

# Galatians 2 - Paul Defends His Gospel; Paul Confronts Peter on Hypocrisy; Jews & Gentiles Both Saved by Faith

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## Galatians 2

- (B) Interdependence (2:1-10)
  - (a) Paul's coming (2:1)

**1 Then after an interval of fourteen years** I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking **Titus** along also.

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- "Then" - *Epeita*, next; this introduces the next event in Paul's experience (Cf. 1:18)
- "...an interval of fourteen years" - 14 years after his conversion, not 14 years after his first visit to Jerusalem (Cf. 1:18)
- Paul visited Jerusalem at least 5x; this was his second (Acts 11:27-30), a "private" meeting (v2)
- The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) was during Paul's third visit
- During that 14 year period, Paul was ministering in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26). At some point, a prophet named Agabus prophesied that there would be a worldwide famine, so the Christians in Antioch with means contributed to a relief fund for the churches in Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30).
- Paul, Barnabas and Titus brought the relief funds, donated by the Gentile churches in Asia Minor, to the Jerusalem church. The visit described in Acts 11:27-30 is the same visit Paul describes in Gal 2:1.
- "...Titus" - a Gentile believer (v3) and one of Paul's faithful disciples
- When Paul wrote Galatians, Titus was living in Antioch. He would later represent Paul to the Corinthian church (2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:5-16), to the Jerusalem church (2 Cor 8:6-24; 9:3-5; 12:18), and to the Cretan church (Titus 1:5).
- Titus possessed excellent people skills, and was a man of unquestioned integrity, especially with financial resources
- The reason Paul brought Titus along becomes evident: he was to be a test case in the matter of Gentile reception into the Church

<b>Paul's visits to Jerusalem</b>
1. The visit after he left Damascus (Acts 9:26-30; Gal. 1:18-20)
2. The famine visit (Acts 11:27-30; Gal. 2:1-10)
3. The visit to attend the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29)
4. The visit at the end of the second missionary journey (Acts 18:22)
5. The final visit that resulted in Paul's Caesarean imprisonment (Acts 21:15—23:35)

(b) Paul's concern (2:2)

2 It was because of **a revelation** that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but *I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that somehow I might be running, or had run, in vain.*

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2 I went in response to a revelation, and in a private meeting with the reputed leaders, I explained to them the gospel that I'm proclaiming to the gentiles. I did this because I was afraid that I was running or had run my life's race for nothing.

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

- "...a revelation" - the prophecy of Agabus of the worldwide famine (Acts 11:27-30)
- "...for fear that somehow I might be running, or had run, in vain" - Paul was *not* concerned that the Jerusalem apostle's would disapprove of his message, because he knew that both he and the original apostles had received their message from God.
- What Paul was concerned about was that his critics would say that he had no fellowship with the Jerusalem apostles due to Paul's false gospel
- To avoid this, Paul met with Peter, James and John privately, because Paul was a wanted man in Jerusalem at the time
- Another reason for the meeting may have been Paul's concern that the Jerusalem apostles would not recognize those he led to Christ as genuine Christians and members of the Church. He was concerned with officially freeing the Gentiles from the requirements of the Law and their equal status with Jewish Christians.
- On top of that, Paul was concerned about unity in the Church and the possibility of rupturing one Church into two separate branches of Jewish and Gentile Christianity
- "...I preach" - *kerusso*, present tense, which means that Paul was still, at the time of writing, preaching the same gospel that he had been preaching before he visited Jerusalem

(c) Paul's companion (2:3)

3 But not even **Titus**, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be **circumcised**.

3 But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

3 But not even Titus, who was with me, was forced to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

- "...Titus" - a Gentile and a faithful ally of the Apostle Paul throughout the NT. Titus is helping Paul nearly everywhere Paul goes.

