

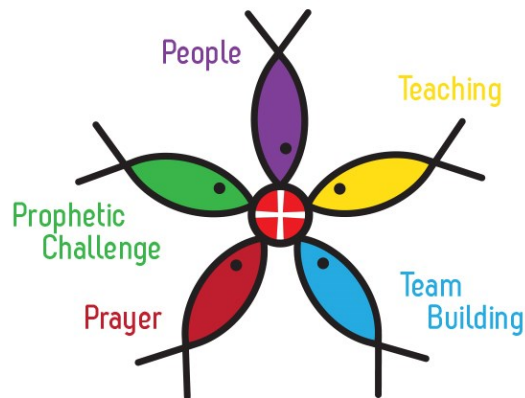


Baildon
Methodist
Church

Part of
**Bradford North
Methodist
Circuit**

Loving God. Loving People. Loving the World.

Come with us, Lord Jesus;
Fill us with your Spirit;
Shape us to your likeness;
Use us to enfold with love our needy world



The Gospel According to St Paul

Taken from St Paul's letter to the Galatians

Written: 48-50 AD

All Bible passages are quoted from "The Message"
We give thanks for Inspiration to the Jesus-Shaped People foundation:
www.jesusshapedpeople.net



What we know

The most likely year for the crucifixion of Jesus was 33AD. The widely accepted date for the conversion of St Paul is 34AD. Paul then spent three years in retreat, studying the life of Jesus, having fled from the Jews in



From The Complete Bible Story Clip Art Book. ©Gospel Light. Used by permission.

Damascus. After another 14 years' missionary travels, we believe that he wrote to "The Galatians": scholars are not sure exactly who was included in that address. However, his reason for writing was that some Jewish Christians were visiting Galatian churches which had been founded by St Paul, to tell them that the men must obey the 613 laws of the Old Testament in order to be true Christians. Paul was incensed enough to write this letter between 48 & 50AD. It is the earliest surviving writing in the New Testament (There is no historical mention of any of the Gospels until Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons gave them names in a publication called "Against all Heresies", written around 180 AD). There is no agreement amongst scholars about when the Gospels were written or by whom. So, Galatians is the first part of the Good News According to St Paul.

Paul's other letters, which all scholars agree were written by St Paul (dates in brackets), are:

1Thessalonians (49-51), Romans (55-57), Philippians (57-59), Philemon (57-59), & parts of 1Corinthians (53-54) and 2Corinthians (55-56)

Your personal **resolutions** here...

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22nd 2023

A reflection

From Max Ehrmann's poem: The Desiderata

*Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember
what peace there may be in silence.*

*As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms
with all persons.*

*Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to
others, even to the dull and ignorant; they too have
their story.*

*Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexations
to the spirit.*

*If you compare yourself with others, you may become
vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and less-
er ones than yourself.*

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

*Be at peace with your own life, however humble, it's a
real possession in the changing fortunes of time.*

*Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world
is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what
virtue there is; strive for high ideals. Everywhere life is
full of heroism.*

*Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither
be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and
disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.*

*Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully
surrendering the things of youth.*

*Nurture strength of Spirit to shield you in sudden
misfortune nor distress yourself with dark imaginings.*

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

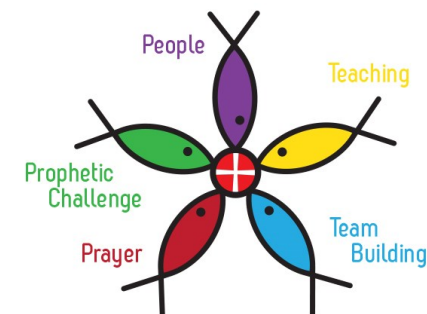
*You are a child of the God no less than the greatest of
stars; you have been called to be here. And whether or
not it is clear to you, the universe is unfolding by God's
hand as it should. Therefore be at peace with Him. And
whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy
confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.*

*With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is
still a beautiful world.*

*Be cheerful. Strive to be happy, as you continue on the
journey to which you have been called.*

Jesus-Shaped People

We study the life and teaching of Jesus to find out how to live godly lives. We find some awesome challenges when we examine how he lived, and what he said. The following five characteristics are a yardstick to measure ourselves by.



