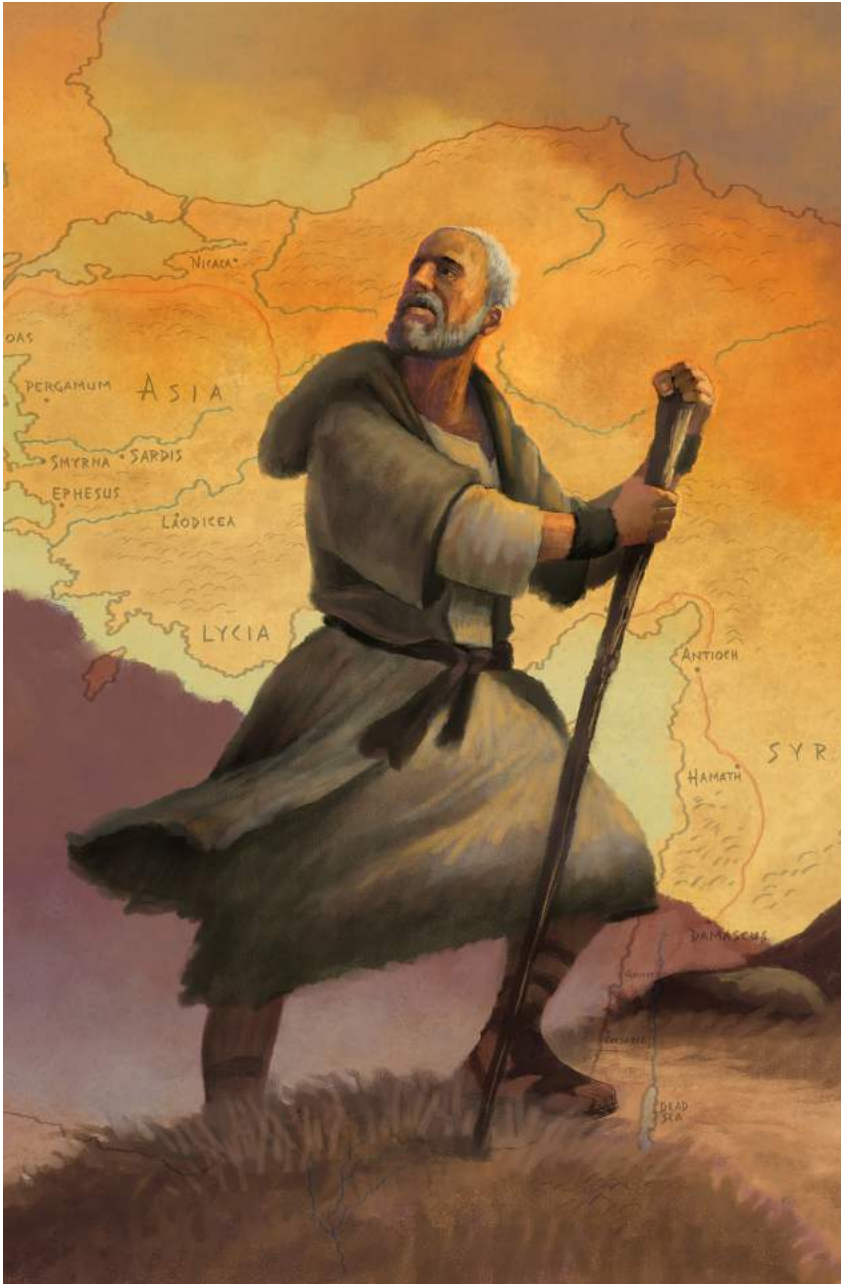
- + These lessons are meant to be explored in the context of a Life Group. In Life Groups, we grow in our faith together and experience life as God intended—in community. We encourage you to join a Life Group and dive into Galatians with others during the week. Visit marinerschurch.org/joinagroup to learn more.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- + Every week there is a reflection question (based on the seven rhythms of Rooted) designed to help you grow in your relationship with Jesus. We invite you to take a moment during your week to process the prompt and take a step to go deeper in your walk with the Lord.

CREATIVE ELEMENTS

- + At the end of each week's content, you'll find creative pieces, including original artwork, personal stories, photography, and creative writing, contributed by our amazing Creative Arts Volunteer Team. Each piece is inspired by the words of Galatians and its themes.



ARTWORK BY : DAVID HARRINGTON

INTRO TO GALATIANS

GALATIANS, WHICH MAY BE THE EARLIEST OF PAUL'S LETTERS, IS ALSO HIS MOST IMPASSIONED. IT GIVES US A STRONG PRESENTATION OF THE TRUTH THAT SINNERS ARE JUSTIFIED AND LIVE GODLY LIVES BY TRUSTING IN JESUS ALONE.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

Author: The author's name is "Paul," and he is an apostle of Christ (Gl 1:1). The autobiographical information in the letter is consistent with what is known about the apostle Paul from Acts and his other letters. Theologically, everything in Galatians agrees with Paul's views elsewhere, notably in Romans.

Background: It is not certain where the Galatian churches were located or when Paul wrote Galatians. The reason is that, during the New Testament era, the term Galatians was used both ethnically and politically. If "Galatians" is understood ethnically, the founding of the Galatian churches is only implied in the New Testament. On Paul's second missionary journey, he "went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia" (Ac 16:6) in north central Asia Minor (near Ankara, the capital of Turkey). His later visit to the same general area is recorded in Acts 18:23 and 19:1. This is where a group from Gaul (modern France) invaded in the third century BC, and it became known as Galatia.

Understood politically, "Galatians" can refer to those living in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia. That region included the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, where Paul worked to plant churches, as recorded in Acts 13:14–14:23.

The view that Galatians was written to the area where the ethnic Galatians lived is called the "North Galatian" theory. The possible dates of writing related to this understanding range from AD 52 or 53, if shortly after the second missionary journey, to AD 56, if written about the same time as Romans, to which it is similar theologically.

The view that Galatians was sent to churches in the southern portion of the Roman province of Galatia is known as the "South Galatian" theory. Some holding this view date Galatians in the early 50s, but others as early as AD 48 or 49, before the Jerusalem Council, which is usually dated to about AD 49. If the earlier date here is correct, Galatians is among the earliest of the New Testament books.

Another key consideration is comparing the basis of contention in Galatians to the topic of debate at the Jerusalem Council. The problem addressed in Galatians is that "the works of the law" of Moses (2:16-17; 3:2; cp. 5:4), notably circumcision (5:2; 6:12-13), were added by some teachers to what was required to be justified before God. This is the same issue that Acts records as the reason why the Jerusalem Council met (Ac 15:1,5), supporting the idea that the existing problem in the Galatian churches was part of the reason for the Jerusalem Council.

If Galatians was written after the Jerusalem Council, it is inconceivable that Paul would not have cited the conclusions of the council, which supported his works-free view of the gospel. This strongly implies that the Jerusalem Council had not yet occurred when Paul wrote Galatians.

MESSAGE AND PURPOSE

Galatians was written to clarify and defend "the truth of the gospel" (2:5,16) in the face of a false gospel. This was done by: (1) defending Paul's message and authority as an apostle, (2) considering the Old Testament basis of the gospel message, and (3) demonstrating how the gospel message Paul preached worked practically in daily Christian living. Paul chose this approach to correct those in the Galatian churches in regard to both their faith and practice related to the gospel.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

There is much about the life and movements of the apostle Paul that is only known—or filled in significantly—from Galatians 1:13-2:14 (and the personal glimpse in 4:13-14). Included are a mention of Paul's sojourn to "Arabia" (1:17) and descriptions of two trips to Jerusalem (1:18-19; 2:1-10). Paul described a confrontation with Peter (2:11-14) that is mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament.

In the middle third of Galatians, certain aspects of the gospel's Old Testament background are explained in unique ways. Notable are: (1) the curse related to Jesus being crucified, as cited from Deuteronomy 21:23 (Gl 3:13); (2) Jesus fulfilling the prophecy of the singular physical "seed" of Abraham (3:16; see Gn 22:18); (3) the roles of the law as prison (3:22-23) and guardian (3:24-25) until Christ; and (4) the extended allegory of the slave and free sons of Abraham (4:21-31).

Galatians tells us much about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Christian life. After God sends his Spirit into the hearts of believers, adopting them as his children (4:5-6), they are commanded to "walk by the Spirit" (5:16), be "led by the Spirit" (5:18), and "keep in step with the Spirit" (5:25), as well as "sow to the Spirit" and "reap" the related eternal harvest (6:8). The moment-by-moment outcome of that kind of sensitivity to the ministry of the Holy Spirit is what is meant by "the fruit of the Spirit" (5:22-23).

STRUCTURE

Galatians follows the typical pattern for a first-century letter, with the exception of the element of thanksgiving: salutation (1:1-5), the main body (1:6–6:15), and a farewell (6:16-18). Contrasting concepts are prominent in the letter: divine revelation vs. human insight, grace vs. law, justification vs. condemnation, Jerusalem vs. Mount Sinai, sonship vs. slavery, the fruit of the Spirit vs. the works of the flesh, and liberty vs. bondage.





WEEK 01

NO OTHER GOSPEL

Galatians 1:1–10

There is one gospel and it is good news, not good advice. The gospel is good news of what Christ has done for us, not advice about what we do for Him. In the gospel, we find that Jesus gave Himself for us, to rescue us, and that the Father has raised Jesus from the dead so that we may have life.

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle—not from men or by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead—² and all the brothers who are with me:

To the churches of Galatia.

³ Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father. ⁵ To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

No Other Gospel

⁶ I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from him who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are troubling you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, a curse be on him!⁹ As we have said before, I now say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, a curse be on him!

¹⁰ For am I now trying to persuade people, or God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

GALATIANS 1:1-10

DAILY DEVOTION



Acts 2:42, 46

Scripture is the very Word of God. Through it, He equips us with all we need to learn about Him and live a life pleasing to Him. A daily rhythm of reading, meditating on, and applying God's Word to our lives is key.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What passage of Scripture has had an impact on your faith journey? Why was it meaningful to you?

A grid of dotted lines for writing, consisting of 12 rows and 30 columns of dots.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

NO OTHER GOSPEL

PREPARE

- + Listen and subscribe to the ***Mariners Life Group Leader Podcast***. Each episode includes a quick conversation to help you prepare for your study, discussion, and application. The first week of each series, Pastor Eric will share key thoughts and hopes for your group.
- + Prepare your heart through personal worship throughout the week using our **Mariners Current Series Playlist on Spotify**. The worship team selects songs to highlight unique themes for the messages and the related discussions.
- + If you missed the weekend message or want to review specific points, you can always watch, listen, and find bulletin notes online at marinerschurch.org/messages.

MAIN POINT

- + There is one gospel and it is good news, not good advice. The gospel is the good news of what Christ has done for us, not advice about what we do for Him. In the gospel, we find that Jesus gave Himself for us, to rescue us, and that the Father has raised Jesus from the dead so that we may have life.

LEAN IN

- + What is the most recent piece of good news that you have received? Who shared it with you and why? What made this news good?
- + Never in history has information been so easily accessible. The average person is exposed to an estimated 5,000+ advertisements each day. Add to that number whatever content we choose to read, watch, or listen to and the amount of information is literally overwhelming. So, what makes something "good news," not just more information, paid messaging, or advice? In this study of the book of Galatians, we'll see what sets the gospel apart as truly life-changing.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

CHOOSE TWO VOLUNTEERS TO READ GALATIANS 1:1-10 OUT LOUD. (p 18)

- + What is the purpose of this letter—what we now call the Book of Galatians?
- + Is Paul's amazement positive or negative? What is he communicating with that choice of words?
- + Why is it appropriate for Paul to invoke or warn of a curse, even on angels?
- + What is the source of his message? His identity? Why is that essential?
- + How does he summarize the gospel message in these opening verses?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- + What can we learn from Paul's example of confidence in truth yet his love for the Galatians? Do you tend to lean more toward one of those while neglecting the other—confidence in truth or love for others?
- + What false "gospels," bad teaching, or misconceptions about God have you believed? How did you come to understand and believe the truth about Jesus?
- + Of the truths Paul mentioned in these verses, which is most meaningful to you right now? Why is it such good news?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- + To what "other gospels" do people turn? Why are these messages or beliefs not truly good news?
- + What reactions have you witnessed or experienced to statements about "truth" when it comes to God? Why do you think people respond in these ways?
- + How can we follow Paul's example, speaking the truth in love, sharing the one true gospel?
- + What other insights from the weekend message were especially timely for you? How might they also be timely for others around you?
- + Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
 - Prayer requests
 - Prayer



Finding lasting community at Mariners begins with Rooted.

Rooted is a 10-week small group experience designed to connect you to God, the church, and your purpose.



Scan the QR Code for information about our next session of Rooted.



SHARING THE GOSPEL

WRITTEN BY : ANNETTE GROSS

In my role as dean at a middle school with 1,600 students, I expected challenges as students acclimated to being on campus again for in-person learning after 18 months of online education due to the COVID pandemic. I felt prepared for whatever came my way since I'd been praying and memorizing Scripture throughout summer. I prayed for covering over students' mental health and over their hearts and minds. I studied and memorized Scripture (Proverbs 21:31 and Ephesians 6:11-13) to equip me for battle. I taught high school summer school, so I believed I was prepared to deal with my middle school students and overcome any challenges I might face.

The first three days back were uneventful; I was excited thinking that perhaps my trepidation was unjustified. I was so grateful and excited,

knowing that we had survived a global pandemic and come back together, seemingly without serious consequences.

But, I could not have been more naive.

Our first full week back to school nearly crushed me. I was bombarded with disciplinary issues. I expected to be busy with students testing the rules to determine where the line would be drawn regarding behavior. This expectation played out as I dealt with 25-30 students each day. Though most behavior was what I deemed normal for middle school students, what was unexpected was the devastation so many families had experienced and how they had chosen to deal with it.



My heart was crushed, and my hope for a smooth transition back to school shattered as I dealt with the agony so many families experienced because of and during the pandemic. They went through death, loss of income, divorce, abuse, internet exposure to pornography and trafficking, gender confusion, isolation, political and social conflict. All of which resulted in anxiety, depression, mental illness, and deep, unsettling fear and loneliness for students. While their broken hearts and spirits were struggling to cope, they now had to transition back to meeting in person for school. For many of them, this transition proved to be too much, requiring intervention from resources outside of the school environment.