- "...circumcised"- circumcision was the ritual by which a Gentile male became an OT proselyte
  - In the OT, if a Gentile wanted to trust in the God of Israel, they submitted themselves to circumcision. It was the outward/physical sign whereby a Jew or a Gentile would identify with the believing community of Israel.
  - Paul here is countering the teaching of the Judaizers, which said that if you want to grow as a believer in Christ, you must submit yourself to the Mosaic Law, which requires circumcision
  - Paul's point in this verse is that if the Judaizer's doctrine was correct, these original apostles in Jerusalem would have compelled Titus (a Gentile) to be circumcised. Yet when Titus accompanied Paul on this trip to Jerusalem, the apostles never compelled Titus to be circumcised.
  - Thus, the doctrine of the Judaizer's, which compelled everyone to either be saved or grow in their faith through obedience to the Mosaic Law, must be in error. Paul makes the point to the Galatians that it wasn't him who was out of step with apostolic teaching, it was the Judaizers.

(d) Paul's conviction (2:4-5)

- 4 Yet *it was a concern* because of the **false brothers secretly** brought in, who had **sneaked in** to spy on our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to **enslave** us.
- 4 But *it was* because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.
- 4 However, false brothers were secretly brought in. They slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in the Messiah Jesus so that they might enslave us.
- 4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:
- When Paul arrived in Jerusalem, he had a conviction/concern and he expressed this conviction/concern to the apostles
- "...false brothers" - the Pharisees/Judaizers in Jerusalem
- A second reason why Paul traveled from Antioch to Jerusalem, other than to deliver famine relief, was to address the Pharisees in Jerusalem, who were teaching the same thing as the Judaizers in Galatia (salvation by works)
- "...secretly...sneaked in" - one thing to understand about false doctrine is that it never barges in through the front door. It's never obvious, it's never transparent. It enters the church secretly, sneaking in to the corners until it grabs a foothold where it can begin to grow and spread.
- The Bible warns us of the secrecy of false doctrine over and over (2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4)

- Paul portrays these advocates of pharisaical doctrine in Jerusalem of sneaking in to take something away from a new believer, namely the simplicity of the gospel and the freedom that believers have in Christ
- "...enslave" - bondage; this is what false teaching does, it puts people in bondage and keeps them unaware of their freedom in Christ. It diminishes the simplicity of the gospel and puts people back in fear.

5 But we did not yield in subjection to them, even for an hour, **so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.**

5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.

5 But we did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you.

5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

- Paul's response is that when it came to the gospel, there was no compromise

— When it comes to someone coming into the church and teaching that you must perform some type of religious act to either become a Christian, to grow as a Christian, or to join the church, Paul had zero tolerance

- Paul often went out of his way to not offend people (1 Cor 9:19-22). He would even at times put himself back under the Mosaic Law so as to not offend the Jewish people so he could win a hearing with them (Acts 18:18; 21:26).

— So Paul had no problem temporarily submitting himself to the Mosaic Law to accomplish his mission, but if you tell Paul that he had to do that to either be saved or to grow as a Christian, Paul would never compromise.

— Paul would never compromise with the notion that either justification or sanctification was by works

- "...so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you" - Paul understood that if he compromised with false doctrine, it would affect the lives of other Christians who were within his ministry sphere

— If Paul compromised the gospel, it would not only affect his life, but the lives of everyone who was following him

— Paul is saying that salvation by faith alone in Christ alone is non-negotiable

(e) Paul's commission (2:6-9)

6 But from those who were of considerable repute (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no favoritism)—well, those who were of repute **contributed nothing to me.**

6 But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.

6 Now those who were reputed to be important added nothing to my message. (What sort of people they were makes no difference to me, since God pays no attention to outward appearances.)

6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

- Paul is not being sarcastic or disparaging the apostles in any way, shape or form here. What he is doing is reacting to the Pharisees.

— He is arguing his case against the Pharisees, who were denying his apostleship. The Pharisees were telling the Galatian churches that Paul birthed and taught that Paul shouldn't be trusted because he was not one of the original apostles, therefore don't listen to his doctrine.

— It's in that spirit that Paul calls the original apostles in Jerusalem "those who were of considerable repute"

— Paul's apostleship was legitimate because he received his message directly from God. It didn't matter that he was converted "late."

