

## The Church That Forgot the Gospel

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**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Galatians 1:1–2:10; 3:1–9

**MAIN POINT:** Paul reminded Christians of the gospel.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Galatians 2:20

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why does God want us to obey Him? We obey because God loves us.

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
(15–20 MINUTES)  
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**EXPERIENCE THE STORY**  
(20–25 MINUTES)  
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## Leader BIBLE STUDY

During his second missionary journey, Paul started several churches in Galatia. Some time later, false teachers crept into these churches and began teaching that there was more to salvation than faith in Jesus. They said that obeying the law of Moses was essential too.

Many of the Galatian believers became confused and believed the lies of the false teachers. They turned away from the gospel Paul had shared with them. Paul wrote a letter—the Book of Galatians—to correct them and reemphasize a proper understanding of the gospel.

Paul asked the Galatians how their salvation could be started by an act of the Holy Spirit but then completed by their own conduct. That was foolishness! What the Holy Spirit began, He would also complete.

Jesus' half-brother James had written a letter to early believers, concerned about Christians' interpreting grace to mean they didn't have to obey God. In Galatians, Paul addressed the opposite problem: Christians who focused so much on obedience that they forgot grace.

James's message was that grace will always lead to obedience. Paul's message compliments James's message: Obedience is impossible apart from grace. Grace and obedience work together in perfect harmony.

This week's session provides a wonderful opportunity to help your preschoolers understand that obedience matters. The Bible is full of instructions and commands that we are to obey; however, the beauty of the gospel is that our ability to obey comes not through our own effort but through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit changes our minds and hearts so that we want to obey God, and He also empowers us to obey. All of salvation—from first trusting to faithful obedience—is God's gift to us through Jesus.



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training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com). For free training and session-by-session help, visit [www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

# The BIBLE STORY

## Bible Storytelling Helps

## The Church That Forgot the Gospel

*Galatians 1:1–2:10; 3:1-9*

• **Useart:** Draw a cross on a dry erase board using a wet erase marker as you introduce the story and the basics of the gospel. As you talk about the lies of the false teachers, use a dry erase marker to add other drawings related to the law (tablets, gavel, scales). When you get to Paul's gospel reminders near the end of the story, wipe down the whole board with a dry eraser, pointing out how only the cross remains.

• **Act it out:** Ask a preschooler to come forward. Give her a sticky note that says "Christian." As you read about the false leaders imposing rules on Christians, gently attach sticky notes with Mosaic laws, like "Don't eat unclean foods;" "Don't work on the Sabbath," and so forth until she is covered. When you say "Jesus is all they need," she can brush off the sticky notes.

Paul had told people in Galatia (guh LAY shuh) the good news about Jesus. They believed, and Paul started some churches. Later, Paul heard that these believers had a big problem. Some false teachers came and told them things that weren't true. They said that people need more than faith in Jesus to be forgiven. These false teachers said you had to obey the law of Moses too.

The believers in Galatia were confused. Before long, they forgot the truth that Paul taught them and believed the lies of the false teachers. So Paul wrote them a letter.

Paul wrote, "To the churches of Galatia: I am amazed how quickly you turned away from God. You believed the lies of the false teachers, but their message is not good news." God gave us good news—the gospel—through His Son, Jesus.

Paul reminded the believers about what God had done in his life. Paul used to arrest and hurt believers, but Jesus changed Paul. Jesus appeared to Paul and told him to tell the good news to the Gentiles, or people who were not Jews. So Paul spent his whole life telling people this message: Jesus came into the world to save people who sin. This is good news for Jews and Gentiles.

"You are foolish." Paul wrote in his letter. "Think about this: Did God give you the Holy Spirit because you obeyed the laws? Or did He give you the Holy Spirit because you heard the gospel and believed by faith?"

Paul wanted to explain something important: You become a Christian by faith. You live as a Christian by faith. The law does not make us right with God.

*Christ Connection: Faith is a gift from God. By faith, we trust in Jesus. We should not trust in ourselves because no one can be good enough to be accepted by God. When we have faith, the Holy Spirit changes us and gives us power to obey God.*



**WANT TO  
DISCOVER  
GOD'S WORD?  
GET  
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out [www.lifeway.com/devotionals](http://www.lifeway.com/devotionals).