While I did my best to pray and trust God to care for "my kids" and their families, it became

impossible for me to let it go. I was unable to quiet my mind from reliving what students revealed to me about what they experienced during our 18 months apart. Their message was clear—trauma and turmoil defined their daily existence: experiences of abuse in their homes and/or online through other students' horrific and targeted cruelty, attempts to lure students into trafficking, loss of multiple family members.

Each day revealed new tragedies that I vigorously tried to heal. Days blurred into weeks, then weeks into months of no sleep. What became clear to me is how essential the gospel is to humanity, especially during uncertain times and events like a pandemic. The need to share the gospel of Christ has never been more real to me. The hopelessness, depression, and anxiety that



crippled so many of my students had an answer and it was not my counsel, my compassion and support, or the resources I provided.

The answer is Jesus!

My physical and emotional strength had become weakness, and it was overwhelming, draining me of hope and peace. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says, "...My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." This realization was my "call to action," compelling me to share Jesus whenever God provided the opportunity. His gift of grace quieted my heart and mind. After two months of no sleep, I finally slept. I experienced the peace His grace provides, embracing the truth that healing the gaping wounds my students were attempting to survive was in His

hands. I needed to let go, believe His promises, pray, and trust Him to provide for each student what was needed for their healing.

Paul admonishes the Galatian church not to abandon the grace of Christ or the gospel he preached that was revealed to him by Christ. Throughout my sleepless nights, I prayed that I would never stray from the gospel of Christ. I prayed for continuing opportunities to share the gospel with my students. The Holy Spirit calmed my heart, reassuring me that the good news of the gospel is the answer for everyone. What an honor to be trusted with His message that is the answer to all human dilemma.



FINDING HOPE IN JESUS

FILMED AND EDITED BY : SCOTT SMITH



Nadia's infectious smile and outgoing personality can undoubtedly turn any frown upside down, a ray of sunshine that only our Heavenly Father could bless this world with. But it wasn't until Nadia began sharing her story with her Mariners family that we realized just how remarkable she is, and why her story of good news had to be shared.

At the age of six, Nadia was diagnosed with a life-altering disease. When you couple that with a cross country move, new schools, COVID, and everything else life has thrown her

way, you wouldn't expect to glean an abundance of hope and inspiration from this young lady. However, that is exactly what she has brought to Mariners. Now at the age of 13, Nadia and her connection with God has become an inspiration to us all, and we are excited to share her story with you.

To learn more about her journey of strife and grace, scan the QR code below.







WEEK 02

GRACE IS GREATER

Galatians 1:11-2:10

The gospel is not a human invention. It is otherworldly and designed by God. In the gospel, we find that God's grace is greater than all our sins (Paul killed Christians) and all our good deeds (Paul was a religious superstar), and it is the power that transforms us.

Paul Defends His Apostleship

¹¹ For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel preached by me is not of human origin. ¹² For I did not receive it from a human source and I was not taught it, but it came by a revelation of Jesus Christ.

¹³ For you have heard about my former way of life in Judaism: I intensely persecuted God's church and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ I advanced in Judaism beyond many contemporaries among my people, because I was extremely zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. ¹⁵ But when God, who from my mother's womb set me apart and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal his Son in me, so that I could preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone. ¹⁷ I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me; instead I went to Arabia and came back to Damascus.

¹⁸ Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to get to know Cephas, and I stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But I didn't see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰ I declare in the sight of God: I am not lying in what I write to you.

²¹ Afterward, I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²² I remained personally unknown to the Judean churches that are in Christ. ²³ They simply kept hearing, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith he once tried to destroy." ²⁴ And they glorified God because of me.

Paul Defends His Gospel at Jerusalem

2 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. ² I went up according to a revelation and presented to them the gospel I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those recognized as leaders. I wanted to be sure I was not running, and had not been running, in vain. ³ But not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. ⁴ This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus in order to enslave us. ⁵ But we did not give up and submit to these people for even a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would be preserved for you.

⁶ Now from those recognized as important (what they once were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism)—they added nothing to me. ⁷ On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter was for the circumcised, ⁸ since the one at work in Peter for an apostleship to the circumcised was also at work in me for the Gentiles. ⁹ When James, Cephas, and John—those recognized as pillars—acknowledged the grace that had been given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to me and Barnabas, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰ They asked only that we would remember the poor, which I had made every effort to do.

GALATIANS 1:11-2:10

REPENTANCE



Acts 2:37-39

Jesus saves those who believe and call upon His name. Saving grace is once and for all (justification) and also a continual invitation to repent for our wrongdoings. With the help of the Spirit we take inventory of our lives, humbly and honestly confess our sin, and turn away from our sin toward God in surrender. Through Jesus' offer of forgiveness, we receive true freedom.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What is God calling you to surrender to Him? Humbly confess where you have gone your own way and ask Him to help you walk in His ways instead.

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ARTWORK BY : MARTHA CAPUTO

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

GRACE IS GREATER

PREPARE

- + Plan ahead:
Life Group Leader Podcast
- + Worship:
Current Series Playlist
on Spotify
- + Review:
marinerschurch.org/messages

MAIN POINT

- + The gospel is not a human invention. It is otherworldly and designed by God. In the gospel, we find that God's grace is greater than all our sins (Paul killed Christians) and all our good deeds (Paul was a religious superstar) and it is the power that transforms us.

LEAN IN

- + What is something that people may not know about you?
- + In today's text, Paul shares some details about his life, especially how he was changed by Jesus. Later, we'll have an opportunity to share our own stories of meeting Jesus and how life has been transformed.

This week will provide a natural opportunity to remind group members of the spiritual rhythm of Share Your Story.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

CHOOSE TWO VOLUNTEERS TO READ GALATIANS 1:11-24 AND 2:1-10 OUT LOUD. (p 32-33)

- + In verse 11, what does Paul want to be sure that people know? Why is that such an important point to clarify and emphasize for the early Christians?
- + What primary evidence does Paul provide in verse 12 to prove his point? How do all of the other verses in today's passages relate to 11–12?
- + What details stand out from Paul's life before meeting Christ? After meeting Christ?
- + What else do these passages reveal about God? About humanity? About grace?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- + Is Paul's point about the gospel not being a human invention more, less, or equally important today? Explain the reason for your answer.
- + In what ways can you relate to Paul's story? What hope does Paul's story offer?

We just celebrated Easter, remembering God's grace given to us in the death and Resurrection of Jesus. This is the gospel. The book of Galatians encourages us to never graduate from the core message of Easter, but rather, to see the gospel take deeper root in our lives. Like Paul, we can share our stories of life change and continual growth. The story of our lives is one of grace—God's grace is bigger than all our sins and all our good deeds. It's the power that transforms us.

What's your story?

- + In a sentence or two, how would you describe your life before faith in Christ?
- + When and how did God open your eyes spiritually to the truth of the gospel?
- + In a minute or two, how would you describe your life and growth as a Christian?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- + Who do you know that struggles with whether or not the gospel is true? Who struggles to believe that life can change? Who might believe that God could never love them or that they're too far gone? Will you commit to praying for God to open their eyes to the truth of the gospel and to see Christ at work in and through you?
- + What other insights from the weekend message were especially timely for you? How might they also be timely for others around you?
- + Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
 - Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
 - New prayer requests
 - Prayer



Welcome to Mariners

Welcome to Mariners is a 60-minute experience during which you'll have the opportunity to learn more about our church, have a live conversation with some of our pastors, and explore how you can get involved. A meal and childcare will be provided. If you're ready to take your next step at Mariners, join us at our next Welcome to Mariners!



Scan the QR Code for more information.



A GRACIOUS GOD

WRITTEN BY : ANGELINA JOSEPH

I once heard an anecdote about a new convert who came out from a church revival shouting "Grace! Grace! God's grace!" As he was walking on the street, he met a stranger and asked him "Do you know grace?" and the stranger replied "Grace? Who is Grace?" This resonated with me because I attended church for several years before the grace of God was introduced to me.

I grew up in a church where there was limited biblical teaching. Our family religiously attended church because of our belonging to a certain denomination. However, we did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We thought our involvement in church ministry and activities would earn us

God's grace and eternal life. But we fell into the same trap as the Pharisees throughout the New Testament because they taught and focused on the law instead of recognizing the gift of God for humanity, namely, Jesus Christ. As stated in Galatians 3:10, "For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, because it is written, Everyone who does not do everything written in the book of the law is cursed."

The paradigm shifted when my cousin invited me to her church which was lively and engaging. At first, I was shocked! I went to her church repeatedly because she had something I didn't have, and it was causing a void in my life. I longed for the joy and love her friends and herself exhibited. My cousin's friends knew Bible verses and were grounded in the Word.



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For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, because it is written, Everyone who does not do everything written in the book of the law is cursed.

Galatians 3:10

This explained the confidence they had in talking about the Bible. A confidence that I didn't have.

As I continued to attend her church, God graciously opened my heart and eyes to the truth of His Word, and in time His grace found me! For the first time, I understood the beautiful gift He has provided of entering into a loving relationship with Him.

As I grew in my faith, my relationship with Jesus Christ led me to get involved in church activities inside and outside the four walls of the church and answer to the great commission as an



act of obedience: "Then he said to them, go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." (Mark 16:15) I was so overwhelmed with God's grace that the conviction to serve consumed me.

Grace is mentioned 170 times in the Bible and represents two letters "יח" in the Hebrew language that mean "Favor." The New Strong concordance as well as theologians define grace, as an "unmerited favor or a gift." Stanley Horton goes on to say "The term grace represents an aspect of God's character and activity. To experience the grace of God is to receive a gift that one cannot earn and does

not deserve." (Systematic Theology Revised Edition p 129) I am living proof that His grace is truly unmerited favor. I do not deserve is grace, and He does not need me. Yet His unending love found me, it transformed me, and I will forever rest in this reality of gratitude all thanks to grace.

GOD'S GREAT GRACE

WRITTEN BY : CHRISTINE CAINE | TEACHING PASTOR

"Christine?" Mum asked. "Since we're telling the truth, would you like to know the whole truth?" I had just reached for the baklava when Mum asked this all-telling question, and somehow, I knew. Searching her eyes for the answer, wanting it to be anything other than what I was thinking, I found myself saying it for her: "I was adopted too."

I was a grown, married, 33-year-old woman, and I was learning for the first time that I wasn't who I thought I was. The funny thing is, of all the things that could have popped into my head and out my mouth, I asked, "Am I still Greek?"

It was the comic relief we needed on one of the toughest days of our lives together. And what I said next astounded me even more, but it reflected the previous decade of my life—years in which I'd filled my heart with God's grace-filled Word.

"Before I was formed in my mother's womb," and I paused to add, "Whosever womb that was—God

knew me. He knit together my innermost parts and fashioned all of my days before there was even one of them. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Even though I've only just found out I was adopted, God has always known, and He has always loved me. And since that hasn't changed, nothing has changed. I may not be who I thought I was, but I still am who He says I am. And I am more. I am loved. I am His."

My mum was as shocked as I was by what I said, but it was the truth. And it would serve to be the foundation of how I would move through the months ahead sorting out my heart, trying to comprehend what my parents had kept from me—especially on the day my birth certificate arrived, something I'd never seen.

I was not prepared for what it said, but where my name was to be listed: it read number 2508 of 1966. No name, just a number. Then, there was a social work report that made me realize my mother gave birth to me and left the hospital without me. I wasn't just unnamed, I was



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...He named me while I was in
my mother's womb.

Isaiah 49:1

unwanted. I was abandoned from the start. And yet, once again, God's great grace and His Word came to rescue me. Isaiah 49:1 showed me the truth: "...He named me while I was in my mother's womb."

There's much more to my story, but for every chapter in my story, there's been a chapter in God's story of great grace, love, and mercy. I've seen God turn around the very things the enemy meant for evil in my life and work them together for my good and His glory. God took an unnamed, unwanted, abused, adopted young woman from Australia, poured His grace on me, and now His grace works through me to help rescue the victims of human trafficking around the world, and to equip and empower people to fulfill their God-given purpose.





WEEK 03

CHRISTIAN AMNESIA

Galatians 2:11-21

We are prone to forget the gospel and experience Christian amnesia. Even the Apostle Peter, the one God used to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, failed to apply the message to the totality of his life and relationships. The life we are to live is to "never set aside the grace of God."

Freedom from the Law

¹¹ But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned.¹² For he regularly ate with the Gentiles before certain men came from James. However, when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he feared those from the circumcision party. ¹³ Then the rest of the Jews joined his hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴ But when I saw that they were deviating from the truth of the gospel, I told Cephas in front of everyone, "If you, who are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel Gentiles to live like Jews?"

¹⁵ We are Jews by birth and not "Gentile sinners," ¹⁶ and yet because we know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we ourselves have believed in Christ Jesus. This was so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no human being will be justified. ¹⁷ But if we ourselves are also found to be "sinners" while seeking to be justified by Christ, is Christ then a promoter of sin? Absolutely not! ¹⁸ If I rebuild those things that I tore down, I show myself to be a lawbreaker. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live for God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

GALATIANS 2:11-21

PRAYER



Acts 2:42

One of the most important elements in any relationship is communication. Prayer is just that: engaging God in a conversation, sharing our hearts with Him, and spending time listening to His voice, both individually and in community.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How might God be inviting you to connect with Him?
What do you think He wants you to experience from a deeper relationship with Him?

A series of horizontal rows of small dots, intended as a guide for handwriting practice or as a template for writing answers.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

CHRISTIAN AMNESIA

PREPARE

- + Plan ahead:
Life Group Leader Podcast
- + Worship:
Current Series Playlist
on Spotify
- + Review:
marinerschurch.org/messages

MAIN POINT

- + We are prone to forget the gospel and experience Christian amnesia. Even the Apostle Peter, the one God used to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, failed to apply the message to the totality of his life and relationships. The life we are to live is to "never set aside the grace of God."