- "...contributed nothing to me" - Paul says that while I was in Jerusalem, the apostles did not change my gospel/doctrine one iota. He says that his message lined up perfectly with the message of the apostles.

— The apostles watched as Paul dealt aggressively with the Pharisees in Jerusalem, those who were teaching salvation by works. And when Peter, James and John saw and heard what I was doing, they didn't contest it, they didn't argue with me, in fact they contributed absolutely nothing.

— What Paul is saying is that these apostles did not change his message or his course of actions in even the smallest degree

7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised

7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised

7 In fact, they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised.

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

- God gave the apostles specific purposes and specific audiences. Our God is a God of variety. Different Christians have different ministries, different Christians have different

audiences and spheres of influence, different Christians have different people that the Holy Spirit wants them to reach (1 Cor 3:6). This is a basic principle of God.

— But, we're all preaching the same message (1 Cor 12:4)

8 (for He who was at work for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised was at work for me also to the Gentiles),

8 (for He who effectually worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles),

8 For the one who worked through Peter by making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me by sending me to the gentiles.

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

- Going even further, when the apostles in Jerusalem saw and heard Paul's teaching, they proclaimed his ministry as just as legitimate as Peter's ministry

— This is no small mention...up to this time, Peter is known by all to be the lead apostle

— In every list of the apostles in the Bible (Matt 10; Mark 3; Luke 6; Acts 1), Peter is always listed first

— In Acts, Luke parallels the miracles performed by first Peter, then Paul, to demonstrate what Paul is saying here: that Paul's apostleship and authority was on the same par with Peter.

From Peter to Paul	
Peter	Paul
Heals a man lame from birth (3:1-11)	Heals a man lame from birth (14:8-18)
Heals by shadow (5:15-16)	Heals by handkerchief (19:11-12)
Success is a cause of jealousy (5:17)	Success is a cause of jealousy (13:45)
Confronts a sorcerer (8:9-24)	Confronts a sorcerer (13:6-11)
Raises Dorcas (9:36-41)	Raises Eutychus (20:9-12)
Jailed and miraculously freed (12:3-19)	Jailed and miraculously freed (16:25-34)

9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we *might* go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.

9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we *might* go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

9 So when James, Cephas, and John (who were reputed to be leaders) recognized the grace that had been given me, they gave Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the gentiles and they to the circumcised.

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

- Paul traveled to Jerusalem, he confronted false doctrine from the Pharisees in the midst of the three heavy hitters, the pillars of the early church, Peter, James and John. And what did these men of reputation do? They shook Paul's hand in agreement of everything he said and did.

— These pillar apostles recognized the grace of God in Paul's life, and they agreed with his gospel message from beginning to end. In addition, by doing this, they recognized God's calling on Paul life, to preach to the Gentiles, just as they had recognized God's call on their lives, which was to preach the gospel to the Jews.

— They recognized Paul's ministry as just as legitimate as their own ministries

### **Division of Labor**

The apostles sent one group of evangelists to the Gentiles, the other to the Jews. However, they requested the missionaries to the Gentile world not to so divorce themselves from the Jewish believers—especially those at Jerusalem, who were notoriously poor (Rom 15:26). A few years before, God had revealed the door opening to the Gentiles through Peter at Joppa (Acts 10:12-15). Paul relates the arrangement as to the division of spheres of labor while in Jerusalem.

Preposition "of" may also be rendered "for." The Apostles had established no churches outside of Judea (Acts 8:1). Even those scattered abroad did not preach to the Gentiles (Acts 11:19). Barnabas, sent to investigate Antioch, did not report back to the apostles, but sent for Paul in Tarsus. The proof of Paul's good faith was that he raised a substantial fund among the Gentile churches, which he and others took to Jerusalem on the occasion of his last visit (1 Cor 16:1-4).

### **Same Gospel**

Peter had also been among the Galatians preaching the same gospel as everywhere else—on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-39), and again in Acts 3:19-21,26. The Jewish nation had rejected their Messiah. Again (Acts 4:10-12). Now, you hear the same man preaching in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10). Then examine the message addressed to the Jewish converts (1 Peter 1:18-20). This is the gospel Peter preached. Compare it to that of Paul (Acts 13:32-39). Nothing is different, just fuller; Paul added justification. We are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6).