Jesus was devoted to **loving people**; people on the edge of society as well as people in society. He went to them, He tried to meet their needs.

Jesus used **everyday language, outrageous stories, & memorable images** to capture hearts & minds. He wants us to examine, & maybe ditch, cherished beliefs.

Jesus **built teams**, He tapped people on the shoulder and expressed faith in their abilities, He left the future of the World in the hands of a few disciples.

Jesus retreated **in prayer**, reflection, mindfulness, to make sure that He was on the right track.

Jesus issued **prophetic challenges** about the use of power & money, about justice and peace.

We need to remember these characteristics as we work through the Gospel of St Paul

The Gospel According to St Paul Week I

Questions:

Am I willing to listen to those who think differently from me?

Am I willing to consider their views and believe that I may be mistaken?

Am I always prepared to change my mind?

St Paul changed sides completely, what would be the equivalent for me?

Am I willing to change the world around me as I believe God wants me to do?

St Paul sacrificed his freedom many times for his beliefs, what am I prepared to sacrifice?

Am I determined, or just bigoted?

St Paul was set on a good career. He was respected by those in authority, he was passionate, he had status, he was doing an effective job.

All that changed because Paul's life became infected by Jesus, his life, teaching and example.

This was before any gospel had been written.

In order to get his ideas straight, he disappeared into "Arabia" for three years, it must have been a long tussle.

We can compare this with the time that Jesus spent in the desert which we remember in our festival of Lent, or even to today's gap years.

Led by

Lay Pastor

Mervyn Flecknoe with Naomi Cahill

The Bible

Galatians 5:19-21

It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cut-throat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community.

I could go on!

This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom.

Pray for

Those who have fallen prey to bad habits of drinking, gambling, or sexual violence;
Those who try to help them;
Those whose partners abuse them;
Children whose parents abuse them;

Collect for the day

Stern Father God, I want to recognise my own sins, to understand the harm that I do with my wealth, the good that I have let pass by, the love that I have neglected to bring to my dealings with others; I want to use my freedom to walk in your earthly footsteps. Amen

February 19th 2023

**The Gospel
According to
St Paul
Week 7**

Because I am amongst the richest people on the planet, I do the most harm.

Perhaps I eat food grown by people who do not have enough good food for themselves?

Perhaps I eat fish from trawlers that destroy the ocean bed?

Sometimes I use and throw away many things made in factories by people in poverty

We all use and throw away goods made from minerals taken unsustainably from the Earth

**Communion Worship
led by
Rev Phil Drake**

**Know Yourself
First!**

Questions:

Do I spend my money as though it was a gift from God?

Do I possess too much?

Do I give money away wisely and often?

Could I manage on less?

Do I buy food wisely?

Do I repair and reuse before throwing away?

The Bible

Galatians I:13-20

I'm sure that you've heard the story of my earlier life when I lived in the Jewish way. In those days I went all out in persecuting God's church. I was systematically destroying it. I was so enthusiastic about the traditions of my ancestors that I advanced head and shoulders above my peers in my career. Even then, God had his eye on me. Why, when I was still in my mother's womb, he chose and called me out of sheer generosity! Now he has intervened and revealed his Son to me so that I might joyfully tell non-Jews about him.

Immediately after my calling, without consulting anyone around me and without going up to Jerusalem to confer with those who were apostles long before I was—I got away to Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus, but it was three years before I went up to Jerusalem to compare stories with Peter. I was there only fifteen days—but what days they were!

Pray for
All those in prison for their beliefs or for opposing a government;
All those who suffer mockery, persecution, or deliberate isolation in their communities;
All those questioning the religious beliefs of their parents.

