*divING DEEPER* **Discussion Guide**

**TEXT SUMMARY**

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Today’s text, **Galatians 1:1-5**, gives us the opening paragraph, the salutation, of Paul’s letter to the believers in the churches in Galatia.

**INTRODUCTION** (observation)

1. Paul is careful to point out that his credentials as an apostle were not of human origin; he was made an apostle “through Jesus Christ and God the Father” (v. 1).
2. Unlike many of Paul’s other letters, Galatians wasn’t written to believers in a single city. Galatia was a region, and the letter is addressed to “the churches of Galatia,” the churches scattered throughout the region.
3. Paul’s salutation highlights a theme he will develop throughout the letter: that our salvation came about because Christ “who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age” (v. 4). He will argue vigorously that our salvation is through Christ alone, not through Christ and anything we can add.

**READING**

1Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2and all the brothers who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

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

Galatians 1:1-5, ESV

**DISCUSSION** (interpretation): Paul was furious because teachers from the mother church in Jerusalem (“Judaizers”) had confused Gentile believers in Galatia about the nature of the gospel message. The Judaizers taught, particularly, that Gentiles who want to be in Christ must become Jewish by being circumcised.

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Three main points emerge from Paul’s salutation:

1. **Jesus is the gospel** (v. 1). The Judaizers taught a kind of “Jesus and” version of the faith. Why might someone from a Jewish background consider circumcision non-negotiable? (See Genesis 17.)
2. **The gospel is given to us graciously through Christ** (v. 2-4). Paul saw that the message of the Judaizers mixed faith with works. How Paul summarize the gospel in these verses?
3. **God alone is to be glorified** (v. 5). Based on what we read about the gospel in Paul’s salutation, what role do we play in making ourselves right with God? What credit can we take for our right standing before God?

**SO WHAT?** (application)

There’s nothing inherently evil about circumcision. Yet we will see that Paul is strenuous in his denunciation of the message of the Judaizers. Why?

We are not tempted to treat circumcision as a prerequisite for our salvation, but we are vulnerable to the temptation to add require-ments and additional stipulations to the simple message that Christ died for our sins.

What are some of those added requirements and stipulations we are tempted to add to the gospel?