



Small Group Guide: Jesus Plus Nothing Equals Freedom

Based on Galatians 2

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you tried really hard to earn someone's approval or acceptance. How did that make you feel?

Sermon Recap (5 minutes)

Main Point: We cannot add anything to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Salvation is by grace alone through faith in Jesus—not Jesus plus our performance, rituals, or religious activities.

Key Scripture: Galatians 2:1-5, 11-14, 20

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Understanding the Gospel

1. **The Masterpiece Illustration:** The sermon opened with a story about a boy wanting to "improve" a masterpiece with crayons. In what ways do we sometimes try to "improve" the gospel with our own additions?
2. **Read Galatians 2:4-5.** Who were the "false brethren" and what was their agenda? Why was Paul so concerned about their influence?
3. **Jesus Plus Nothing:** What does the phrase "Jesus plus nothing equals freedom" mean to you personally? Where have you struggled to believe this is enough?

Religion vs. Relationship

1. **The Fruit vs. The Root:** The sermon distinguished between things that are the "fruit of salvation" versus the "source of salvation." What are some examples of each? Why is this distinction important?

2. **Modern Additions:** The sermon mentioned several ways we add to Jesus today:
 - Jesus + church attendance
 - Jesus + daily devotions
 - Jesus + ministry success
 - Jesus + spiritual disciplines
3. Which of these have you been tempted to rely on for your acceptance before God?
4. Read Galatians 2:11-14. Why did Paul confront Peter "to his face"? What was Peter afraid of, and how does fear drive us toward performance-based religion?

Living in Grace

1. **Performance Anxiety:** Have you ever felt like you needed to "earn" God's love or approval? What does it feel like to live under that pressure?
2. Read Galatians 2:20. What does it mean practically to say "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"?
3. **Guilt and Shame:** The sermon mentioned that guilt keeps us in bondage. Is there an area where you've been carrying guilt even though Jesus has already declared you "not guilty"?

Protecting the Gospel

1. **Discernment:** How can we recognize when someone is preaching a "different gospel" that adds requirements to Jesus? What should our response be?
2. **Bold Grace:** Paul boldly defended grace even when it meant confronting church leaders. Where do you need more boldness to share or defend the true gospel?

Key Takeaways (5 minutes)

Have each person share which of these truths resonates most with them:

- ✓ Grace is enough. We cannot add to what Jesus finished on the cross.
- ✓ We don't clean up to come to Christ; we come to Christ and He cleans us up.
- ✓ Christian life is not "try harder"—it's die to self and let Christ live through you.
- ✓ Church attendance, devotions, and serving matter—but they are the fruit of salvation, not the source.
- ✓ When Jesus said "It is finished," He meant it. There's nothing more to add.

Practical Application (15 minutes)

Personal Reflection

Take 2-3 minutes of silence for each person to ask themselves:

- What have I been adding to Jesus?
- Where have I been striving instead of resting in His finished work?
- What would change in my life if I truly believed grace is enough?

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: The Freedom Audit

- Make a list of things you believe make you acceptable to God
- Cross out everything except "faith in Jesus Christ"
- Spend time thanking God that His grace is sufficient

Option 2: Grace Conversation

- Share the "Jesus plus nothing equals freedom" message with someone this week
- It could be a believer who's struggling with performance or a non-believer who thinks they need to "get their life together" first

Option 3: Sabbath Rest

- Take one day this week to intentionally rest from striving
- Don't do your "Christian checklist"—just spend time enjoying God's presence
- Journal about what this reveals about your relationship with Him

Option 4: Confession & Freedom

- If you've been carrying guilt about something Jesus already paid for, confess it to a trusted friend in the group
- Pray together and receive the freedom Christ purchased for you

Accountability & Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Share & Pray:

- What's one area where you need to stop striving and start resting in grace?
- How can we pray for each other this week?

Group Prayer Focus:

- Thank God for His sufficient grace
- Ask for freedom from performance-based religion
- Pray for boldness to share the true gospel
- Pray for those who prayed the salvation prayer during the service

Before Next Meeting

- Read: Galatians 3 (we'll cover it in two weeks)

- **Memorize: Galatians 2:20 - "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."**
- **Reflect: How is your identity rooted in Christ rather than in your performance?**

Leader Notes

- **Be prepared for vulnerability—people may share deep struggles with performance and guilt**
- **Emphasize grace throughout the discussion; avoid letting the group become judgmental**
- **If someone shares about adding works to salvation, respond with gentleness and truth**
- **Some may need ministry time for freedom from religious bondage**
- **Celebrate anyone who prayed the salvation prayer during the service**

"If God's not coming down on you, why are you coming down on yourself?"