

Potpourri Sunday School Class Schedule and Study Supplement
17 Sep 2017 - 07 Jan 2018 (as of 09/29/17)
(Room 116, Education Building, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church)
(class teacher/contact: Mike Bearden; michaelrbearden@bellsouth.net)

Note 1: A new study book (*Paul and the Galatians* – by Rev. Paul E. Stroble) begins on Sep. 17, 2017, from 9:00 am - 9:50 am in classroom 116 in the SAPC Education Building. You are welcome to attend the class and listen to/participate in the discussions without reading the book or the scripture readings below. The study book selection (see the schedule below) can be obtained in paperback or e-book from both Cokesbury and Amazon (the study re Presbyterians and Mormons is attached in PDF format to the Potpourri section of the SAPC Sunday School web page). A copy of a class calendar/brief study supplement (see below) is available on the Sunday School web page (St. Andrews Presbyterian Church web site) and from Mike Bearden in class for those that don't want to obtain a copy of the book. This schedule also contains the study and book following *Paul and the Galatians*, too (*Presbyterians and Mormons: A Study in Contrasts* and *The Redemption of Scrooge* [for Advent]), continuing through the end of Dec. 2017.

Note 2: Questions and suggestions/requests for subjects and/or books may be submitted to Mike Bearden - michaelrbearden@bellsouth.net .

Week	Date and Time	Book	Chapter	Scripture (Bold = Primary)	Teacher	Remarks
1	09/17/17 9:00 am -9:50 am	Paul and the Galatians (Paul E. Stroble)	1 (Who Were the Galatians?)	Galatians 1:1-5	Mike Bearden	
2	09/24/17 9:00 am -9:50 am	Paul and the Galatians (Paul E. Stroble)	2 (A “Second String” Apostle?)	Galatians 1:6 – 2:10	Mike Bearden	
3	10/01/17 9:00 am -9:50 am	Paul and the Galatians (Paul E. Stroble)	3 (Faith or Works?)	Galatians 2:11-21	Mike Bearden	
4	10/08/17 9:00 am -9:50 am	Paul and the Galatians (Paul E. Stroble)	4 (Faith Came First)	Galatians 3:1 – 4:7	Mike Bearden	
5	10/15/17 9:00 am -9:50 am	Paul and the Galatians (Paul E. Stroble)	5 (What Is Liberty?)	Galatians 4:1 – 5:15	Mike Bearden	

Week	Date and Time	Book	Chapter	Scripture (Bold = Primary)	Teacher	Remarks
6	10/22/17 9:00 am -9:50 am	Paul and the Galatians (Paul E. Stroble)	6 (Life in the Spirit)	Galatians 5:16 – 6:18	Mike Bearden	
7	10/29/17 9:00 am - 9:50 am	Presbyterians and Mormons: A Study in Contrasts [PC(USA)]	Study Guide – Session One	N/A	Mike Bearden	
8	11/05/17 9:00 am - 9:50 am	Presbyterians and Mormons: A Study in Contrasts [PC(USA)]	Study Guide – Session Two	N/A	Mike Bearden	
9	11/12/17 9:00 am - 9:50 am	Presbyterians and Mormons: A Study in Contrasts [PC(USA)]	Study Guide – Session Three	Selections from <i>The Book of Mormon</i> , 3 Nephi, Chapter 10:18 – Chapter 11:41 (see remarks)	Mike Bearden	Referenced scripture selections from <i>The Book of Mormon</i> are at Appendix A, Presbyterians and Mormons: A Study in Contrasts.
10	11/19/17 9:00 am - 9:50 am	Presbyterians and Mormons: A Study in Contrasts [PC(USA)]	Study Guide – Session Four	Psalm 86:1-12	Mike Bearden	
11	11/26/17 No Class – See Remarks	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Class – Thanksgiving Weekend

Week	Date and Time	Book	Chapter	Scripture (Bold = Primary)	Teacher	Remarks
12	12/03/17 9:00 am - 9:50 am	The Redemption of Scrooge (Matt Rawle)	1 (Bah! Humbug!)	Matt. 1:1-17, 20:1-16; Mark 1:1-13; Luke 1:1-38, 46-55; John 1:1-18; Gal. 6:7; Col. 2:13-14	Mike Bearden	Advent Study
13	12/10/17 9:00 am - 9:50 am	The Redemption of Scrooge (Matt Rawle)	2 (The Remembrance of Christmas Past); and, 3 (The Life of Christmas Present)	Chapter 2 Matt. 2:13-23; Luke 16:19-31; Gal. 1:13-24 Chapter 3 Exodus 16:13-21; Matt. 20:1-16; Luke 2:1-10, 15:1-10	Mike Bearden	Advent Study
CA14	12/17/17 9:00 am - 9:50 am	The Redemption of Scrooge (Matt Rawle)	4 (The Hope of Christmas Future)	1 Sam. 3:1-10; Psalm 42:1-5; Luke 19:1-9; John 4:4-30; Acts 3:1-10	Mike Bearden	Advent Study
rC15	12/24/17 No Class – See Remarks	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Class – Christmas Eve
16	12/31/17 No Class – See Remarks	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Class – New Year’s Eve

Week	Date and Time	Book	Chapter	Scripture (Bold = Primary)	Teacher	Remarks
17	01/07/18 9:00 am -9:50 am New Book Begins	See comments.	See comments.	See comments.	Mike Bearden	New book begins – new info to be published in Nov/Dec 2017.