# Introduce THE STORY

**SESSION TITLE:** The Church That Forgot the Gospel

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## Welcome time

- “Take My Life and Let It Be” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- “What We Have in Common” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Instruct preschoolers to find what everyone has in common and circle it (a cross image). Talk about the different types of people pictured and how they all believe in Jesus.

**SAY** • In our story today, some people forgot that believing in Jesus is all you need to be part of God’s family! They thought you had to look or act a certain way too. These people all look very different, but they all trust in Jesus!

## True or false?

Make several statements and allow preschoolers to guess whether each is true or false. Include Biblical statements like “God loves you” and silly statements, shifting your tone to help younger preschoolers pick up on what is not true.

**SAY** • It’s important to be able to recognize what is true and



what is false, or not true! Since I am your teacher, you can usually trust what I say. But I said some silly things, didn't I? Only God's Word is always true. In our Bible story today, false teachers said things that weren't true, and some Christians forgot what God's Word says about the gospel.

## Which comes first?

Before the session, number individual blocks using tape and a marker. If using a block train, number from front to back; if using interlocking bricks, number from largest to smallest.

Help preschoolers place the blocks in order: build the train from engine to caboose, or build a tower from bottom to top. You may also allow the preschoolers to build incorrectly and emphasize how you cannot drive a train with a caboose or build a tower upside-down.

**SAY** • This week we will learn how important it is to remember what comes first! When we trust in Jesus, God helps us obey. Why does God want us to obey Him? We obey because God loves us. We don't make God love us by obeying! The Bible says "We love because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

- blocks or a block train
- interlocking bricks (optional)
- tape
- marker

## Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Tell the preschoolers they must do something impossible (ride an elephant) to move to the Bible study area. Recruit another teacher to lead the children in exclaiming "that's not true!" and moving to Bible study anyway.

- countdown video (optional)

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## Introduce the Bible story

Tip: Be sensitive to home situations.

Invite preschoolers to talk about rules they have at home and whether they always obey those rules.

**SAY** • Obeying rules is one way we show love to our parents. But if you disobey, do your parents stop loving you? No! God still loves us when we disobey, too. In our story today, some believers thought God wouldn't love them unless they obeyed the rules.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

Place a bookmark at Galatians 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • What book is this? (*the Bible*) Whose words are in the Bible? (*God's words*) Is God's Word true? (*always*) Today's story comes from the Book of Galatians, a letter that Paul wrote to believers living in Galatia. Let's listen to God's words.

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling helps. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

## Talk about the Bible story

**SAY** • The people in Galatia believed the lies of the false

- Bible
- bookmark
- "The Church That Forgot the Gospel" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

teachers. They thought they had to earn God's love by obeying the law of Moses. **Paul reminded Christians of the gospel.** Faith is a gift from God. By faith, we trust in Jesus. We should not trust in ourselves because no one can be good enough to be accepted by God. When we have faith, the Holy Spirit changes us and gives us power to obey God.

Point to the Bible story picture the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Does obeying the law make us right with God? (*no*)
2. Who said that people need more than faith in Jesus to be forgiven? (*the false teachers*)
3. Who reminded Christians of the gospel? (*Paul*)
4. Who came into the world to save people from sin? (*Jesus*)
5. Who gives us power to obey God? (*the Holy Spirit*)

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Obeying God is important, but it doesn't make God love us. God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to save us from our sin! When we trust in Jesus, God sends the Holy Spirit to help us obey Him. ***Why does God want us to obey Him? We obey because God loves us.***

• Big Picture Question Poster

## Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Galatians 2:20. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "F-A-I-T-H."

• Key Passage Poster  
• "F-A-I-T-H" song

**SAY** • It is easy to forget how much God loves us, and Paul had to remind the Galatians of the gospel. We can remember the gospel by memorizing God's Word!

## Transition to small groups



# Experience THE STORY

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## “The Law Says”

Play this version of “Simon Says.” Preface simple commands with “God loves you” and preface difficult commands with “the law says.” Children should only obey the “God loves you” commands. If a child obeys a “the law says” command, ask the big picture question. The child may then repeat the big picture answer to rejoin the game.