LEAN IN

- + What's the funniest, most embarrassing, or hardest-to-believe thing that you've ever forgotten? What happened as a result? How did you realize your mistake?
- + In today's text and discussion, we'll consider how we're prone to forget even the greatest news of all: we've been saved by faith through grace.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

CHOOSE A VOLUNTEER TO READ GALATIANS 2:11-21 OUT LOUD. (p 48)

- + What drama does Paul describe in verses 11–14? Why was this a more serious problem than simply who sat where?
- + What are the main points to Paul's response in verses 15–21? How would you summarize the overall message?
- + What else does this passage reveal about God? About humanity? About grace?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- + Reread verse 20. How would you explain this verse to someone? What does this look like in your own life? Provide some general and specific examples of being crucified and no longer living, of Christ living in you, and of living by faith.
- + Reread verse 21. Does this convict you, encourage you, or a little bit of both? Explain your answer.
- + When are you most likely to forget or "set aside" the grace of God? What areas of life do you try to earn the approval of yourself, of other people, or even of God in your own effort?



LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- + Think back to Cephas (Peter) and the example he set and the influence he had on others.
 - On a scale of 1–10 (1 nothing like Christ, 10 being perfectly Christ-like), how might your family rate your example today? Your neighbors? Coworkers?
 - What negative influences could result from a bad example?
 - What positive influences could result from a good example?
- + Where do you see natural divisions in our community? How can the grace of Christ heal broken relationships between people and people groups? Have you ever seen this kind of gospel unity? If so, describe it. If not, why do you think that you haven't seen it?
- + What other insights from the weekend message were especially timely for you? How might they also be timely for others around you?
- + Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
 - Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
 - New prayer requests
 - Prayer



SOLELY HIS ONLY

WRITTEN BY : LEXI RAGAN

I was never mine to begin with.
When did I go molding myself into my own?
Did it happen alone?
I cannot seem to remember.

All I do now is try to melt the fog.
I'm accustomed to this shell of self,
this "born-again" lethargy I loathe but still
live with and sit with in hollow hope.
I'm afraid I've forgotten who I am.

It's easy to forget when the law lingers.
What shouted in the crowd called a bit
louder than what whispered in the chapel.
I forgot what I was here for,
so I followed the sound.

One day Paul proved our practice perplexing.
Said we glossed o'er the glory of
our Christ's crucifixion by resurrecting
laws that deserved extinction.
Had I really discarded the death of life?

This message felt too far away from me.
Still, I seemed to have recollection
of amnesia fading freedom
when I joined the proud parade.
This, I am starting to remember.

The mask I put on never was the right size
and deep down, a tugging told me
where I walked was not wise.
The me I had molded was losing its shape.

I'm done being strung like some high-minded fugue
who plays for points in a fleeting pew,
I'm neither a Gentile nor a Jew,
But a child of grace wrapped in solid truth!

How could I possibly forget
I died the easiest death one could die
when the heaviest death one could die
cried out on the cross at Calvary?
For love. For me. For One. For free.

I was never mine to begin with.
Let it stay that way for all time.
May I never forget I'm in Him,
That to Him belongs all my life.

Sincerely,
One in Christ

ROD'S STORY

FILMED AND EDITED BY : SCOTT SMITH

Rod came to Mariners for the first time during a difficult season when he felt completely overwhelmed. During the service, he heard a message that spoke to him personally, which dramatically changed his perspective, and moved him to put his trust fully in Jesus and God's plan for his life.

Scan the QR Code below to hear more of Rod's story of finding strength in Jesus and His grace through all the ups and downs of life.





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WEEK 04

THE SHOCKING LOVE OF GOD

Galatians 3:1-13

More shocking than our drifting from the message that gives us life is the message itself—that Christ was cursed for us. On the cross, Christ received the opposite of the priestly blessing (Numbers 6) so that we could be blessed by Him.

Justification through Faith

¹ You foolish Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? ² I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning by the Spirit, are you now finishing by the flesh? ⁴ Did you experience so much for nothing—if in fact it was for nothing? ⁵ So then, does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law? Or is it by believing what you heard— ⁶ just like Abraham who believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness?

⁷ You know, then, that those who have faith, these are Abraham's sons. ⁸ Now the Scripture saw in advance that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and proclaimed the gospel ahead of time to Abraham, saying, All the nations will be blessed through you. ⁹ Consequently, those who have faith are blessed with Abraham, who had faith.

Law and Promise

¹⁰ For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, because it is written, Everyone who does not do everything written in the book of the law is cursed. ¹¹ Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because the righteous will live by faith. ¹² But the law is not based on faith; instead, the one who does these things will live by them. ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.

GALATIANS 3:1-13

SHARE YOUR STORY



Acts 2:14-36

The greatest gift we can ever give someone who doesn't yet know Jesus is an introduction to Him. Sharing our life stories is the most powerful way to show the transforming power and salvation offered through Jesus Christ. When we tell our stories of transformation, we tell the story of God.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How have you experienced God's shocking love in your life?

A series of 12 horizontal rows of small dots, intended for writing a reflection.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

THE SHOCKING LOVE OF GOD

PREPARE

- + Plan ahead:
Life Group Leader Podcast
- + Worship:
Current Series Playlist
on Spotify
- + Review:
marinerschurch.org/messages

MAIN POINT

- + More shocking than our drifting from the message that gives us life is the message itself—that Christ was cursed for us. On the cross, Christ received the opposite of the priestly blessing (Numbers 6) so that we could be blessed by Him.

LEAN IN

- + What did you do for Mother's Day? What comes to mind when you think of family?
- + Today we'll look at the extended family of faith. In our passage of Scripture, Paul reminds the Galatians that just like being born into a Jewish family didn't make the people of Israel right with God, being born again spiritually and living by faith in Jesus is the only way to be blessed as children of God.

This week will provide a natural opportunity to remind group members of the spiritual rhythm of Share Your Story.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

CHOOSE A VOLUNTEER TO READ GALATIANS 3:1-13 OUT LOUD. (p 58)

- + Why did Paul use such strong language like "foolish" and "cast a spell" in verse 1? What does this reveal about the nature of his concern?
- + What did Paul mean in verse 3 by "beginning by the Spirit" and "finishing by the flesh?"
- + What do you notice about the way Paul uses "bless" and "righteous?" How about the way he uses "curse" and "law?" What is Paul describing?
- + What else does this passage reveal about God? About humanity? About grace?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- + When has the truth of Scripture felt harsh to you? How has it proven to be an act of grace for you to recognize "harsh" truth revealed by God's Word?
- + This idea was introduced last week, but in your Christian life specifically, how are you tempted to rely on "finishing in the flesh" instead of walking by the grace-filled power of the Spirit? What happens when you try to keep the law by your own religious or moral effort? How do you recognize that you're living in the flesh rather than the Spirit?
- + What other insights from the weekend message were especially timely for you? How might they also be timely for others around you?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- + Reread verses 7-13. What are the only two conditions for all people in relation to God? What has Christ done? How must people respond?

Galatians reminds us that God is pursuing people from all people groups, and we have an amazing opportunity to participate in taking the gospel to all nations. In addition to exciting news about serving unreached people groups globally, next weekend is Mariners' Outreach Weekend. Take some time to discuss ways that your group can participate in this powerful experience—one of our seven rhythms of discipleship.

- + How can we help ministry partners take the gospel to all nations, especially unreached people groups?
- + How can we participate in Outreach Weekend? If plans have already been made, review the details with your group to make sure everyone is prepared for the experience.
- + Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
 - Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
 - New prayer requests
 - Prayer



LOVE LIFTED ME

WRITTEN BY : BRANDON GROSS

What is shocking love?

To me, it's reminiscent of a hymn I haven't heard in over 25 years ("Love Lifted Me" by James Rowe). As I sat down to write this story, I began retracing the hymn's origin to me: church services with grandpa and grandma when I was growing up, memories of overcooked pot roast after church service (only love could make that palatable), and family.

Warm and endearing, yes. But shocking, no.

As I continued down this rabbit hole, I thought back to my childhood and what love meant to me then. A warm blanket and bowl of soup from my father when I was sick—that's love. I

would milk even the mildest symptoms to get out of school, which he undoubtedly knew. My mother sacrificing her needs and/or sanity to provide me with a good pair of shoes to protect my feet and avoid being made fun of at school—that's love. Their patience, a virtue I struggle with to this day—that's love. And that love certainly lifted me far more than I deserved over the years.

Something was still missing however, and it wasn't until I read the lyrics that the hymn's true meaning became clear, and I understood what God was trying to tell me. As I read the lyrics once, twice, and a third time, my eyes welled up and tears began to stream down my face.



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SO GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE...

Genesis 1:27

In that moment, I felt overwhelmed. What started out as a story to compliment my parents and the loving nature God has blessed them with turned into a divine teaching moment. Suddenly, I was taken back to week one of Rooted and the story of creation. "So God created man in his own image..." (Genesis 1:27). All of my mistakes, the anguish I have caused my parents, the pain and disappointment over the years they must have felt watching me repeat my mistakes, and yet they still love me. This is shocking love that can only come from God, because there is no way a parent can love a child so deeply otherwise. And then



my thoughts transitioned to God's love for me. I really didn't want to go here in this already fragile state, but He wasn't done with me yet. I have sinned so deeply and cried out for Him to rescue me countless times, and yet I still sin. I don't deserve any of what He's blessed me with because I still sin. I don't even deserve the love and forgiveness I've been blessed with on Earth because I still sin. Yet, He says otherwise.

When I think of shocking love, I think of His embrace. We have been blessed to have a Creator who made us in His image, so that we can show others grace and ultimately shock them with our love. So, take a moment today, drop to your knees, and thank Him for His grace. If you're struggling, ask Him to cover you in His abundant grace. His love will shock you!

ADORNED WITH GRACE

WRITTEN BY : NATALIA GUARINO

Out of the dark
Into Your light
Salt of the Earth
Perched city in night

Wore my disgrace
Pierced in my place
Made brand new
My beloved Bridegroom

Dressed in Your grace
Forgiveness not free
Your love unconditional
Your goodness follows me

Garland for my head
Lamp for my feet
Clothed in humility
You humble me

Crown on my head
Gospel for my feet
Clothed in righteousness
You have righted me
Adorned in Your grace

Forgiven and free
Your joy overflows
Your peace rests on me

Father is near
Holy Kingdom above
Immaterial leading
Gowned in Your love

Eyes on the Son
Morning Star bright
Holy Spirit guide
Your Bride robed in white

Forever in Your grace
Forgiven and free
Your love saves
Your grace rescues me



ARTWORK BY : MARTHA CAPUTO



5

WEEK 05

GRACE FOR ALL NATIONS

Galatians 3:7-29

The fullness of God's gracious plan is that people from every nation will be eternally happy. From the very beginning, God's intention has been to rescue people and populate Heaven with people from every people group. We are invited to participate.

⁷ You know, then, that those who have faith, these are Abraham's sons. ⁸ Now the Scripture saw in advance that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and proclaimed the gospel ahead of time to Abraham, saying, All the nations will be blessed through you. ⁹ Consequently, those who have faith are blessed with Abraham, who had faith.

Law and Promise

¹⁰ For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, because it is written, Everyone who does not do everything written in the book of the law is cursed. ¹¹ Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because the righteous will live by faith. ¹² But the law is not based on faith; instead, the one who does these things will live by them. ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. ¹⁴ The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promised Spirit through faith.

¹⁵ Brothers and sisters, I'm using a human illustration. No one sets aside or makes additions to a validated human will. ¹⁶ Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say "and to seeds," as though referring to many, but referring to one, and to your seed, who is Christ. ¹⁷ My point is this: The law, which came 430 years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously established by God and thus cancel the promise. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance is based on the law, it is no longer based on the promise; but God has graciously given it to Abraham through the promise.

The Purpose of the Law

¹⁹ Why, then, was the law given? It was added for the sake of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise was made would come. The law was put into effect through angels by means of a mediator. ²⁰ Now a mediator is not just for one person alone, but God is one. ²¹ Is the law therefore contrary to God's promises? Absolutely not! For if the law had been granted with the ability to give life, then righteousness would certainly be on the basis of the law. ²² But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin's power, so that the promise might be given on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ to those who believe. ²³ Before this faith came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed. ²⁴ The law, then, was our guardian until Christ, so that we could be justified by faith. ²⁵ But since that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for through faith you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus.

Sons and Heirs

²⁷ For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. ²⁸ There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.

GALATIANS 3:7-29

SERVE THE COMMUNITY



Acts 2:44-45

We are called and equipped by the Holy Spirit to share God's love by participating in the ministry of Jesus. He has given us agency with Him to fearlessly influence our society and the world. When we serve in the world and in His church, we impact those around us and reveal God's glory.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Where might God be calling you to use your gifts, passions, and experiences to serve others?

A grid of 10 rows and 20 columns of small dots for reflection writing.



LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

GRACE FOR ALL NATIONS

PREPARE

- + Plan ahead:
Life Group Leader Podcast
- + Worship:
Current Series Playlist
on Spotify
- + Review:
marinerschurch.org/messages

MAIN POINT

- + The fullness of God's gracious plan is that people from every nation will be eternally happy. From the very beginning, God's intention has been to rescue people and populate Heaven with people from every people group. We are invited to participate.

LEAN IN

- + Quiz your group with the following "family tree" questions? Who...
 - Knows the origin of their last name?
 - Can name a great-great-grandparent?
 - Has the oldest living relative?
 - Has the youngest relative?
 - Has the most siblings?
 - Has the most distant family member (geographically)?
 - Has the closest family member (geographically)?
- + Today's discussion will dig deeper into the topic of God's family.

This week will provide a natural opportunity to remind group members of the spiritual rhythm of Serve the Community.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

CHOOSE A VOLUNTEER TO READ GALATIANS 3:7-29 OUT LOUD. (p 72-73)

- + In verses 15-18, what does Paul's illustration of the "will" and "inheritance" represent?
- + Why is Paul's point in verse 17 about the time between God's promise to Abraham and God's provision of the law for Israel significant to understanding the gospel?
- + In verses 19-26, what does Paul's illustration of the guardian represent?
- + In verses 27-29, what does being "clothed with Christ" represent?
- + What else does this passage reveal about God? About humanity? About grace?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- + Of the various illustrations Paul used in this text, which was most helpful to you personally? How did it help? What became more clear?
- + We're at the halfway point now. In light of everything we've read and discussed in the first three chapters of Galatians over these five weeks, what has been the most amazing thing so far? Why does that stand out to you?
- + What other insights from the weekend message were especially timely for you? How might they also be timely for others around you?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- + Next weekend is an "I Believe" weekend in worship gatherings. Is there anyone that you can invite to join you?
Would the person/people you identified for prayer in week two be willing and able to join you in person or online?