Study Supplements begin on the following page.

Paul and the Galatians – Study Supplement
(See scripture list for each lesson on the schedule above)

“But, as we shall see in this book, Galatians is a letter of much power and influence. Justification through faith, the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God’s love of Jew and Gentile alike, the absolute confidence we can have in salvation, the impossibility of salvation through works, the misleading quality of works, the power and evidence of the Holy Spirit, the relationship between Christ and the ‘old covenant’: These are a few of Paul’s favorite themes in many of his letters, themes that are addressed in Galatians as well.” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

Chapter 1: Who Were the Galatians?

“... although Paul denied that Gentiles needed circumcision. That is Paul’s point in his letter to the church in Galatia, a predominantly Gentile church. Only by faith in Christ can one be in a right relationship with God. That is, one cannot achieve a relationship with God by performing works of the law or by observing certain rights, God-given though they may be. Because of Christ, no human activity whatsoever can earn for a person a relationship with God. To think otherwise is to deny the sufficiency of God’s grace (see, for instance, Galatians 2:16; 3:24-26; 6:12-15).” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

“To embark on a study of Galatians is to realize the completeness of God’s love for us. The Letter to the Galatians deals with interrelated themes:

- The role of older Jewish rites such as circumcision in Christian living (especially for Gentiles)
- The broader role of the Jewish Torah, or ‘Law,’ for Christians
- The great doctrine of justification by faith
- The kind of life Christians ought to and can lead
- The source and nature of Paul’s apostleship

All these themes are woven together through the greater theme of God’s grace that has done everything necessary for our salvation.” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

Chapter 2: A “Second String” Apostle?

“Whoever these teachers were, they maintained that a Christian must keep certain aspects of the old Mosaic law. This was as we saw earlier, a concern of many first-generation Christians. How much of the older Jewish law should Christians still uphold? What about Christian converts that were not previously Jewish? Jesus himself said, after all, ‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and

teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 5:17-19). Paul E. Stroble, Paul and the Galatians

“The leaders of Jerusalem included Peter, James, John ‘who were [the] acknowledged pillars’ of the church and who ‘recognized the grace that had been given to me [Paul]’ (Galatians 2.9). Paul E. Stroble, Paul and the Galatians

“Paul became an apostle through the direct intervention of God. Paul was conscious of the fact that he, a persecutor of the church, was surely not the most likely choice. But God’s will was done! God chose Paul as an apostle! The church at Jerusalem understood this, and so they gave Paul their respect and approval as he ministered to the Gentiles. Paul told this to the Galatians so they might understand his authority to preach to them the true gospel – unlike the teachers who recently visited the church.” Paul E. Stroble, Paul and the Galatians

Chapters 3: Faith or Works?

“The matter did not end there, however. Paul later met with Peter at Antioch. Peter had had table fellowship with both Jews and Gentiles; but at Antioch, Peter was criticized by ‘certain people...from James’ (Galatians 2:12) for eating with Gentiles. Peter then withdrew from Gentile Christians ‘for fear of the circumcision faction’ (Galatians 2:12) and did not eat with the Gentiles. Even Barnabas and the other Jewish converts were swayed by the pressure and withdrew from the Gentiles.” Paul E. Stroble, Paul and the Galatians

“Before, Paul had lived a life of obedience. But there is a fine line – one that both Jews and Christians walk – between obedience as a response to God’s grace and obedience as a way to earn God’s pleasure. For Paul, the inability of the law to make us alive and free is a drastic problem, one so serious that we need nothing less than God’s Son to save us. But Christ’s power is so much greater than the law, providing us with nothing less than the Spirit of the almighty God, that Paul would no longer claim anything of his own. He had died to the law but had come to life in Christ. The law is no ‘respirator’ if we are already ‘dead’ to sin. In both the Old and New Testaments, only God can give us breath and life.” Paul E. Stroble, Paul and the Galatians

“Paul argues that the Gentiles should have known and acknowledged God but did not act on that knowledge (Romans 1:18-32). The Jew has the law but runs the risk of being judged by the law when he or she sins (Romans 2). Though circumcision and the law are advantageous, and ‘real circumcision is a matter of the heart’ (2:29), Jews find themselves under the power of sin as do Gentiles ((3:9-20). Thus we are justified through Jesus Christ alone ((3:21-31). He condemned the sin under which Jews and Gentiles suffer (8:3) so that truly our sin is crucified in him (Galatians 2:19). Now we are justified not by the law that would condemn us, but by the free grace of God in Christ.” Paul E. Stroble, Paul and the Galatians

