



# One Page Sermon

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#### Galatians 3:1-9, 23-29 Paul pleads with the Galatians to get back to the mission.

Paul's language in this part of the letter is ramped up. He really does not understand how the Galatians could have things so wrong. His message remains clear: not eating with those who are uncircumcised damages the community. While part of the letter to the Galatians gets pretty deep in the theological weeds, Paul's argument can be summarized simply: Abraham had a relationship with God before the Law. God chose Abraham before he was circumcised. They had a covenant relationship based only on Abraham's faith. This is the covenant that Christ has now fulfilled. Nothing in between Abraham and God's first conversation and the resurrection of Christ should get in the way of the mission: which is building the Kingdom of God.

Paul was arguing to get back to basics. He was arguing to get out of the theological arguments, the rule-following, and exclusionary table practices, and just build a community connected to and by Christ. Paul was reminding the Galatians to get back to their mission.

While the Gospels were not yet written when Paul wrote this letter, the stories of Jesus were circulating. The early followers of Christ were telling the stories of Jesus, especially the stories of his resurrection. Last words matter, and all too often we focus on the last words of Jesus on the Cross, but what about the last words of Jesus after the resurrection?

In Matthew, Jesus left us with a commission to "make disciples" of the entire world. In Mark, the angels of God tell the women to "go back to Galilee and meet Christ there." The implications of this command are for the reader to go back to the beginning of the Gospel and remember that the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus are just the beginning of the good news.

In John, Jesus ends with a simple command, "Follow me," and before this he has a conversation with Peter, reminding him three times that if Peter loves Jesus, his job is to care for the sheep of God. Finally, in Luke and Acts, we have Jesus telling the disciples to be witnesses to Christ "to the ends of the earth."



The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul is June 29. Learn more at <https://orthochristian.com/95310.html>

Think for what all of these "last words" mean together. The call is to follow Christ. The call is to follow him in that path that he laid out: forgiveness, compassion, and mercy. Jesus told his disciples to care for one another, and tell the stories of his life, ministry, death, and resurrection. "Make disciples," "Follow me," "Feed my sheep," "Be my witnesses," this is the heart of what Jesus left us with. And this is the heart that Paul is trying to get us back to consider.

Paul does a lot of theological, rhetorical, and logical work to help people see a much simpler argument: Go back to basics. Go back to the relationship God had with Abraham, which was a promise. Then consider that Christ is the fulfillment of that promise. Then act as a community that is formed by Jesus' call upon our life.

Follow his way of compassion, grace, and love; feed those who are hungry and care for one another; witness to great things you have seen. Be disciples. Build community. This is the call upon our lives.