Galatians reminds us that God is pursuing people from all people groups and we have an amazing opportunity to participate in taking the gospel to all nations. Take some time to review insights and experiences from Outreach Weekend.

- + Do you have any stories to share from personal experiences during the weekend?
- + What was especially inspiring or meaningful to you during Outreach Weekend?
- + Did any new ideas or opportunities come to mind for ways to continue loving our neighbors and reaching out to the community?
- + Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
 - Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
 - New prayer requests
 - Prayer



SPREADING GOD'S GRACE

WRITTEN BY : JOSSY CHACKO

God's grace is for every person, in every situation, in every nation. Through this COVID season, our leaders—including myself—have been stretched in every way. And we have experienced that grace that is sufficient. Just like the Apostle Paul's experience, there has been no change to our circumstance, but the Lord has given us an extra dimension of grace to navigate through the endless challenges.

The turmoil has created incredible opportunities for us to demonstrate in a practical way the often invisible grace of our Lord. Last year alone, we helped 3.64 million suffering people. As one of our brothers took food to a homeless person affected by COVID, he cried and wanted to touch the worker asking "Are you an angel?" as he had not eaten for weeks. As our people continue to choose to love their neighbor as themselves, we continue to hear powerful stories of God's grace at work.

We are also seeing record numbers of young people choosing to serve the Lord. COVID has caused them to open their eyes to the vanity and futility of worldly things and they are instead choosing to invest in what matters in eternity. Thanks to your partnership we are able to train, equip, and resource them.

Last year, we mobilized 1 million hours of prayer, resulting in some miraculous testimonies. For example, a family was walking down the street and heard loud wailing from a home. They rushed in to help, thinking something terrible was happening. Instead, they found our worker and his family crying out for the Lord to protect their village and nation. This family was so moved that they stayed for the prayer meeting. Within a few weeks, the extended family of 11 people chose to accept this special grace.

All of this—and much more—is only possible thanks to your commitment and partnership to take this grace to all nations, especially those who don't have the opportunity to hear.

In many nations, God is using the misery and emptiness of the world to open people's eyes and draw them closer to Himself. Our job is to be light and salt in every situation. Our job is not to make people accept Him, that is their choice; our job is simply to share about Him, leave imprints of His grace in their lives, and continue to pray.

Would you be intentional in spreading His grace today? From your home to the ends of the Earth? In eternity, you will be so glad you did!



WEEK 5

MARINERS GLOBAL CHURCH PARTNERS



- MEXICO
- HAITI
- GERMANY
- SRI LANKA
- CONGO
- EGYPT
- KENYA
- UGANDA
- EAST & SOUTH ASIA

ARTWORK BY : DAVID HARRINGTON



MEXICO

Partner Spotlight

Ministerios Transformación

Pastor Daniel & Yoli Nunez / Pastor Tury & Naiiely Nunez

Ministerios Transformación is committed to preparing God's people to serve in their community and transform the world. Pastor Daniel has planted 45 churches, reaching over 1,000+ people in the northern Baja California area of Mexico. Pastor Tury has taken on the role of lead pastor at Comunidad Connexion in the El Niño neighborhood.

HAITI

Partner Spotlight

Communauté De Gloire (Glory Glory Center)

Pastor Samuel Metelus

The Glory Glory Center cares for 50+ children who were orphaned by Haiti's 2010 earthquake. Their ministry extends to the surrounding communities as the church becomes a center of hope, care, healing, opportunity, and development in Southern Haiti and beyond. Pastor Sam most recently opened a new school, College Lumiere, serving over 350+ students.

EAST & SOUTH ASIA

Partner Spotlight

Partner unnamed for safety.

GERMANY

Partner Spotlight

Stadlicht, Mavuno Berlin, and

Treffpunkt Leben

Pastors Henry Dittrich, Christian Boguslawski, and Martin Scharnowski

Germany has the largest economy in the European Union; ensures free, quality higher education for both national and international residents; and is among one of the most punctual countries in the world. Though once a central hub of theology and Christian thought, Christianity in Germany has receded over time. However, due to crises in the Middle East, Germany has opened its doors to over 1.1 million refugees, leading many German church leaders to believe that God is on the move, creating opportunities to present the gospel to people from the Middle East, but also bringing about a New Reformation for Germans with multi-ethnic and multi-cultural churches.

SRI LANKA

Partner Spotlight

Kithu Sevana

Pastor Adrian Devisser

Kithu Sevana means "The Shadow of Christ" and our partners are passionate about living this out in their community. Their vision is to reach out to men, women, and children who are overlooked, rejected, and ignored by society.

CONGO

Partner Spotlight

Un Jour Nouveau (Africa New Day)

Camille & Esther Ntoto

The aim of the ministry is to reconcile the past, address present situations, and prevent future recurrences of crises through Christ-centered and unique holistic strategies.

EGYPT

Partner Spotlight

Partner unnamed for safety.

We partner with the largest evangelical church in the Middle East. Located in Cairo, the church has over 7,000 members and a presence in over 20 countries in the Middle East. Our partner church is known as the "Church of the Revolution," as it extends a hand of love to people, regardless of their religious background.

KENYA

Partner Spotlight

Mavuno Church

Pastor Muriithi Wanjau

Mavuno Church, located in Nairobi, Kenya, has a vision to plant a culture-defining church in every capital city and gateway city of the world. They do this by turning ordinary people into fearless influencers who bring transformation in the various sectors of society.

UGANDA

Partner Spotlight

Ggaba Community Church

Pastor Peter Kasirivu

Ggaba Community Church, located in Kampala, Uganda, holds a vision to bring holistic transformation to the people of Uganda. This church is in partnership with over 200 churches all over Uganda to rebuild a country, which was under dictator oppression for years.

PARTNERS

Mariners Church Refugee Ministry

Partner Spotlight

Voice of the Refugee

A faith-based, non-profit that exists to mobilize local resources in order to fully engage and assist the Middle Eastern and North African refugee community of Orange County.

International Students

Partner Spotlight

Bridges International

Our mission as the Mariners International Students Ministry is to fulfill and live out God's calling by being in community with international students and bringing glory to God. We do so by partnering with Bridges (based out of UCI) and connecting students to the Mariners family.



6

WEEK 06

KIDS AND HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM

Galatians 4:1-7

Because of Jesus we are no longer enslaved to this world, but are kids and heirs of the Kingdom. The law only shows us our need for Christ and is powerless to rescue us. But what the law could not do, Christ did for us. Now, we may enjoy a relationship with our eternal Father.

4 Now I say that as long as the heir is a child, he differs in no way from a slave, though he is the owner of everything. ² Instead, he is under guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. ³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were in slavery under the elements of the world. ⁴ When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!" ⁷ So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir.

GALATIANS 4:1-7

WORSHIP



Acts 2:26-28, 46-47

As children of God, it is important to consistently set aside time to remember what God has done, to thank Him for it, and to put Him on display as we give Him the glory. In all circumstances, we are called to practice God-centered worship.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How has worship grown your love and gratitude for Jesus?

A grid of 20 rows and 30 columns of small dots for writing.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

KIDS AND HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM

PREPARE

- + Plan ahead:
Life Group Leader Podcast
- + Worship:
Current Series Playlist
on Spotify
- + Review:
marinerschurch.org/messages

MAIN POINT

- + Because of Jesus we are no longer enslaved to this world, but kids and heirs of the Kingdom. The law only shows us our need for Christ and is powerless to rescue us. But what the law could not do, Christ did for us. Now, we may enjoy a relationship with our eternal Father.

LEAN IN

- + Did you or anyone in your family have a nickname growing up? What was it and where did it come from?
- + In today's text, we'll see the term "Abba," which was a term of love and respect for a father in the time and culture of Jesus. This highlights the close personal relationship we have with God as His children.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

CHOOSE A VOLUNTEER TO READ GALATIANS 4:1-7 OUT LOUD. (p 88)

- + What is meant by the comparison of a child to a household servant? How does that depict life under the law?
- + How does adoption help explain the transformation of identity we experience in Christ?
- + Where do you see all three Persons of the Trinity in this text? Why is this significant?
- + What else does this passage reveal about God? About humanity? About grace?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- + What thoughts and feelings do you have when Scripture says you are a child of God—a son and heir of the Father?
- + Does the language of “Father” help or hurt your own relationship with God?
 - If you had a good or decent relationship with a father figure, how has that shaped the way you view God? And how you view yourself as His child?
 - If you had a bad relationship or none at all with an earthly father figure, how has that shaped the way you view God? And how you view yourself as His child?
 - How can both our good and bad experiences with family help us understand and long for a perfect Heavenly Father and life as His children—brothers and sisters in Christ?
- + Is the Spirit prompting you to take a step of faith, walking in the freedom you’ve received as a son and heir—not a slave—of God? If so, what is it and how can we help? (If you’re not sure or not ready to share yet, prayerfully ask the Spirit to prepare your heart for next week.)

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- + What other insights from the weekend message were especially timely for you? How might they also be timely for others around you?
- + Did anybody know someone who responded to the “I Believe” part of last weekend’s worship gathering?
- + What encourages or challenges you when you see people respond to the gospel of Jesus in faith? What memories or affections are stirred up in you when seeing declarations of faith, baptisms, etc.?
- + Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
 - Updates on previous weeks’ prayer requests
 - New prayer requests
 - Prayer

ABBA, FATHER

WRITTEN BY : NU YANG

Stumbling in the dark
I often miss my mark
I don't know if I'm aware
I'm gasping for air
Soaking in my shame and guilt
Like a dying flower that has wilt

It's easier to hide alone
Than to accept the love He's shown
I rather admit defeat
Than give up my earthly seat
How can I accept my Father's grace
and lose myself in His embrace?

What debt do I have to pay
to find a new way?
Chained and bound
is how I'm found
He unshackles me and opens the door
Leads me to freedom and so much more

Washed anew in Christ's blood
Grace pours out like a flood
I've been given a clean slate
For me, it's not too late
A will, an inheritance with my name
My Father's Love I shall claim





HIS DAUGHTER

WRITTEN BY : MAEGAN LUJAN

// Who is Maegan Lujan?"

It's a simple enough question, but one that I dreaded answering most of my life. It caused uneasiness, anxiety, frustration, sadness, disappointment; basically, an emotional tidal wave that only I drowned in. To the world, I was a new student in X town and eventually a director at Y company. Inside, I was the foster kid just trying to make sense of life and get through the day. So, why share this with you? Because there are thousands like me right here in Orange County, and they need a voice.

From day one, there was nothing normal about my life. I grew up with my mom, two brothers, and one sister in some capacity, some of the time. For a couple months we'd live in one place, then we'd move to another place, and then my mom would meet someone new who was abusive toward us, then we'd leave, and the cycle just continued. My siblings, who thankfully are still alive and part of my life in some form, were there for periods of time, and

then they weren't. My birth father, a man who I truly wish more time could've been spent with learning who he was, spent most of my life in prison for violence and substance abuse.

At some point, after moving to countless towns in several states, my siblings and I were placed in foster care. Life with my mom was messy. She was dishonest, used people, and was unable to provide any sense of security or stability for us. While foster care did yield more stable home environments, my life was still unstable. Social workers, black trash bags with my few belongings being moved around by hands in latex gloves, a new (but temporary) home, confusion...that was my reality.

When I turned 14, my older brother aged out of the system and my sister was adopted. This left my little brother and I, who had a short stint back with my mom before I decided being on our own would be a safer option, which meant running away. By the grace of God, I was able to secure a job here in Orange County at a coffee shop. I made friends and even rented



a room of my own. By now my dad was out of prison and settled in Costa Mesa. While it was a little daunting, I did finally meet him, and we spent some time together. Unfortunately, it was short lived as he ended up back in prison; his strongholds got the best of him once again. He passed away in 2017, out of prison and living in Arizona. I never did have the chance to get very close to him as he believed only bad things happened when he was in our lives, which still stings. My mom is somewhere, still fighting her battles and not a part of my life.

My reality growing up was rough, but somehow, I maintained a glimmer of hope. Not so much for myself, although I did have dreams, but for the other foster children out there. The kids who wept themselves to sleep and felt lost at every waking moment needed to know they weren't alone and that our Heavenly Father is with His children every step of the way. Somehow, somehow I knew that I was meant

to be a voice for and to them. But I still didn't have my own voice.

Overwhelmed with insecurities and imposter syndrome, I finally cracked. In May 2019, I was in Las Vegas for a business event and corporate speaking engagement and had to leave a day early for the OC Business Journal's Women in Business awards dinner. As a nominee, I couldn't miss this. As the foster kid, a life full of pain and suffering came full circle to being a notable businesswoman. And then it hit me in the airport—if I win, "Who is Maegan Lujan?" will be asked and I had to be prepared. Let's just call this my watershed moment because I shed some tears to say the least. After all this time of just trying to survive life, my story needed to be told, and I needed to fulfill my purpose of advocating for OC's foster youth.

Although I didn't win or get to tell my story publicly at this event, I did have my chance a



few months later in New York City with a room full of successful businesswomen, where I was named a 2019 Woman in Tech Influencer of the Year. As I told my story, tears were shed and my life was changed. God ignited a fire within my soul. I had served at a few of the Mariners Foster Family Christmas parties, but that wasn't enough. I finally had the courage to accept God's calling of being a voice to those in need.

It turns out that telling my story publicly started another form of tidal wave, one yielding an outpouring of support from my professional community. My company, Toshiba, is a corporate sponsor to Orangewood Foundation, and our CEO decided it was my time to take on the management of our partnership. Formally, I'm our ambassador to Orangewood; personally, I'm the foster kid who has now found her purpose; spiritually, I'm His daughter who finally found her home.

It's not easy to invest time in our foster youth; your heart will break in ways you never thought possible. But I promise you it's a fraction of what every foster child in your community feels. Every minute of time spent serving, ounce of positive energy, warm smile, and genuine prayer impacts our youths' lives in more ways than you can imagine. We're fortunate to have a church home that partners with our local foster youth organizations, and we need you.