Chapters 4: Faith Came First

“What does Abraham mean to you? He is revered by three world religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), representing nearly two billion people, as the father of faith in the one God. In Galatians 3, Paul continues his main point: God saves by faith rather than by works. Paul uses different arguments to prove his point. First he uses the example of experience. Then he uses the example of Abraham.” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

“Furthermore, the evidence of God’s love is already manifested in the lives of the Galatians through the Spirit and through miracles. Did they earn God’s love, manifested in these ways, through works? ‘Of course not!’ says Paul. But, we too, think this way much of the time. We have evidence of God’s love in our lives; but in times of crisis or insecurity, we fall back on thinking that we must deserve God’s love and work for it. We fall back on our own righteousness, on our own achievements. We fall back on thinking that if we do or promise ‘X,’ God will be more pleased with us and move to help us. This is foolish thinking!” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

“But in Christ one finds equality as God’s children. God has adopted us as precious heirs, ‘heirs according to the promise’ (Galatians 3:29). This was the wonderful message that Paul wanted to impress on the Galatians.” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

Chapters 5: What Is Liberty?

“Paul’s basic point is that the Galatians have been set free! They are no longer slaves to anything but have ‘received adoption as children’ (Galatians 4:5). They are known by God and know God, so why should they fall back on older spirits and older observances that are now irrelevant to them (Galatians 4:9). Why do they listen to teachers who demand that they be circumcised in order to be saved?” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

“Paul is so perplexed with them that he declares, ‘I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted’ (Galatians 4:11). He does not lament that his time was wasted – Paul never speaks of wasted time in his letters – but that the Galatians were losing the most important thing they could ever have: the good news of Christ. That good news means a personal relationship with God who does not demand observances but instead wants us as trusting, obedient children.” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

“Consider the phrase ‘fallen away from grace’ (Galatians 5:4). What does that phrase usually mean? Usually it means some kind of moral lapse. Interestingly, Paul employs the phrase to refer to the Galatians supposed religious conscientiousness! They want to be obedient, so they allow circumcision. They want to keep the law and also to hold to Christ. One can ‘fall away from grace’ through excessive religious devotion as well as through moral lapse if one forgets that salvation is of God alone and never of us.” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

“If we mistreat one another, we take grave risks with one another and hold up Christ to contempt. Paul reminds us that the church exists for one thing: for love of God and love of neighbor. It is a great blessing when we have such a church in our lives.” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians* (See Galatians 5:13-15)

Chapters 6: Life in the Spirit

“Several years ago an interview of Christian novelist Reynolds Price appeared in the literary journal *The Georgia Review*. Price said at one point, ‘It’s the great thing that institutional Christianity constantly fails to do – that is, to remember Jesus saying, ‘Do unto others,’ or when God says, ‘I will have mercy and not sacrifice,’ or ‘Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord,’ ‘I will repay.’ Christian churches seem to be too busy getting vengeance on and sacrificing other Christians, not with mercy and forgiveness.’ The interviewer interjected, ‘William Faulkner said, ‘The trouble with Christianity is we haven’t tried it yet.’” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

“‘Live by the Spirit,’ says Paul, ‘and do not gratify the desires of the flesh’ (Galatians 5:16). Again, we may be misled by the way the word *sarx* is translated as ‘flesh.’ Paul is not saying, ‘Live by the Spirit, and do not go out and eat and drink too much and have lots of immoral sex,’ although those things are included in his list of ‘works of the flesh.’ About half the vices Paul lists in Galatians 5:19-21 have to do with attitudes and relationships – the ‘little’ sins that we think are ‘all right’ compared to the ‘big’ sins. But living by the Spirit means excluding the ‘scandalous’ sins like immorality and drunkenness and also exclusion of the ‘respectable’ sins like envy, telling people off, rushing into conflict, judging others, and so forth.” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

“Reread John 15:17. Jesus tells his disciples, ‘I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.’ That word *may* is important. Jesus does not say, ‘You should love one another,’ or ‘You have to love one another.’ The word *may* indicates that permission to love is being given and also implies the power to love that is granted to us. That is the work of the Spirit. That is Paul’s confident foundation for Christian ethics and mutuality.” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

“The vices listed here in Galatians can be controlled by rites and rules; but if the heart is unclean, the law has not really done the job of transforming a person. Jewish writers speak of training a person’s intentions: guiding a person toward a transformation of the heart; so, too, Paul’s teachings here in Galatians. None of these fruits of the Spirit can be controlled by rites and rules. They spring from the Spirit’s work within us.” Paul E. Stroble, *Paul and the Galatians*

Presbyterians and Mormons: A Study in Contrasts

See the four-part study guide in the PDF copy of the report. Copies of the study guide and selected appendices will be available in class.

The Redemption of Scrooge

A study supplement will be provided; pending completion.