(f) Paul's commendation (2:10)

10 *They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.*

10 *They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.*

10 The only thing they asked us to do was to remember the destitute, the very thing I was eager to do.

10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

- The only thing the Jerusalem apostles told Paul was to remind him to remember the poor
- They had nothing to say about Paul's orthodoxy (correct belief), they only offered a minor tweak to Paul's orthopraxy (correct practice)
- The apostles didn't even "command" Paul to remember the poor, it was just a suggestion or a recommendation, a word of wisdom
- Paul's response was complete agreement. He didn't argue or dispute the wisdom of the apostles, but rather agreed wholeheartedly, and proclaimed that it was something that he was eager to do

(C) Rebuke of a lead apostle (2:11-21)

(a) Conflict (2:11)

11 But when **Cephas** came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly wrong.

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

- After Paul returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, this conflict arose
- The timing for this is likely sometime between Acts 11 and Acts 15. It definitely occurred before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), since that was an official church denunciation of the doctrine of the Judaizers (legalism), which is the basis for this conflict.
- "...Cephas" - one of Peter's three names (Simon, Peter, and Cephas); Cephas is his name in Aramaic
- Peter is his Greek name; Simon is his Hebrew name

(b) Cause of the conflict (2:12)

12 For prior to the coming of **some men from James**, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and separate himself, **fearing those from the**

## **circumcision.**

12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

12 Until some men arrived from James, he was in the habit of eating with the gentiles, but after those men came, he withdrew from the gentiles and would not associate with them any longer, because he was afraid of the circumcision party.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

– "...some men from James" – means that these Pharisees/Judaizers came from the church in Jerusalem (of which James was the pastor), not that James believed their doctrine was true (Cf. 2:9)

— These Pharisees were using James' name to add some credibility to their false doctrine

— The basis for the conflict between Paul and Peter was the fact that Peter would regularly eat and fellowship with Gentiles, but when the Judaizers/Pharisees came around (Cf. Acts 10:28; 11:3), Peter began to withdraw/separate himself from the Gentiles out of fear

— By withdrawing and separating himself from the Gentile believers when the Pharisees/Judaizers came around, Peter's actions indicated that their false doctrine of works salvation was true and Paul's teaching of salvation by faith alone was wrong

— The problem was that he was being hypocritical, saying one thing and doing another. His actions likely caused Gentile Christians to feel rejected and unworthy. In view of his leadership position in the church, his actions had influence on the church as a whole, sending a conflicting message.

— Before Pentecost, Peter had a tendency to compromise his convictions when under pressure (Cf. Matt 16:16-23; 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18,25-27)

— It is strange that Peter did not recall that Jesus routinely ate with publicans and sinners, which shows that He did not conform to this strict Jewish practice

— "...fearing" - *phobeō*, afraid of, intimidated by

— What was Peter afraid of? Losing credibility or popularity? Being marginalized theologically? To avoid ridicule or contempt? (Prov 29:25; Matt 10:28)

— "...those from the circumcision" – the Judaizers/Pharisees who thought the path to salvation (justification and/or sanctification) was through works (obedience to the Mosaic Law)

— This is the same crowd that Paul confronted in Jerusalem (Cf. v4-5), and who was poisoning Paul's new converts in Galatia

(c) Consequences of the conflict (2:13-14)

13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

13 The other Jews also joined him in this hypocritical behavior, to the extent that even Barnabas was caught up in their hypocrisy.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

- The first (of two) consequences that came from Peter's behavior: he negatively influenced other believers

— We have to understand Peter's role as the lead apostle. Everyone viewed Peter as the leader of the apostles. Consequently, when people saw Peter compromise on doctrine, they believe it may be ok for them to compromise on some doctrines as well.

— This is why James 3:1 says that not many are to become teachers, because teachers will incur a stricter judgment. This is part of the price associated with spiritual leadership. The more God promotes you into a place of spiritual leadership, the more people will watch what you do and how you act. Consequently, you have the power to bless people positively or you can hurt people negatively.