Please consider praying this prayer with me and joining the mission of providing the loving voice our foster youth need: "Father, please open my heart to our community. As your son/daughter, you've blessed me, and I want to bless those that are in need of your love. I want to be a beacon of hope to those who are lost. Please use me."

THE MIRACLE OF SALVATION

WRITTEN BY : JOHN THOMAS | COMMUNITY PASTOR

I wonder whether you have ever shared this sentiment that I find myself carrying from time to time. It goes something like this: "I wish we saw more miracles today like the ones we read about in the New Testament." It seems like every time I open up the gospels or turn the page in the book of Acts, I read of miracle after miracle.

Miracles were in fact a normative and essential part of Jesus' ministry. While John the Baptist was

in prison, John sent some of his own disciples to question Jesus whether He was the Messiah they had been waiting for. Was He the one who was going to bring the long-awaited Kingdom or should they keep waiting? Jesus' answer was "... Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news." (Luke 7:22)



An emphatic yes! Jesus was saying that the Kingdom had come, His Kingdom had come, and one of the ways His Kingdom is demonstrated is through miracles. Where the curse of sin brought on death and destruction, the Kingdom brought life and healing. So, I long for miracles! I long to see more of the in-breaking of God's Kingdom in the here and now.

And here's what I know to be true. There is no greater miracle than a life reborn through the transformative and final work of Jesus. There is no greater miracle than how God is able to take us from enemies to sons and daughters, from darkness to light, from death to life. Charles Spurgeon put it plainly when he said, "The greatest miracle of all is the salvation of a soul."

As we put our faith in Jesus, we are given new life. This isn't some new life that only starts on the other side of eternity, but a new life that we can experience now as we are welcomed home as adopted sons and daughters of our loving

Father. Galatians 4:7 tells us, "So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir." We are heirs of God! For some, their earthly inheritance from their family is substantial. But I can guarantee you, nothing comes close to the inheritance we have as children of God. We get the fullness of His forgiveness; His everlasting peace; and His love always at work in us. All that He is, is available to us. Not because of our perfection or worth, but because of the perfection of Jesus we receive when we say yes to Him.

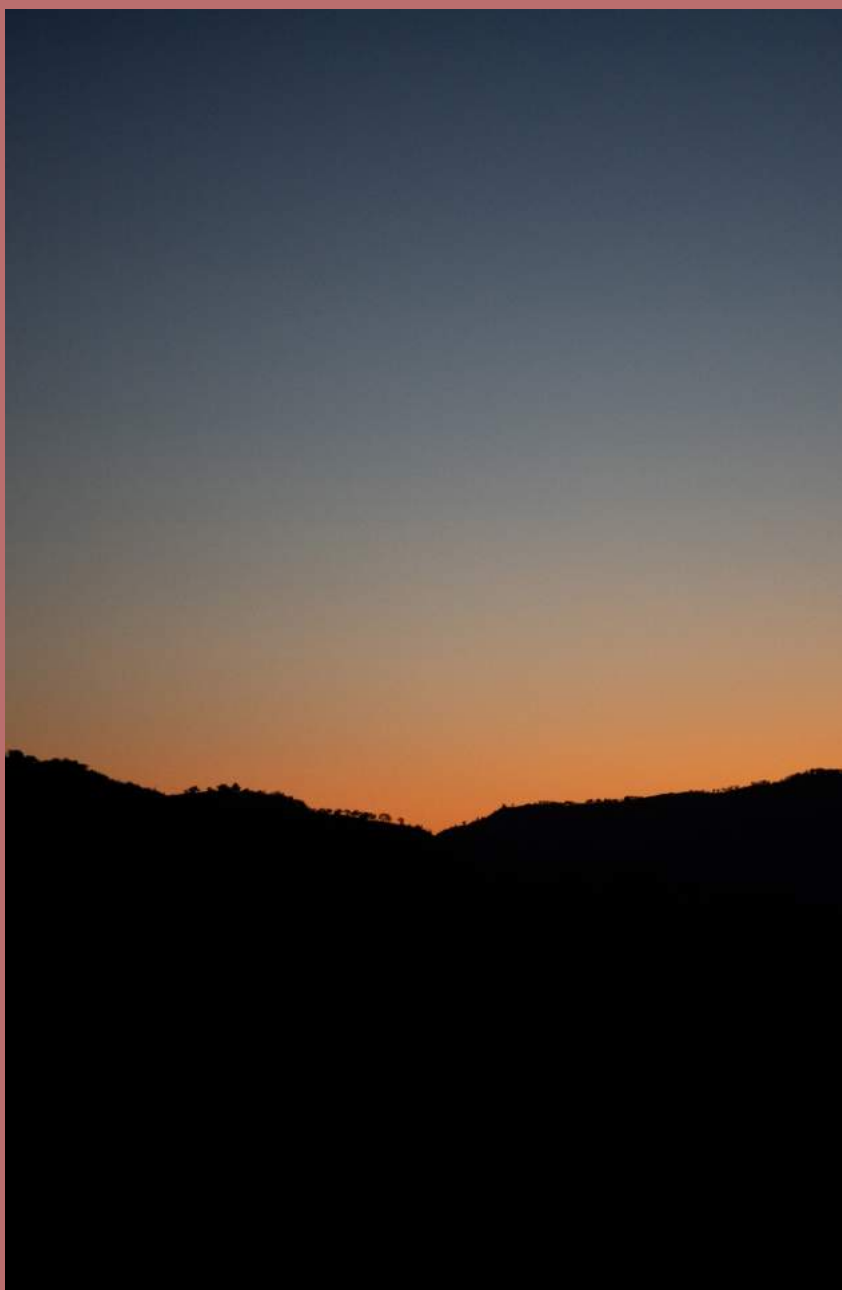
So every time someone stands and declares, "I Believe," that is a miracle. Every time a wandering, distant heart, compelled by God's Spirit and grace takes a step towards home, the Father, who is always pursuing, comes running to embrace with His grace. That is a miracle! Yes and amen to more miracles. Yes, and amen to every man, woman, and child being reborn and welcomed home into the family of God!

ALL-CHURCH NIGHT OF WORSHIP

We regularly host extended times of worship inside the Worship Center at Mariners Irvine with the Mariners Worship team. Bring your friends and neighbors and come experience the incredible joy of worshipping together in community at our next All-Church Night of Worship.



Scan the QR Code for more information.





WEEK 07

FREED TO BE FREE

Galatians 4:8-5:1

Don't let legalism steal your freedom! Legalists will always persecute those who are in awe of God's grace. Legalists don't really like grace because grace reminds us that we have done nothing to qualify ourselves to stand before God.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

⁸ But in the past, since you didn't know God, you were enslaved to things that by nature are not gods. ⁹ But now, since you know God, or rather have become known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elements? Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again? ¹⁰ You are observing special days, months, seasons, and years. ¹¹ I am fearful for you, that perhaps my labor for you has been wasted.

¹² I beg you, brothers and sisters: Become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have not wronged me; ¹³ you know that previously I preached the gospel to you because of a weakness of the flesh. ¹⁴ You did not despise or reject me though my physical condition was a trial for you. On the contrary, you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus himself.

¹⁵ Where, then, is your blessing? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ So then, have I become your enemy because I told you the truth? ¹⁷ They court you eagerly, but not for good. They want to exclude you from me, so that you would pursue them. ¹⁸ But it is always good to be pursued in a good manner—and not just when I am with you. ¹⁹ My children, I am again suffering labor pains for you until Christ is formed in you. ²⁰ I would like to be with you right now and change my tone of voice, because I don't know what to do about you.

Sarah and Hagar: Two Covenants

²¹ Tell me, you who want to be under the law, don't you hear the law? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and the other by a free woman. ²³ But the one by the slave was born as a result of the flesh, while the one by the free woman was born through promise. ²⁴ These things are being taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai and bears children into slavery—this is Hagar. ²⁵ Now Hagar represents Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷ For it is written,

Rejoice, childless woman,
unable to give birth.
Burst into song and shout,
you who are not in labor,
for the children of the desolate woman will be many,
more numerous than those
of the woman who has a husband.

²⁸ Now you too, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ But just as then the child born as a result of the flesh persecuted the one born as a result of the Spirit, so also now. ³⁰ But what does the Scripture say? "Drive out the slave and her son, for the son of the slave will never be a coheir with the son of the free woman."

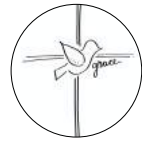
³¹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of a slave but of the free woman.

Freedom of the Christian

5 For freedom, Christ set us free. Stand firm, then, and don't submit again to a yoke of slavery.

GALATIANS 4:8-5:1

SACRIFICIAL GENEROSITY



Acts 2:44-45

Giving demonstrates our dependence on God.

We acknowledge that all we own has been given

to us by Him. In His generosity toward us, God

desires that we, too, are generous and will use

our resources as a tangible way to partner with

Him in His work in the world and in the lives of

those around us. We are blessed to be a blessing

(Genesis 12:2).

REFLECTION QUESTION

Where is God calling you to give generously?

How has giving increased your faith and trust in Jesus?

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LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

FREED TO BE FREE

PREPARE

- + Plan ahead:
Life Group Leader Podcast
- + Worship:
Current Series Playlist
on Spotify
- + Review:
marinerschurch.org/messages

MAIN POINT

- + Don't let legalism steal your freedom! Legalists will always persecute those who are in awe of God's grace. Legalists don't really like grace because grace reminds us that we have done nothing to qualify ourselves to stand before God.

LEAN IN

- + When have you been more focused on the rules or technical precision of something than on enjoying and being fully invested in the experience?
- + In today's text, we'll be reminded that while discerning right and wrong is certainly part of the Christian life, God invites us to rest and enjoy the freedom of a relationship with Him.

This week will provide a natural opportunity to remind group members of the spiritual rhythm of Repentance.

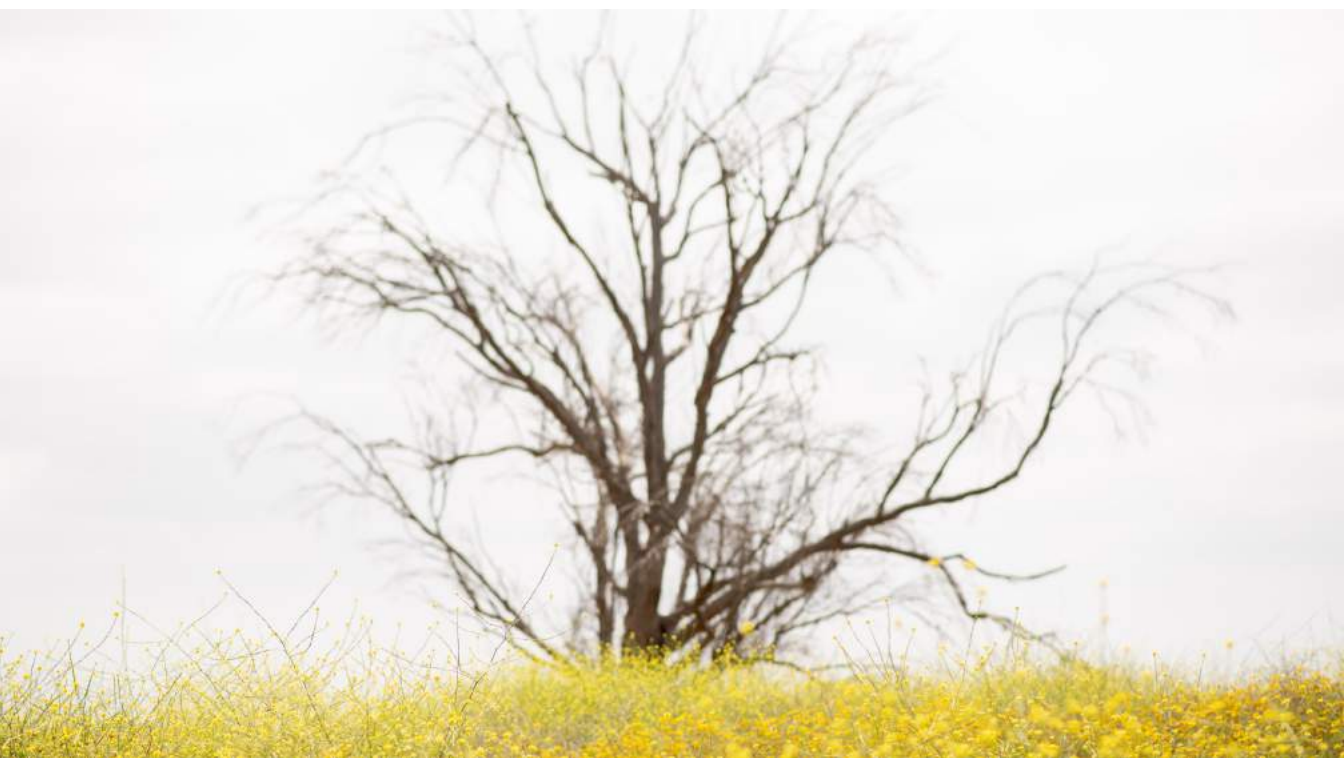
LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

CHOOSE A VOLUNTEER TO READ GALATIANS 4:8-5:1 OUT LOUD. (p 102-103)

- + What examples does Paul give for how the Galatians' actions have been Christ-like but their beliefs and religious practices have missed the heart of the gospel? What does this reveal about the Christian life? What sobering reminder does it provide churches, small groups, and families?
- + What point is Paul making with the historical and theological illustration of the "free woman" (Abraham's wife, Sarah) and Hagar (Abraham's slave, Sarah's servant)?
- + How is 5:1 a summary statement for today's passage (and for the past several weeks)?
- + What else does this passage reveal about God? About humanity? About grace?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- + The Galatians were reverting to a form of religious ritual and rule keeping. In what ways are you prone to legalism? Where do you find yourself judging others or even yourself on anything other than faith and grace?
- + What guilt or shame robs you of the joy of your identity and inheritance in Christ?
- + Reread Galatians 4:8-9 and 5:1. What "weak and worthless" things do you keep turning back to even though you've been freed by Christ? Is anything currently enslaving you?



LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- + Related to the rhythm of repentance and breaking strongholds, are there certain routines, environments, or relationships that you need to set healthy boundaries or even stay away from to allow the Spirit to reorder your affections and habits toward Christ-likeness?
- + What other insights from the weekend message were especially timely for you? How might they also be timely for others around you?
- + Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
 - Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
 - New prayer requests
 - Prayer

CARE & RECOVERY

Mariners Care and Recovery is the place where our stories of pain, trial, and struggle become the soil from which God deepens our discipleship and moves us into a redeemed future. We offer a wide array of safe, gospel-centered group experiences focused on three areas: relational and emotional growth courses, support groups, and recovery groups.



Scan the QR Code for more information.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

WRITTEN BY : JARED KIRKWOOD | DISCIPLESHIP PASTOR

Billions of dollars are spent annually to attend movies and sporting events—that's a ton of money in hopes of feeling happy!

The pursuit of happiness often leads us to a pursuit of money—believing that money is the entrance fee to a life of joy. God is deeply concerned with your joy and your finances, but did you know that in Scripture those two things are connected?

The Bible is far from silent about finances. With roughly 500 verses about prayer, even fewer than verses about faith, it's staggering to see that over 2,000 verses deal with financial issues.

In Matthew 25, we find the parable of the talents, a story about a master who distributes his wealth between three servants. Two of them receive the money and immediately put it to work, doubling the wealth. One servant, believing the master was a harsh man, hid the money in the ground out of fear. When the master returns all three servants are asked to show what they did with their distribution. For the two who put it to work, they receive the greatest reward: sharing in their master's joy. For the one who was afraid, a very different result.



For many of us, a financial conversation doesn't feel like freedom. Actually, it feels like the opposite: constraint. We build budgets and attempt to stick to them, organize our bills and a schedule to pay them on time, or—if you're like me—manage savings accounts to ensure we have enough to cover our son's braces for when that time comes. But the reality is that for most of us, financial decisions and conversations come from a place of scarcity rather than abundance.

The major turning point for me came when I embraced one critical component: God is the generous giver of all things, and I am the faithful steward.

This goes against nearly everything we learn outside of the church. We are constantly confronted with the message that says, "You earned this, you deserve this, and you are entitled to this. If you don't have enough, work harder. If you have plenty, spend how you wish because it's all yours." But if we make the shift to seeing God as the owner and giver, our relationship to material possessions and finances completely changes.

That change is freedom. We don't have to be constrained by our material possessions, excessive financial obligations, or pressure to increase our finances to cover our expenses when we trust that God will provide. "Consider the birds of the sky: They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they?" (Matthew 6:26)

I have been given a portion of God's wealth, which informs everything I do with what is His. If it all goes back to Him anyway, I am freed to be as generous, loving, and kind as He is with me. Jesus wants you to have an abundant life, not one of scarcity (John 10:10). Abundance comes from God, you need only to steward it well.

And what's the result? Unexplainable joy.





GOD'S
GRACE

WHERE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED GOD'S GRACE IN YOUR LIFE?

"Deep down, I knew there was something in me that wanted to be better, but time after time, I would be stuck in a repeated cycle of bad habits, trying to find answers in all the wrong places...It was only by the grace of God that He was able to pull me out of the rut I had put myself in. He gave me a chance to fight another day."

Johnny (28)

"I am grateful to be reborn and start a new life with Jesus Christ being the center of my life. He is my everything, and I surrender my life to Him. All I want is to be His servant. To love, trust, obey, honor, fellowship, and serve Him and His people."

Lores (49)

"By His grace, I survived a broken back, a broken neck twice, and I am not a paraplegic or quadriplegic. Because of this, I tell everyone, 'You are looking at a walking, talking miracle of God.' "

Gary (69)

"A time when I experienced God's grace was definitely at summer camp...That week during one of the services I felt really connected and in awe with God and flipped the switch at the service to be able to walk with Him. I'm super thankful for that."

Adam (18)

"Reassurance of His presence, power, and protection—even when I make mistakes."

Anita (61)

"In my heart."

Ben (4)

"It was not until my freshman year of high school that I encountered God's grace. At a Mariners Church service, the pastor described that I have one true father—my Heavenly Father.My earthly father and I do not speak any longer, but I am satisfied knowing that I have a Father in Heaven watching out for me. I receive His new grace every morning."

Hailey (16)

"He has helped me through very hard times. He has helped me not let my mom die. He also let me have a good school. He comforts me when I get hurt. He stays right beside me at all times, and He is always with me."

Eli (10)

"In spite of my shortcomings, my Heavenly Father in His loving way, continues to provide to me the undeserved gift of grace throughout both the challenging and rewarding seasons of my life.

My faith, my family, my service, my health, my abilities, and my provisions, all are a testimony to God and His favor."

Bill (63)

"God brought His message of salvation to my work cubicle. Seven years ago, a coworker pulled out a Rooted book and kindly asked "Do you believe in Jesus?" He showed me grace when I repented of my sins—and when I stubbornly tried to keep them a secret from Him...He's transformed the way that I think so that I can freely love and serve those around me."

Steph (32)





WEEK 08

HOW NOT TO BE MISERABLE

Galatians 5:1-5:15

Religion, man's attempt to earn God's favor, leads to misery. When we trust ourselves, our joy is never full, we never know if our standing is secure, and we are never satisfied that we have done enough. Instead of trying to be justified, we must trust the Justifier.

Freedom of the Christian

5 For freedom, Christ set us free. Stand firm, then, and don't submit again to a yoke of slavery. ² Take note! I, Paul, am telling you that if you get yourselves circumcised, Christ will not benefit you at all. ³ Again I testify to every man who gets himself circumcised that he is obligated to do the entire law. ⁴ You who are trying to be justified by the law are alienated from Christ; you have fallen from grace. ⁵ For we eagerly await through the Spirit, by faith, the hope of righteousness. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes anything; what matters is faith working through love.

⁷ You were running well. Who prevented you from being persuaded regarding the truth?

⁸ This persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. ⁹ A little leaven leavens the whole batch of dough. ¹⁰ I myself am persuaded in the Lord you will not accept any other view. But whoever it is that is confusing you will pay the penalty. ¹¹ Now brothers and sisters, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. ¹² I wish those who are disturbing you might also let themselves be mutilated!

¹³ For you were called to be free, brothers and sisters; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement: Love your neighbor as yourself. ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will be consumed by one another.

GALATIANS 5:1-5:15

PRAYER



Acts 2:42

One of the most important elements in any relationship is communication. Prayer is just that: engaging God in a conversation, sharing our hearts with Him, and spending time listening to His voice, both individually and in community.

REFLECTION QUESTION

**What can you bring to the Lord in prayer?
Where are the places you need His wisdom,
grace, strength, or guidance?**

A grid of 20 rows and 20 columns of small dots, intended for handwritten reflection.



LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

HOW NOT TO BE MISERABLE

PREPARE

- + Plan ahead:
Life Group Leader Podcast
- + Worship:
Current Series Playlist
on Spotify
- + Review:
marinerschurch.org/messages

MAIN POINT

- + Religion, man's attempt to earn God's favor, leads to misery. When we trust ourselves, our joy is never full, we never know if our standing is secure, and we are never satisfied that we have done enough. Instead of trying to be justified, we must trust the Justifier.

LEAN IN

- + In this past year, when have you experienced the greatest joy?
- + As we begin chapter 5 of Galatians this week, we'll see that the Christian life of righteousness is one of deep satisfaction expressed through joyful love.

This week will provide a natural opportunity to remind group members of the spiritual rhythm of Repentance.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

CHOOSE A VOLUNTEER TO READ GALATIANS 5:1-15 OUT LOUD. (p 114)

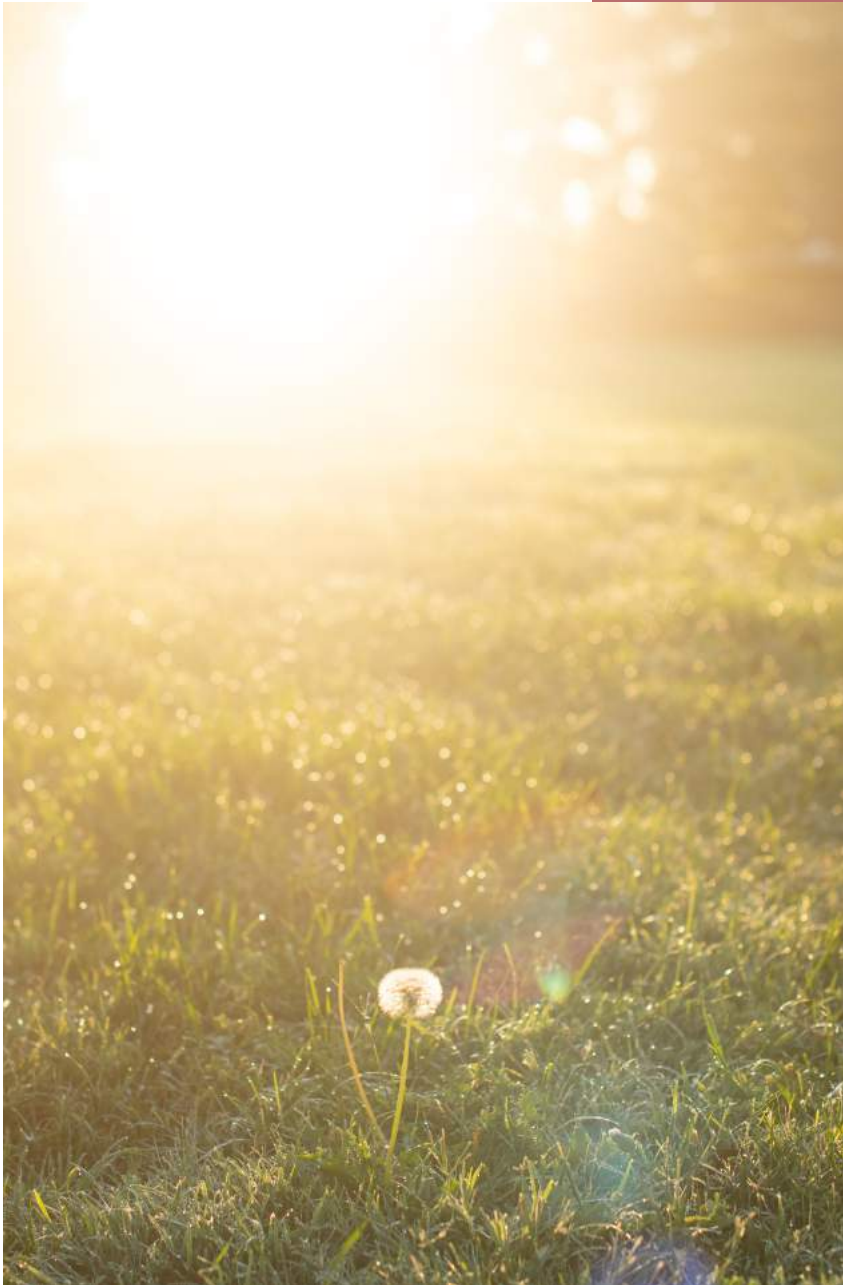
- + What new emphasis does Paul add to his ongoing argument against religious legalism?
- + In verse 9, what does the illustration of "leaven" and "dough" represent?
- + In verse 15, what does the language of "bite," "devour," and "consume" represent? How does this relate to the other metaphor used and point being made in this text?
- + What else does this passage reveal about God? About humanity? About grace?

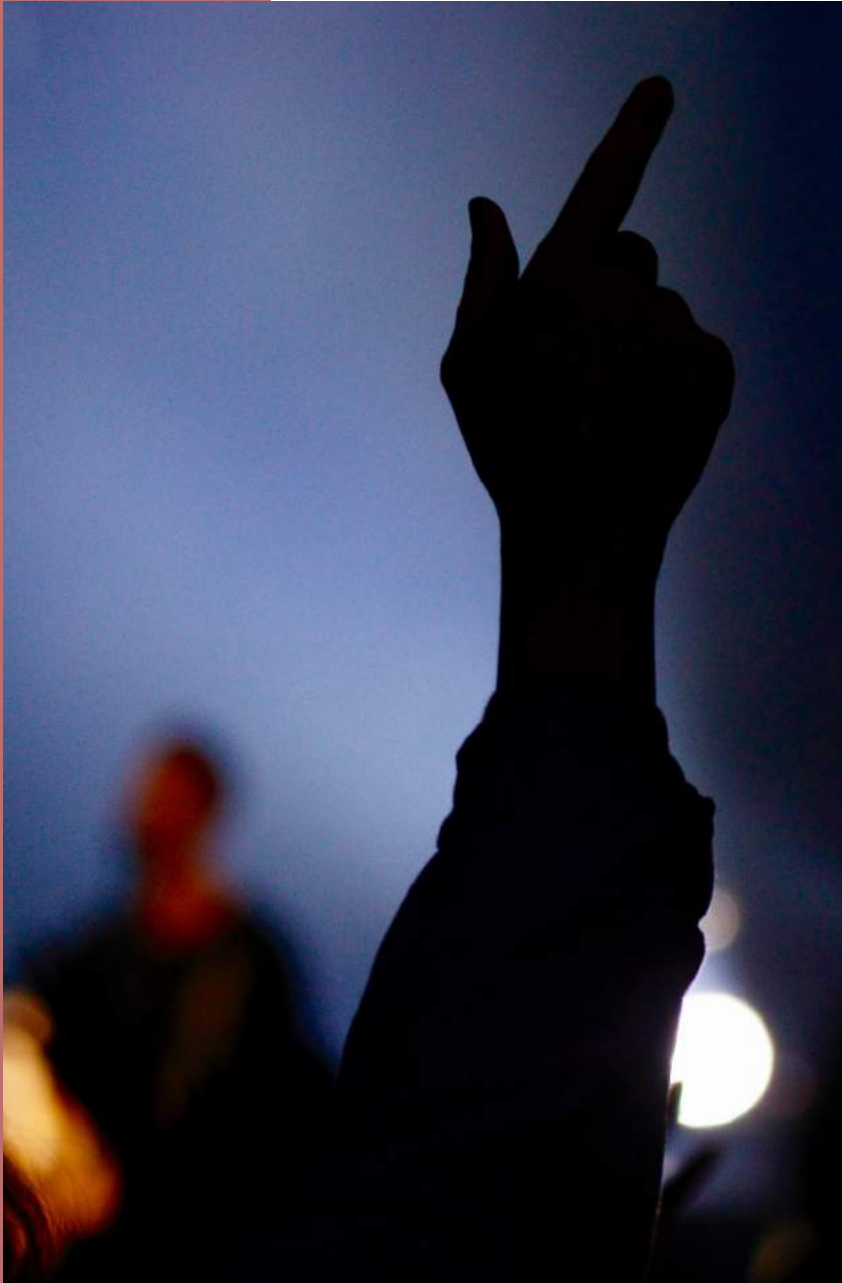
LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- + Paul warns against false teachers leading people away from the gospel. What are some examples of false teachings or ideas that creep into Christian thought and culture? What makes those ideas misleading or even dangerous?
- + What false or misleading ideas have you believed about Christianity? What have you said or taught to others that you later recognized to be mistaken, misleading, or false?
- + How do you discern the Christ-like love for your neighbor that is both righteous and gracious? How have you been shown this kind of love? What effect did it have on you?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- + What other insights from the weekend message were especially timely for you? How might they also be timely for others around you?
- + What updates do you have from anything you shared last week regarding strongholds and repentance? How have you experienced the Spirit at work to set you free?
- + Do you need to confess and repent of anything else so that we can pray for your freedom and joy? Has the Spirit revealed any other:
 - strongholds,
 - legalism,
 - false teachings,
 - lack of love for your neighbors,
 - or other sin enslaving you?
- + Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
 - Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
 - New prayer requests
 - Prayer