Collect for the day
God of St Paul, whom you helped to change his beliefs and his life;
where our lives are not in the image of Jesus,
we ask that you help to change us too. Amen

January 15th 2023

The Gospel According to St Paul

Week 2

Questions:

How much is my family's income greater than Universal Credit?

Why don't I know? Don't I care enough?

How much am I prepared to share of what I have?

On whom do I depend for comfort; how much do they get paid?

What ways can I find of supporting poor people without patronising them?

What can I do anonymously?

How much of our church's energy is devoted to those who do not profess Christianity? Are we an outward looking church? How much of our personal life is devoted to those who do not profess Christianity?

It is evident that from the earliest days of the church, there has been agreement amongst its leaders that we should have a concern for the poor.

This concern has often been subverted. The church has often divided the poor into the feckless and the deserving, without empathetic knowledge of the lives of either group.

The Bible mentions "The Poor" 2000 times!

Led by

Rev Nick Blundell
with Covenant
Vows

The Bible

Galatians 5:22-26

But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. Among those who belong to Christ, everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good—crucified.

Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives. That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.

Pray for

**Those who ignore the gifts that they have;
Those who have not found out that gifts can be
gained, developed, grown, and passed on;
Those who have given us an example of how to use
the gifts of the Spirit.**

Collect for the day

Holy Spirit of many gifts, I pray that I may learn in humility to embrace the gifts that flow from you; that my love for you, for my neighbours, and for your world, should overflow in abundance.

Amen

February 12th 2023

**The Gospel
According to
St Paul
Week 6**

Do you remember last year's study about the Fruits of the Spirit?
love,
joy,
peace,
patience,
kindness,
goodness,
faithfulness,
gentleness
self-control

If we judge ourselves against others, we will be led astray.

As Max Ehrmann says in the Desiderata: If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser ones than yourself.

**This All-Age
Worship led by
Rev Christine
Crabtree**

Questions:

Am I loving enough?

Do I radiate joy to others?

Do I create peace in places of conflict?

Could I be more patient?

Am I usually kind?

Do I live a good life?

Am I faithful to my beliefs?

Am I gentle with those who irritate me?

Would John Wesley commend my self-control?

The Bible

Galatians 2:9-10

Recognizing that my calling had been given by God, James, Peter, and John—the pillars of the church—shook hands with me and Barnabas, assigning us to a ministry to the non-Jews, while they continued to be responsible for reaching out to the Jews.

The only additional thing they asked was that we remember the poor, and I was already eager to do that.

Pray for
All those who can only afford food OR heating;
All those who feel crushed by credit card debt or by the demands of loan sharks;
All those who are ashamed of being poor;
All children who go to bed or to school hungry;
All those who cannot afford to care for the environment.

Collect for the day
God of the dispossessed, I ask only that you help me be a faithful custodian of your earth,
a friend of the weak,
an advocate of the poor,
and a host to the strangers. Amen

January 22nd 2023

The Gospel According to St Paul

Week 3

Questions:

Do I always stay faithful to my beliefs?

Do I change my stand depending on whom I am with?

Do I have the courage, or lack the courage, to express my beliefs?

Am I sure about what I believe?

What would count as "denying my Lord"?

How am I tempted to "fit in"?

Do we have the courage and faith to challenge the views of those in authority when we think that they are leading people astray?

Does our behaviour change depending on whom we are trying to impress?

Do our moral arguments change to fit in with those around us?

Peter felt compelled to tell Jesus that he was the Christ, the one to save the world, but in the courtyard after the capture of Jesus, he denied all knowledge, do we change our tune depending on whose company we keep?

Led by

**Jonathan &
Sean Hayes**

The Bible

Galatians 4:1-7

Let me show you the implications of this. As long as the heir is a minor, he has no advantage over the slave. Though legally he owns the entire inheritance, he is subject to tutors and administrators until whatever date the father has set for emancipation. That is the way it is with us: When we were minors, we were just like slaves ordered around by simple instructions (the tutors and administrators of this world), with no say in the conduct of our own lives.

