

# **THEME: Focus in the Coming Storms**

## **LOOKING BACK**

- What was the most important thing you did or heard from the last session?

## **CONNECT The Cross**

### **Resources**

Bibles

### **Icebreaker Activity - Examining the Gospel**

**Things to prepare:** Pencils/pens, notecards, large sheet of paper, marker

#### **Activity – The Brainstorm:**

1. Discuss in pairs: What is the Gospel?
2. Ask each group to write down their ideas on a notecard.
3. Combine all the ideas onto one large sheet of paper.

### **Discuss**

- What are the key ideas about the Gospel? Sin separates us from God. Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Now, whoever declares that Jesus is Lord and believes that Jesus was raised to life is forgiven and receives eternal life. Our relationship with God is restored, and we are part of His kingdom— both Jews and Gentiles together. Wherever we go, we get to represent His kingdom on earth until Jesus returns.
- If you could sum up the Gospel with one picture, what would the picture be of and why? Our suggested answer: the cross, because Jesus died and shed His blood on a cross. His blood was payment for all our wrongdoings.

# TRUTH TO KNOW

## Faith Focus: The Centrality of the Cross

### Introduction

We want to help you know the Truth and will do our best to tell you what is true, but you don't just need to take our word. You need to read it in the Bible for yourself. So, we will open the Bible and read the Truth each time we meet. This week's "Truth to Know" is found in **Galatians 1:1-11**.

Did you know the Bible warns us against following a different gospel?

### Background to This Bible Passage

Galatians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to a group of churches in several towns in a region called Galatia. Paul was concerned about reports from this region that Christians there were beginning to follow a different gospel message, not the one centered on the cross of Jesus. The believers in Galatia were being deceived, and Paul wanted to bring them back to the true Gospel.

### The Unfolding Story - Your Interactive Teaching

Read **Galatians 1:1-11**.

- What do you notice about Paul's introduction of himself in verse 1? *He was associating himself with Jesus Christ, the one who was raised from the dead by God the Father.*
- Paul knew there was a danger for Christians to be deceived and associate themselves with another gospel message. In verses 3-5, Paul also clarifies what Jesus did for humankind. What did Paul say here? *Jesus gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from evil.*
- In verse 6, Paul calls out the problem that the Galatians are experiencing. What was this problem? *Some among them were twisting the message about Jesus and presenting a different gospel.*

Paul made it clear that there is only one Gospel. He warned the Galatians not to be deceived by false teachings about Jesus. In **Matthew 24:4-5**, Jesus Himself warned that many will be deceived at the end of the age. This is an important idea for us as we look toward the return of Jesus. We know that deception about Jesus is increasing and will continue to increase, so people present a version of Jesus not found in the Bible and follow that rather than the true Jesus. For example, the Jesus who says sins do not matter.

- How can we make sure that we are not deceived? *We want to be sure that we're following the one true Gospel as written in the Bible.*
- What should we focus on now and in the coming days? *Living fully for Jesus, just as Jesus lived wholly for the Father, even to the extent of dying on the cross for our sins.*

### Activity Suggestion - Focusing on the Cross

**Aim:** To consider how we can keep the cross of Jesus central in our hearts and minds as we face the storms at the end of the age.

**Things to Prepare:** Communion elements: grape juice, small cups, and bread/wafers

**Activity – Taking Communion:**

1. Pass around the communion elements.
2. Read **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**.
3. Partake of the juice and bread together.
4. Pray together.

**Discuss - The Coming Storms**

- Jesus warned us that deception will increase as we get closer to His return. He also said that there will be more storms and challenges to walk through, and this will be tough. What must we focus on as we go through the storms ahead? *We will need to stay focused on Jesus.*
- Taking communion is a great way not to be deceived and to focus on Jesus and the true Gospel. Why? Jesus told His followers to do this often in remembrance of Him. Communion gives an opportunity to focus on Jesus' body and blood, which He sacrificed on the cross for our sins.

Regularly taking communion helps us to stay centered on Jesus and what He has done for us. When we focus on this, it keeps us from being deceived.

## READY TO GO

*Thinking about how this affects our lives and our response to the signs we see.*

Think about what you will do to stay focused on the true Gospel.

## TIME FOR ACTION



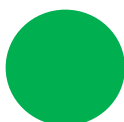
**1. "STOP & THINK" Action Point**

Take two minutes to think about your own life. Have you ever been faced with a gospel message that is not the true gospel? How was it different from the true Gospel?



**2. "PAUSE TO PRAY" Action Point**

Have a conversation with God about today's lesson. Ask Him to help you stay focused on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and not be deceived by any false gospel messages.



**3. "GO & DO" Action Point**

Gather some others and pray together or sing a worship song to thank God for sending Jesus to be a sacrifice for our sins.

## **SPRINGBOARD**

Discuss what topic you would like to do together next time. After this session, you may wish to follow up next time with one of the following sessions:

- Guard Against Deception
- How to Listen to the News
- How to Be in the World and Not of It

## DEEPER STUDY

*For those who would like to study further the themes raised in this session.*

### For Study

1. Read **Matthew 14:22-34**. In this story, we see that when Peter has his eyes focused on Jesus, he can walk on water. What caused Peter to fall into the water? How might we connect our learning from today's lesson to this Bible story? What do we need to keep our eyes focused on in this generation of storms before the Lord's return?
2. Read **John 6:25-59**. What is something new that you have learned from these verses, especially as they relate to communion?

### For Memorizing

1. **1 Peter 2:24** (NIV): "'He himself bore our sins' in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by his wounds you have been healed.'"
2. **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** (NIV): "For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

### For Observation

1. It is important to keep the cross of Jesus central in our focus when we face the storms that will come. There are already false versions of Jesus, and people are getting confused and deceived. Some of these false Jesus' did not die on the cross and did not sacrifice their body and blood for humanity. We need to know the real Jesus. Watch [this video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNJ5oi1cw2I) about seeking the real Jesus. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNJ5oi1cw2I>)

### For Action

1. Ask one or two people at your school or in your neighborhood what they know about Jesus. See if they mention the cross and His sacrifice. If not, share with them what you learned about the true Gospel.

### Before the Next IN:Tribe

1. Create a poster about the Roman Road. You can learn about this by watching the video on [this website](https://www.gotquestions.org/Romans-road-salvation.html): (<https://www.gotquestions.org/Romans-road-salvation.html>). Choose some key words from each bible verse to display on your poster. Bring your poster to share with others at our next IN:Tribe meeting.