EXPERIENCING GOD'S GRACE BY DOING HIS WORK

WRITTEN BY : BRANDON GROSS

"For I know the plans I have for you"—this is the Lord's declaration—"plans for your well-being, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

In December 2019, a meeting took place between two Lighthouse Community Center volunteers and the pastor of Mariners Tustin Jorge Molina to discuss what a youth program would look like at this new congregation. What could not be foreseen was the arrival of the pandemic and the challenges that would ensue with launching the congregation. While COVID seemed like an obstacle at first, it was God's glorious plan falling into place with the right people at the right time. What started as a group of people gathering and praying, evolved into a new congregation

consisting of local community members seeking fellowship during trying times.

Background

Alex and Maribel Martinez began volunteering at the Lighthouse Community Center in 2019. Both have a longstanding passion for youth ministry; this seemed like a perfect fit for the two Mariners members to get involved. In addition to tutoring and leadership development for teenagers, the center also offers small groups focused on providing a solid foundation in Christ. Leading these small groups seemed like the perfect opportunity for Alex and Maribel to share their love for Christ while uniting and empowering teens in the community. What they didn't know was the future God had in

store for them and the Tustin community.

Fast forward to 2020, Mariners Tustin came to life in July with the youth ministry taking shape a month later. With a youth ministry now established, Alex and Maribel wasted no time starting Rooted Essentials (the youth edition of Rooted) in January 2021. Similar to the Rooted curriculum adults go through at Mariners, there is an outreach component that encourages community service.

The Challenge

After a lot of prayer, Alex and Maribel were led to the Orange County Rescue Mission (OCRM), a strong partner of Mariners Church. Considering the shortage of goods resulting from COVID, there was a dire need within the community for personal hygiene products including:

Soap
Shampoo
Toothpaste
Razors
Shaving cream
Laundry detergent
Toilet paper

When I asked Alex and Maribel why they accepted this challenge, they expressed their passion for the youth group, recognizing the importance of personal hygiene items in the community and how to procure them. A life skill that we all need to learn at some point, and one that seemed more valuable now than ever before. Equally importantly was the youth group got to recognize the groups of people in Orange County that were in need and how to advance God's Kingdom. But was this going to be enough to motivate young adults to get out of their comfort zone and ask for donations?

After hitting their knees again in prayer, Alex and Maribel felt convicted to show the youth group video testimonies of both adults and children who had been blessed by the OCRM's outreach and support. In doing so, the Tustin youth were not only motivated to reach their donation goals, but they also felt convicted by God to help these people.

"It really hit their hearts to see children in need living in the same community (as them)," Alex said.





The Results

From Feb-Mar 2021, the youth group secured the following donations:

135 bars of soap (goal of 100)
130 bottles of shampoo (goal of 100)
60 bottles of conditioner (goal of 0)
112 tubes of toothpaste (goal of 100)
280 razors (goal of 240)
62 bottles of shaving cream (goal of 50)
69 bottles of laundry detergent (goal of 50)
362 rolls of toilet paper (goal of 300)
1,356 feminine hygiene products (goal of 0)

Essentially, they shattered their goals, and blessed the lives of hundreds of in-need residents in Orange County.

Impact

The amount of humility and compassion for the community, coupled with a desire to continue helping those in need throughout Orange County radiated from this group. More importantly, they recognized that grace plays a key role in our relationship with God and those around us.

Upon completion, each member of the youth group shared what this outreach exercise meant to them. Some of their statements included:

"Serving can really show you a part of the world that people don't like to see or don't want to see. It can show that even you as one person



can still do something small to make an impact in someone else's life."

"Being a friend and showing grace to someone who is different than you."

"Serving was humbling and gives you a better perspective knowing that scarcity will still be there for them after you serve. And what you have, your lack of scarcity, is a lot to be grateful for."

"Serving is good for your soul. It's better than sitting at home on social media and wasting time."

"When I saw how little these people had, it made me wonder why I complain about such

little things that don't really matter."

"It'll make you happy to bless others with things they need but don't have."

"Impactful on your heart and mind; made me feel blessed to have all that I have. I feel spoiled. They were so happy to have God, and I need to remember how important that is."

Upon asking Maribel what the main takeaways were from this project, she replied, "Pointing these kids to Christ in a time when society is pointing them everywhere else. Limiting selfish desires. Less stuff, more faith. You are strongest on your knees."



THE FUTURE IS NOW

WRITTEN BY : DOUG FIELDS | YOUTH PASTOR

At Mariners, we don't believe that teenagers are "the future of the church." It's a common statement used by good-intended leaders who want to be empowering. Rather, we believe that teenagers are the church of today, and can contribute with their passion and gifting as they find their place of service. We're not waiting for them to become adults to follow Jesus and serve others—we value service now. It's one of the primary actions to make a young faith last.

For example, seventh grader Parker came to Mariners in desperate need of community. Her family was in the midst of a cancer-scare, and it pushed Parker to seek out something at church. She was extremely resistant to getting connected but was excited to hear about the opportunity to serve with our Junior High Tech Team. She

shadowed a couple other students and then jumped right into the tech booth and fell in love with serving, finding new friends, and connecting with amazing leaders. These leaders walked with Parker and her family through her father's surgery. Over a year later, Parker has now been baptized and is serving as one of the youngest video technicians in the Worship Center. She has also made lifelong friends. Through serving, Parker found her passion, community, and a new place to call home.

Last fall, Tyler, 12th grade, found the High School Ministry's weekly Instagram show, *The Upside Down*. This show is for students, by students. His best friend, Luke, posted about *The Upside Down* on social media and Tyler was intrigued enough to watch every single episode. When they got connected and stepped into the video studio, they were both awestruck. They were

both so incredibly excited to step into serving through this creative medium. Tyler immediately called his work to request off every Tuesday afternoon so he would be available to serve. Tyler and Luke jumped head first into serving and are now two of our most faithful volunteers. Serving is contagious, and it's changing the lives of our youth.

During quarantine, an 11th grade CDM High School girls' life group felt called to do something more. These students really wanted to serve their friends by inviting them to know Jesus. Led by Ashley and Ryleigh, they created an opportunity for an open invitation for their school friends to hear the gospel for the first time. They had no idea how many people would attend, but they passionately wanted to serve their community. They have now created "Bible Study on the Sand" where several students are teaching the Bible, sharing their testimonies, and experiencing

worship with dozens of students. Six peers have put their faith in Jesus and three have been baptized.

All of this is a reality because serving has ignited our teenagers to be bold and brave for their faith both at church and in their communities.

Want to get involved in supporting our youth ministries at Mariners?

Visit **marinersyouth.com/volunteer**

VOLUNTEER EXPO

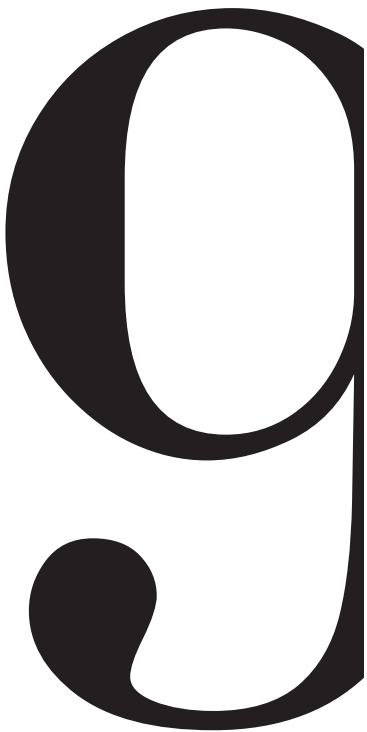
At Mariners, we want everyone to have the opportunity to discover their purpose and make a difference in the world. So, we created the Volunteer Expo, a fun and interactive experience after weekend services at all our locations where you can explore the different serving opportunities and ways for you to get involved at Mariners.

Join us at our next Volunteer Expo to discover how you can plug into one of our ministry teams and start serving regularly at Mariners.



Scan the QR Code for more information about Volunteering at Mariners.





WEEK 09

A FRUITFUL LIFE

Galatians 5:16-25

There is a war within those of us who know Jesus—a war between the Spirit and our flesh. If we walk with the Spirit, we enjoy a fruitful life filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control.

The Spirit versus the Flesh

¹⁶ I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh.

¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I am warning you about these things—as I warned you before—that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things. ²⁴ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

GALATIANS 5:16-25



SERVE THE COMMUNITY



Acts 2:44-45

We are called and equipped by the Holy Spirit to share God’s love by participating in the ministry of Jesus. He has given us agency with Him to fearlessly influence our society and the world. When we serve in the world and in His church, we impact those around us and reveal God’s glory.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How can you make a lasting difference in your community?

A series of 20 horizontal rows of small dots, intended for writing a reflection.



LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

A FRUITFUL LIFE

PREPARE

- + Plan ahead:
Life Group Leader Podcast
- + Worship:
Current Series Playlist
on Spotify
- + Review:
marinerschurch.org/messages

MAIN POINT

- + There is a war within those of us who know Jesus—a war between the Spirit and our flesh. If we walk with the Spirit, we enjoy a fruitful life filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control.

LEAN IN

- + What is your favorite form of competition? What makes it compelling? How is a winner determined? This could be a TV show, sporting event, political or academic debate, etc.
- + In the second-to-last week of our series, we'll look at and discuss the most popular verses in Galatians. This text will set up a stark contrast between competing desires in our own lives.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

CHOOSE A VOLUNTEER TO READ GALATIANS 5:1-15 OUT LOUD. (p 134)

- + What does this passage reveal about God? About humanity? About grace?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- + How would you summarize Paul's main point in this text? How does it begin to tie up the various threads that he has been weaving throughout his letter to the Galatians?
- + Of the desires of the flesh, which has been the greatest struggle in your past? How did the Spirit help you find freedom and change your desires?
- + Of the fruit of the Spirit, which characteristics come most easily for you? Which are the least natural for you? What can you do to intentionally join the Spirit's work to develop the weaker areas so that you have well-rounded and healthy Christian character?



LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- + How do you feel the tension between desires and spiritual warfare in your own life?
- + How do you see it in our culture—even celebrating and promoting fleshly desires? What negative effects do these fleshly desires have on society, even if people care nothing about so-called "spiritual" things?
- + What other insights from the weekend message were especially timely for you? How might they also be timely for others around you?
- + Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
 - Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
 - New prayer requests
 - Prayer





RECEIVING GOD'S GRACE AND FORGIVENESS

WRITTEN BY : BRIANNA GOSCH

I turned 30 in 2016, and my life was nothing like how I imagined it would be. I had been married for nine years and things were not going well. I was a nurse with a great job, and my husband and I were active in our church in Texas, but I was miserable at home. He was mentally and emotionally abusive, and I tolerated it by retreating into depression rather than taking the necessary action to change my situation. I had also just recovered from an extensive surgery after years of trying to conceive unsuccessfully, which further compounded my agony. Our marriage had always been difficult, and after years of counseling with little to no change, I asked myself "Where is this going, and is this going to be my life for the next 60 years?"

I never imagined that I would feel so alone in marriage. I decided to focus on taking care of myself and started to lose the weight I had gained over the past seven years. It was a major confidence boost, but unfortunately, I had caught the eye of a colleague at work who was also married. We began what I thought was a harmless friendship, which quickly escalated into an emotional connection. I had voiced my intentions of getting divorced, and he started pursuing me even harder, offering the attention and support that I longed for.

As a Christian, I didn't want to be "that woman." However, I had no idea how to deal with my dilemma. I would ask myself, "How did I get here? Why am I struggling with this?" The self-condemnation coupled with pride kept me from opening up to anyone about my



emotional adultery. I already knew what they would say, and I wasn't willing to walk away from my job or lose this new connection.

Work was incredibly stressful at the time because of some recent organizational changes. So, I began drinking a glass of wine before bed to help me get some much-needed rest. I had gained favor at work and was invited out for drinks on a few occasions, which was also a great excuse for me to be able to spend time with this man that desired me in ways my husband didn't. Admittedly, it felt good to be wanted. However, I began making more bad decisions at a faster rate.

What started as an emotional affair with my co-worker became a physical one after an afternoon of cocktails. We had a similar experience once more a few weeks after, and that's when life as I knew it came crashing down. I remember coming home after the second time, showering, and going straight to

bed still dazed from that afternoon's events. As I laid there, images and memories from the past three months of this affair started coming back to me as I sobered up. Realizing what I had done, I hoped and prayed it was a bad dream, but there was an undeniable sensation that gripped my entire body. I could feel the weight of my sin separating me from God, and an intense fear of the Lord descended upon me.

