



New City Church: Sermon Discussion Notes

“A Tale of Two Ministries” – Galatians 4:12-20

Purpose: These discussion questions are designed to help you apply the sermon to your personal life, church life or your city's life. You can use these for personal, family, or small group reflection. To review the sermon, go to www.newcitychurch.ca/sermons.

Introduction

Pray – Take a moment to pray, asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture.

Read – Galatians 4:12-20

Sermon Summary – Paul, the theologian and defender of the faith, now shows his more pastoral and tender side. In this section, Paul contrasts his attitude towards the Galatians with the false teachers' attitude towards them. Paul explains that the Galatians have fallen for the flattery of the false teachers and have now come to hate him despite having been such loving friends to him in the past.

Paul show us what it means to be an agent for gospel-change in our communities. He shows us that we need to be *flexible* (4:12) – “I have become as you are.” Paul, who was inflexibly committed to the gospel, was radically flexible when it came to everything else. As he tells us in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, he became everything to everyone precisely because he felt that the gospel compelled and enabled this flexibility. The gospel was his only “sacred cow”. Paul also shows us that while we need to draw near to people and their circumstances and struggles, we also need to be pointing them to something better. To his “I became like you” he adds, “Become as I am”. Paul wanted the Galatians to be as free as he was. Paul was not being arrogant here, he was long past thinking that *he* had it all together. He was *transparent* with them, they knew his struggles, his illnesses, and this transparency won him their ears. They listened because they knew him.

Lastly, Paul shows us that we need to *commit* to people, to love them and really invest out time and lives in theirs. When Paul says that he is in labour for the Galatians *until Christ is formed in them*, he is calling himself a mother to them. Like a mother, he carries the child, loving and nourishing them just as he cares for and nourishes himself until the child can be brought to independence (through the suffering of the mother of course). The goal of Paul is to bring the Galatians to maturity in Christ; the goal of the teachers is to gain followers and to encourage dependence on them.

To be agents of gospel change in our homes, neighbourhoods and nation, we need to see what we have in Christ, to see how flexible, transparent and committed he was, and out of gratitude for our salvation, be flexible, transparent and committed to those God has given us.

Questions

1. Review the passage (Gal 4:12-20) How does this speak to your life?
 - What “sacred-cows” do you have?
 - Why is it so hard to be transparent with people, to admit how you struggle?
2. What implications does Galatians 4:12-20 have for us as a church community?
 - How is New City succeeding/struggling to be *flexible, transparent* and *committed*?
3. How does this text speak to our city?
 - What difficulties/opportunities do you see when you consider how New City might be flexible in its ministry towards Calgary?
 - How does/might New City show its commitment to Calgary? If Jesus showed his commitment by “flexing” to become like us and to committing his life to our salvation, what might “commitment” from New City to Calgary, look like?

Concluding Question

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

Prayer

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- 1) WHO DO WE BECOME? - SONS
- 2) WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A SON? - CLOTHES
- 3) HOW CAN WE LIVE LIKE THIS? - SPIRIT

Baptism = New Creature AND New Community

Church should be radically united - full of differences but no barriers

3:26 - for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christs, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to Jesus = heir promise.

only in "them" are we heirs to all
we're under Law for a season (ideally)

Downward - fair + equitable
Gender - all are eq
First born sons with rights

Compares baptism to putting on clothes

4 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. 3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And

- pedagogos = tutor / steward.
- all are slaves to Law
- God's initiative of right time
- Jesus as human focus

- Saved by
- 1. Redemption
- 2. Adoption

because you are sons, God has 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 an heir through God.

by faith (3:26)
"scream" - loud, spontaneous, passionate

3:26-4:7 = a single "unit" where Paul answers - "what does it mean to be a 'son' of God?"

Abba = Aramaic - Jesus used
The word (Mk 14:36) - when we see our redemption + adoption, we will approach him as a son and empowered to be the church Paul describes.

new city church