



## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*Week of February 6 & 7, 2021*

*Please use these questions to stay connected as a church to meditate on the same sermon preached from God's Word this week. May this be a fruitful time for the building up of our church and for the spread of the gospel.*

### **Sermon Text**

Galatians 6:11-18

*If you were not able to listen to this week's sermon, then please refer to this link to listen prior to answering these questions, <http://hawaiiikaichurch.org/sermononline>*

***11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. 12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. 14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. 16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. 17 From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.***

### **Summary**

In this week's passage - the conclusion of our study through the book of Galatians - Paul makes one last plea with the churches in Galatia to avoid the self-centered false teachers who wanted to "make much of themselves" by forcing the Galatians to be circumcised. Paul contrasts this works based boasting of the false teachers with the cross based boasting of those who have

been crucified with Christ. Paul's emphasis is NOT on our external acts of righteousness but on the internal change that occurs in those who have become new creations in Christ. He ends his letter with a blessing upon those who follow Christ and a reminder that unlike the false teachers who feared persecution, Paul bore the scars and wounds of his beloved Savior.

## Discussion Questions

1. The false teachers were trying to force the Galatians to be circumcised so "that they may boast in your flesh." Their motives were selfish and their focus was on trying to "make a good showing in the flesh". People like this have existed within the church from the very beginning. Why is it important to identify people like this in the church today? How do you spot them? How can you avoid being this way yourself? (In our sermon we were encouraged to ask ourselves, "Is our religion for God or is it for others to see?" and "Do you want a reputation for godliness more than godliness itself?")
2. In v.12, Paul said that the false teachers were forcing the gentile believers to be circumcised in order to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. In other words, the false teachers were afraid of the Jews and were trying to camouflage their Christian beliefs behind circumcision. In what ways do we do this today? In order to avoid "persecution", how do we sometimes camouflage our Christianity?
3. When we camouflage our faith, by downplaying sin and the cross, and instead focus on good causes such as social justice and feeding the poor, we may make ourselves more popular (or at least less offensive) to a watching world, but what are we giving up? What does the church sacrifice when it tries to avoid persecution and appease the world rather than be unashamed of the Gospel?
4. Although Paul could have boasted about his accomplishments far more than any Christian who has ever lived, he said his only boast was in the cross of Christ. In Paul's day, the cross was not something you spoke of in polite conversation for it was a symbol of shame, humiliation, suffering,

punishment, and death. Why would Paul boast in such a thing as the cross? How does the beauty of God's love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness come shining through the deadly and heinous symbol of the cross?

5. Galatians 2:20 tells us that the Christian has been crucified on the cross with Christ and that we have become new creations in Him. In 6:14&15 Paul says, "***the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world***" and that nothing counts for anything, except the new creation. Why is it important to remember that Christianity is not about doing good works and trying to be a better person, but about being a new creation in Christ. Why is it crucial for the Christian to live according to this truth?
  
6. Paul knew the freedom that came from being made into a new creation, unencumbered by ego, unfettered by the opinions and frowns of the world, or the desires to make our homes here on earth. Instead he was free to live wholly unto Christ. So the final question for us from the book of Galatians is this: What is your boast in life? Is it your job and status? Your bank account and portfolio? Your family and children? Or is it the cross of Jesus Christ? How do you know, and how do you show what your boast in life really is?