Shame and guilt covered me like a blanket. I was a nervous wreck, so I called in to work to stay home and processed my next move. All I could do was pray, and repent, and cry out to my Father for mercy and forgiveness. I knew I had to tell my husband, but what was I going to say? I had to talk to him before church that night, knowing that I needed to confess to our church body as well. I told my husband the events of the past three months, providing details as he asked along the way. Although it wasn't easy, he was surprisingly supportive. Then with his



support I confessed to our church body that I had been unfaithful. Mirroring my husband, they were surprisingly supportive. Over the next couple of weeks, there were meetings with the pastor and church body that resulted in extensive conversations that I really didn't want to have. That being said, they all forgave me and helped give me the love and courage to face myself and deal with the deeper issues of my heart. My husband and I met with our pastor on a regular basis and were counseled through what happened. His unconditional love mirrored Christ and gave me the strength I needed to forgive myself. At the time, I found myself regularly in awe. Receiving Christ-like grace from so many people was humbling and comforting; you could find me on my knees thanking our Father regularly.

The real battle within was just beginning because showing myself grace was not easy. But the Lord was with me every day and was patient to lead me through some very dark

places during the healing process, resulting in complete freedom from my sin. Walking in the Spirit and in submission to our Father brought me peace. The dying process wasn't easy and there were days I physically felt like my body was being ripped apart from my old nature. I felt physical pain and cried as the war between my Spirit and flesh raged. It was exhausting, but slowly the war within me became quieter and quieter until finally, the desire was gone. It was a painful, stripping process, but the victory was sweet.

Now I could receive and enjoy the fruits of my labor. Walking in the Spirit is a life-long journey of overcoming myself. From time to time I ask myself, "What fruit are you bearing—fruit of the flesh or fruit of the Spirit?" That self assessment quickly tells me what path I'm on and keeps me accountable on my journey.

PEOPLE OF GRACE

WRITTEN BY : NATALIA GUARINO

We are His chosen people, precious possession,
Walking in Truth not in guilt nor shame
We are led by the Spirit, cloaked in the victory
That only the good news of God proclaims.

Clothed in compassion, patience, humility,
With gentleness and donning all that's kind
We can pardon another, outfitted like Jesus Christ
Extending grace, being once wrong and now made right.

Allowing His love to knit all together
An ensemble, perfected with loving unity
Jesus lives in each believing heart
Ruling with peace over the church body.

Thank You Jesus for Your Scripture
Let it teach, warn wisely, and dwell as psalms
Bless, Lord, the deeds done in Your Holy Name
Be it a word, a hymn, or song.

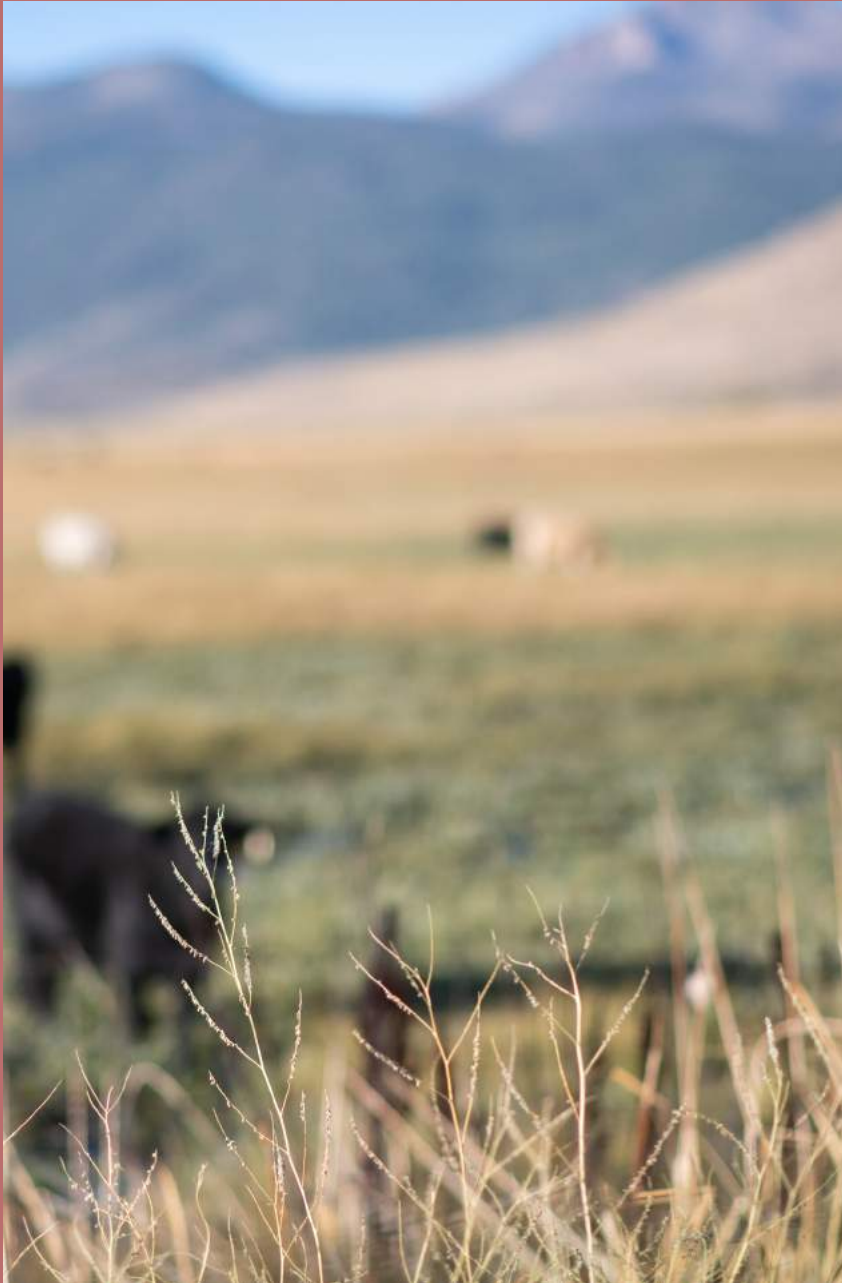
MARRIAGE MATTERS

Whether you are seriously dating, engaged, or have been married for 3 years or 33 years, you won't want to miss Marriage Matters with Doug Fields! We'll feed you dinner, have some serious fun, and equip you with practical tools to strengthen your relationship.

Childcare is available.



Scan the QR Code for more information.





WEEK 10

TOGETHER AND BRAGGING

Galatians 5:26-6:18

Grace is the foundation for relationships among Christians. We are to restore one another, carry one another's burdens, do good to our fellow believers, and brag about the grace of God.

²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Carry One Another's Burdens

6 Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted. ² Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone considers himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ Let each person examine his own work, and then he can take pride in himself alone, and not compare himself with someone else. ⁵ For each person will have to carry his own load.

⁶ Let the one who is taught the word share all his good things with the teacher. ⁷ Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows he will also reap, ⁸ because the one who sows to his flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. ⁹ Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.

Concluding Exhortation

¹¹ Look at what large letters I use as I write to you in my own handwriting. ¹² Those who want to make a good impression in the flesh are the ones who would compel you to be circumcised—but only to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For even the circumcised don't keep the law themselves, and yet they want you to be circumcised in order to boast about your flesh. ¹⁴ But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world has been crucified to me through the cross, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For both circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing; what matters instead is a new creation. ¹⁶ May peace come to all those who follow this standard, and mercy even to the Israel of God!

¹⁷ From now on, let no one cause me trouble, because I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. ¹⁸ Brothers and sisters, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

GALATIANS 5:26-6:18

DAILY DEVOTION



Acts 2:42, 46

Scripture is the very Word of God. Through it, He equips us with all we need to learn about Him and live a life pleasing to Him. A daily rhythm of reading, meditating on, and applying God's Word to our lives is key.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How will you continue to make time in God's Word a regular part of your life?

A grid of 20 rows and 20 columns of small dots, intended for handwritten reflection.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

TOGETHER AND BRAGGING

PREPARE

- + Plan ahead:
Life Group Leader Podcast
- + Worship:
Current Series Playlist
on Spotify
- + Review:
marinerschurch.org/messages

MAIN POINT

- + Grace is the foundation for relationships among Christians. We are to restore one another, carry one another's burdens, do good to our fellow believers, and brag about the grace of God.

LEAN IN

- + What did you do for Father's Day?
How would you describe the ideal father? The ideal family?
- + In our final week in the book of Galatians, we'll see Paul using familial language to describe the church and relationships between brothers and sisters in Christ.

LOOK DOWN | LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

CHOOSE A VOLUNTEER TO READ GALATIANS 5:26-6:18 OUT LOUD. (p 150)

- + Paul often opens and closes his writing with "grace and peace," as he does with his letter to the Galatians. Why is this significant in general? Why is it especially relevant for his letter to the Galatians?
- + In this final passage of Scripture, what instruction does Paul give for self-awareness and personal maturity in Christ? What instruction does he give for our responsibility and love for others? Why are both important to the Christian life? What happens if either is neglected?
- + What else does this passage reveal about God? About humanity? About grace?

LOOK IN | APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE

- + How does Paul's repeated use of phrases like "brothers and sisters" shape your understanding of the church community and of Christian life?
 - How have you experienced the family-like nature of life in Christ?
 - What are some practical examples of ways this group has been like brothers and sisters?
 - In what ways is this evident with Mariners? How could we be mindful to help a sense of familial love be even more evident to others?
- + What burdens have others helped you carry? Who helped you and how did it affect you?
- + Without naming anyone or breaking any confidence, how have you helped others carry their burdens?

LOOK OUT | IDENTIFY THE RELEVANCE OF GOD'S WORD IN THE WORLD

- + What other insights from the weekend message were especially timely for you? How might they also be timely for others around you?

- + What has been your greatest takeaway from our series in Galatians?
 - What did you learn about God?
 - What did you learn about humanity/yourself?
 - What did you learn about grace?
 - What action step, experience, or application was most meaningful to you?

- + Who can you invite to join you for our next weekend message series looking at the Holy Spirit?

- + Close each time together as a group with prayer and the following reminders:
 - Updates on previous weeks' prayer requests
 - New prayer requests
 - Prayer





GOD'S GENTLE GRACE

WRITTEN BY : JULIE FRANCIS

I know when God blesses me with His grace, I need to always reciprocate with helping others in need. My 88-year-old dad, who is on a vast decline with dementia, fell and fractured his skull this past Thanksgiving. Not aware of the fall, the hospital stay for a few days, or even his surroundings, God specifically told me to just comfort my dad with gentleness, kindness, and loads of patience to help him recover.

Miraculously, my dad's "happy-go-lucky" demeanor has him on the mend as if he is not ready to throw in the towel of life yet. His Tongan caregiver can hoist all 240 lbs. of him up like a sack of potatoes. (She is from a long line of college football family alumni hence her brute strength.) Yet, my dad is unaware of what is happening to him. He speaks little and eats robustly when I am around, but I can tell he is losing the ability to recognize even family members. His thoughts each day are scattered, and his actions are reduced to a shuffle of his feet to get around the house. When you honor your Father and Mother, this takes on a new meaning even when your family isn't ideal in the communication department.

My dad was so bright and on top of his profession when he raised our family. Seeing him reduced to a shell of himself is how I gravitate toward God's grace to keep me from losing my perspective in caring for my dad. It's hard to watch his life robbed of dignity, but God reminds me of all the goodness when my dad cared for me growing up and to hold on to those thoughts.

My dad even sometimes calls me childhood nicknames again like "pumpkin," "jewels," and "little one." He is still so gentle even in his confused state of mind and broken body. As I cling onto Galatians 5:22, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control," this describes my dad exactly. I now pray for him, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25)

"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20

This book would not have been possible without the amazing team of people who created it. This is a project designed and executed by talented volunteers from our church family who said "yes" to God's calling and chose to use their passions, gifts, and experiences to serve and bless others. We hope that after you've gone through this book and this series, their work will inspire you in your walk with Jesus and encourage you to take your next courageous step of faith.

For some of you, your next step might be to begin serving at Mariners. If you'd like to use your creative gifts to serve others, we invite you to visit the Volunteer at Mariners page on our website to get started. We'd love to have you join our team.

We're so grateful for everyone who contributed pieces, edited, and informed the contents of this book, and for the leadership and support of our Senior Pastor Eric Geiger.

We pray you continue to experience God's grace in your life as you respond to His amazing invitation to rest.

CREATIVE ARTS VOLUNTEER TEAM

EDITORIAL TEAM

Nu Yang | Project Editor
Darren Tow | Assistant Project Editor
Brandon Gross | Creative Writing Lead
Pam Vasquez | Project Manager/Graphic Design Lead
Barbara Berg | Photography Lead

CONTRIBUTORS

Qi An | Layout and Graphic Design
Marsha Berger | Editing
Jossy Chacko | Spreading God's Grace
Martha Caputo | Original Artwork
Stephanie Gasca | Photography
Eric Goodman | Photography
Annette Gross | Sharing the Gospel
Julie Francis | God's Gentle Grace
Brianna Gosch | Receiving God's Grace and Forgiveness
Natalia Guarino | Adorned with Grace, People of Grace, Photography
David Harrington | Illustration
Angelina Joseph | A Gracious God
Maegan Lujan | His Daughter
Lexi Ragan | Solely His Only
Scott Smith | Video
Charlene Tsai | Graphic Design
Tom Walker | Photography

STAFF CONTRIBUTORS

Christine Caine | Teaching Pastor
Doug Fields | Youth Pastor
Jared Kirkwood | Discipleship Pastor
Jeremy Maxfield | Life Group Curriculum
John Thomas | Community Pastor

MARINERS STAFF TEAM

Cathi Workman | Chief Content Officer
Larry Lundstrom | Communications Pastor
Andy Piscioti | Creative Director
Katie Brown | Content Writer
Carsten Tice | Photographer
Kenny Low | Graphic Designer
Mark Wilkins | Video Director
Lauren Young | Video Editor

SPECIAL THANKS

Rod Garrett
Didem Gokcedag Gorduren
Sandra Makram
Nadia Molina
Jordan Poblete

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OR SKILLS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE
WITH OUR CHURCH?**

**WE'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU ON OUR
TEAM FOR FUTURE PROJECTS!**

SCAN THE QR CODE TO GET CONNECTED WITH OUR
CREATIVE ARTS VOLUNTEER TEAM