But when the time arrived that was set by God the Father, God sent his Son, born among us of a woman, born under the conditions of the law so that he might redeem those of us who have been kidnapped by the law. Thus we have been set free to experience our rightful heritage.

Pray for

**Those who give their lives to loving others;
Carers who devote themselves to disabled children;
Wives and husbands who honour their vows
in sickness and in health;
People who give themselves to someone who does
not love them.**

Collect for the day

Lord above all laws, I confess that I have allowed myself to be a slave to beliefs that have nothing to do with your life teaching or example. I want to grow up now, to be freed from the shackles of religious laws, to be bound only by the law of love

Amen

February 5th 2023

The Gospel According to St Paul

Week 5

The Law of Love

Questions:

What religious rules do we respect and hold dear?

Are they important in holding our community together?

Do they exclude anyone?

Whom could I love better?

How could I love better?

Whom do I admire for the love that they show?

Paul says that the human race needed the Jewish law, just as children need teachers and parental rules.

Just as parents have to let go, to see children adopting different life-styles, hoping that the values they have offered through their own example will prevail, so God does not require us to follow the 613 laws of Moses, just to the commands of Jesus:

Love God,
Love your neighbour.

We will not gain favour with God, whatever we hope that means, by adhering to religious rules, but by living loving lives.

Led by

Dawn Jankowicz

The Bible

Galatians 2:II-14

Later, when Peter came to Antioch, I had a face-to-face confrontation with him because he was clearly out of line. Here's the situation. Earlier, before certain persons had come from James, Peter regularly ate with the non-Jews. But when that conservative group came from Jerusalem, he cautiously pulled back and put as much distance as he could manage between himself and his non-Jewish friends. That's how fearful he was of the conservative Jewish clique that's been pushing the old system of circumcision. Unfortunately, the rest of the Jews in the Antioch church joined in that hypocrisy so that even Barnabas was swept along in the charade. But when I saw that they were not maintaining a steady, straight course according to the Message, I spoke up to Peter in front of them all: "If you, a Jew, live like a non-Jew when you're not being observed by the watchdogs from Jerusalem, what right do you have to require non-Jews to conform to Jewish customs just to make a favourable impression on your old Jerusalem buddies?"

Pray for

Those who find themselves with companions who believe differently;

Those who can only keep their jobs by denying their beliefs.

Children who suffer persecution on social media.

Collect for the day

God of integrity, I ask that all my conversations be honest and open, without fear or favour, speaking without dissembling, prepared to disagree in compassion and in love, trying to understand the point of view of others with whom I disagree. Amen

January 29th 2023

The Gospel According to St Paul

Week 4

Questions:

Are we ready to accept everyone as an equal child of God, worthy of equal respect, equal love, equal value before God?

If someone checked the people we meet, would they think that we value:

Methodists over Catholics;
White refugees over Syrians;
Heterosexual couples over gay couples?

Do we respect the right of people to live different lives from us?

At various times in the past, the Church has told people with great authority that they were inferior:

*For not going to church,
For believing in a different religion,
For playing football on Sundays,
For being divorced,
For being homosexual,
For eating meat on Fridays.*

The people who did this thought that they were right to do so.

*We now believe that they were wrong.
What will future generations judge that we got wrong?*

Led by
**Lay Pastor
Claire Nott**

The Bible

Galatians 3:28

In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pray for

**Those who feel themselves to be the odd one out ;
Those who are persecuted for being different;
Those who ignore the Teaching of Jesus about love and who prefer to discriminate and hate;
Those who value money and possessions over relationships and service;
Those who look down on other people who are different;
Those who are disabled and experience prejudice
Those who feel that their bodies are the wrong gender.**

Collect for the day

Loving God, I confess that I have tried to make you in my own image, of my own background and colour, approving of my own use of money and time, instead of recognising your face in the face of everyone I meet. I am blind, help me to see.
Amen