**SAY** • There are a lot of laws to obey. It can get confusing! The believers in Galatia were confused and believed you had to follow all of God’s rules for God to love you. But the law does not make us right with God. **Paul reminded Christians of the gospel.** Even if we try our very best, we still sometimes make wrong choices. That’s why God sent Jesus, who always obeyed Him perfectly. God loves us, and He sent Jesus to be our Savior. So ***why does God want us to obey Him? We obey because God loves us.***

## Review the timeline

Use a Bible storybook, the Big Story Circle, and/or the Small Group Timeline to briefly review the following pairs of Bible stories. Help preschoolers find each Bible story picture and then talk about how God’s promises always



• Bible storybook, Big Story Circle, or Small Group Timeline

come before His commands. Feel free to include other examples as long as the children are interested.

- “God’s Covenant with Abraham” and “The Ten Commandments”
- “Jesus’ Resurrection” and “Jesus Gave the Great Commission”
- “The Holy Spirit Came” and “The Ethiopian Official Believed”
- “Paul’s Conversion and Baptism” and “Paul’s Second Journey”

**SAY** • The Bible teaches us that God makes promises before He asks us to obey, and He keeps His promises even when we don’t obey! Faith is a gift from God. By faith, we trust in Jesus. When we have faith, the Holy Spirit changes us and gives us power to obey God. ***Why does God want us to obey Him? We obey because God loves us.***

## Good news or bad news?

Before the session, write several good news statements and several bad news statements on separate pieces of paper and fold each paper like a letter. Make several statements, enough for each child, and be sure to include the following statements: *People have to obey the law of Moses to be forgiven and Jesus came into the world to save people who sin.*

- paper
- crayons or markers

During class, invite a child to open a letter, then you will read it out loud for the class. Ask the preschoolers whether it is good news or bad news. Talk about what makes it good or bad. Repeat, allowing each child to open a letter until everyone has had a turn.

**SAY** • Paul wrote a letter to the believers in Galatia to say, “You believed the lies of the false teachers, but

their message is not good news.” God gave us good news—the gospel—through His Son, Jesus. **Paul reminded Christians of the gospel.**

## Finish the task

Give each preschooler clear instructions for an unfinished task as you give them the wrong tool for the job.

**SAY** • That was confusing, wasn’t it? The believers in Galatia were confused, too. But **Paul reminded Christians of the gospel:** You become a Christian by faith and you live as a Christian by faith. You don’t start with faith and finish with law, just like we couldn’t start a job with scissors but finish with tape! Paul said what the Holy Spirit began in the believers, He would also complete.

• various items for tasks

Sample tasks:

- tape to finish cutting a heart shape
- a marker to finish erasing the board
- paper towel to finish sweeping
- a broom to put a book on the shelf

## Entry requirements

Before the session, prepare two letters: on the first, write “Jesus came into the world to save people who sin. Trust in Jesus alone!” On the second, write “You believed the lies of the false teachers, but their message is not good news!” Set up a simple obstacle course around the room using classroom furniture. Read the first letter aloud. Invite preschoolers to follow you through the obstacle course, adding silly requirements. Emphasize obeying all the rules if they want to be in the church. Finish by reading the second letter and repeat the key passage.

**SAY** • Sometimes it is easy to think we have to do more to make God love us, but it isn’t true. **Paul reminded Christians of the gospel.** Let’s remember the gospel by practicing our key passage!

- paper, 2 sheets
- pencil or marker
- Key Passage Poster (optional)

## Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve flour tortillas, deli ham, and cheese for snack, inviting preschoolers to roll it up like a scroll. Talk about how the false teachers said you had to obey the law of Moses to be forgiven. The law said that on some occasions people could only eat flat bread like the tortilla, and people could never eat ham. **Paul reminded Christians of the gospel.** The law does not make us right with God. We can enjoy ham wraps because of what Jesus has done for us!

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

## Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of a cross. Explain that the cross reminds us that Jesus came into the world to save people who sin. Just like the believers in Galatia, we can forget the truth. **Paul reminded Christians of the gospel.** Our pictures will remind us of the gospel, too. Pray for the children.

**SAY** • God, thank You for sending Jesus to save us from sin.

Please help us remember the truth. Help us to trust in You alone. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers