

Galatians: Jesus + Anything Ruins Everything

Message by Pastor Clay, The Naz

Week 1

September 21th, 2025

[Link to Sunday Service](#)

Summary

We begin this series in Galatians by addressing the danger of spiritual drift, particularly how we as Christians can tend to drift toward a performance-based faith. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, Paul confronts the false teaching that salvation requires Jesus plus something else (like circumcision or following certain religious rules). The true gospel is Jesus plus nothing—salvation is based entirely on Christ's performance for us, not our performance for him. Using Paul's own transformation from religious terrorist to apostle as an example, we see how God leads with grace rather than judgment. With this in mind, we should be careful not to fall into the traps of modern versions of legalism and progressive Christianity that distort the biblical Jesus because anything added to the gospel of grace effectively rejects Christ himself.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather to discuss Your Word today, we thank You for the gift of grace through Jesus Christ. We acknowledge our tendency to drift toward performance-based faith rather than resting in Your finished work. Open our hearts to understand the true gospel message that Paul so passionately defended in Galatians. Help us to see where we might be adding to Your perfect work, and give us the courage to surrender those areas to You. May our discussion today draw us closer to the heart of Your gospel. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker (Optional)

What's something you've drifted away from in your life that once seemed very important to you (a hobby, friendship, habit, etc.)?

Key Verses

Galatians 1:1-9

Acts 9:1-6

Psalm 147:3

Questions

1. In the message, Pastor Clay used the illustration of his mother drifting on a float in the lake. How have you experienced spiritual drift in your own life?
2. What does it mean that we are “prone to drift into a performance-based faith”? Where do you see this tendency in your own spiritual journey? (Eph. 5:16; 1 John 2:15; Heb. 12:1)
3. Paul was described as going from 'the greatest persecutor of the church to the greatest church planter.' How does Paul's transformation demonstrate the power of God's grace? (Galatians 1:13-16; Acts 9:1-6)
4. Jesus plus *nothing* equals everything, but Jesus plus *anything* ruins everything. What are some “plus” items that Christians commonly add to the gospel today?
5. How would you explain the difference between biblical Jesus and modern Jesus to someone who is new to Christianity? (see Table in Appendix for reference)
6. Religion will hand you rules that never heal your wounds. What wounds in your life have you tried to heal through religious performance?
7. What's the difference between following Jesus out of *gratitude* for his grace versus following Jesus to earn his *approval*?
8. How might our group help each other avoid drifting into legalism while still encouraging holy living? (Heb. 10:24-25)

Life Application

This week, take time to examine where you might be adding to the gospel in your own life. Identify one area where you've been trying to earn God's approval through your performance rather than resting in His grace. Write it down, pray over it, and consciously surrender it to God each morning. Then, choose one person in your life who needs to hear about God's grace and find a way to share with them how Jesus' performance, not yours, is what matters most.

Key Takeaways

- Christians naturally drift toward a performance-based faith that believes God's approval depends on what we do for Him rather than what Christ has done for us.
- The true gospel is that Jesus plus nothing equals everything - our salvation is based entirely on Christ's performance, not our own.
- Adding anything to the gospel (Jesus plus rules, traditions, or good works) distorts the message and effectively rejects Christ.
- No matter how immoral or rebellious we've been, the gospel offers complete transformation through grace, not through our own efforts.
- Jesus died not only for the things we've done, but also for the things that have been done to us. He heals our wounds in ways that rule-following never can.

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for your finished work on the cross that requires nothing from us but surrender. Forgive us for the ways we've drifted into trying to earn what you freely give. We confess our tendency to add to your perfect sacrifice with our imperfect efforts. Help us to rest completely in your grace and to extend that same grace to others. Heal the wounds that we've tried to cover with religious performance, and restore us to the freedom that comes from trusting solely in you. May we leave this discussion with renewed commitment to the true gospel - Jesus plus nothing. In your name we pray, amen.

Appendix

Which Jesus Do You Follow?

BIBLICAL JESUS	MODERN JESUS
Born as God Almighty in the flesh	Was a good teacher and man
Shows unrelenting love to the overlooked and outcasts of society	Claims to love all people but casts out those who don't agree with his ideals
Loves us enough to speak the truth	Water down words to avoid offense
Points us toward eternal treasure	Promises earthly treasure
Warns of sin, judgement & hell	Sends all to heaven, dismisses hell
Commands repentance of sins	Minimizes need for repentance of sins
Gives you salvation, hope, peace & joy	Gives you health, wealth, & happiness
Hated & despised by the world	Loved & accepted by the world
Hates sin & exposes the truth about sin	Overlooks sin & never corrects you
Commands with divine authority	Gives suggestions not commandments
Says to expect persecution in his name	Promises our best life now
Exalts God the Father's will	Serves your will above God's will
Risen from the dead and one day every knee will bow to Him	A great historical figure with some wisdom to consider