— Peter, because of his leadership position, was negatively impacting people by his hypocrisy. In Peter's current state, where the Lord was still working on his character, when the pressure came upon him, he would fold.

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

14 But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I told Cephas in front of everyone, "Though you are a Jew, you have been living like a gentile and not like a Jew. So how can you insist that the gentiles must live like Jews?"

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

- Peter's actions, as he lapsed into fear in the presence of these Judaizers/Pharisees, communicated (implied) that the Gentiles should go back under the Mosaic Law for purposes of salvation

- Paul is calling Peter out for hypocrisy. Peter came to Christ by faith alone in Christ alone, now Paul is calling him out publicly for his actions, which communicated that Gentiles could not come to Christ in the same way as Peter, but instead must adhere to the Mosaic Law.
- Peter also cast doubt on the truth that God accepts Jews and Gentiles equally, playing into the hands of the Judaizers. His actions were also insulting to his Gentile brothers, and contrary to his own convictions.
- Peter, and Barnabas, may have felt the need to “be all things to all men” (1 Cor 9:22) in order to win some of them, but Paul saw their behavior implying a difference between Jewish and Gentile Christianity, and this was as much of a threat to Gentile liberty as the accusations of the false teachers.
- Peter and Paul both acknowledged the equality of Jews and Gentiles in the Church (Cf. Acts 11:17). It evidently took Peter longer to see the practical application of this truth and apply it to his own actions.
- Some may ask, Why didn't Paul take Peter through the steps of church discipline (Matt 18:15-17)? Paul was obviously aware of this teaching by Jesus (Cf. 6:1), but instead followed 1 Tim 5:20.
- The reason is because Peter's sin was public, not private. And even worse, this was sin pertaining to the root of the gospel itself. Peter was sending out misinformation about the gospel through his actions, which was misleading and deceptive to those whom he was leading.
- A public sin of this stature, particularly one that dealt with the content of the gospel, had to be dealt with publicly

### Five Doctrines Denied by Peter's Actions

1. The unity of the Church (v14)
2. Justification by faith (v15-16)
3. Freedom from the Law (v17-18)
4. The gospel itself (v19-20)
5. The grace of God (v21)

#### (d) Content resulting from the conflict (2:15-21)

This passage (v15-21) is the high point of Galatians. If it was not for this passage, had the Holy Spirit not used these words to work in the hearts of the Protestant Reformers, the Protestant church would likely not exist, even to the present day.

#### (i) Justification by faith alone (2:15-16)

**15** “We are Jews by nature and not sinners from the Gentiles;

15 "We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles;  
15 We ourselves are Jews by birth, and not gentile sinners,  
15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,  
- Paul now offers the Galatians a doctrinal summary of the reasons for his rebuke of Peter...  
- The Jews regarded the Gentiles as the "unwashed masses"; they viewed them as less than. It was an arrogant attitude that permeated Judaism in the first century.  
— What Paul is saying is that this was exactly how Peter was acting...as if Jesus didn't die for the Gentiles, as if the gospel wasn't readily available to the Gentiles.  
— Peter's actions communicated additional requirements to salvation for Gentiles, out of arrogance

16 nevertheless, knowing that a person is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the Law; since by works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

16 yet **we know** that a person is not justified by doing what the Law requires, but rather by the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah. We, too, have believed in the Messiah Jesus so that we might be justified by the faithfulness of the Messiah and not by doing what the Law requires, for no human being will be justified by doing what the Law requires.

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

- This is Martin Luther's favorite verse...
- This verse communicates a very simple truth: justification is accomplished by faith alone, not by adhering to the Law (not by works). Period. Paul repeats this doctrine 3x in this verse, showing the importance that Paul gives to this doctrine.
- The moment an unbelieving sinner becomes a believer by accepting by faith what Jesus Christ has done is the moment that unbelieving sinner is justified in the presence of a holy God.
- Justification is a verdict. If you're on trial for a crime you've been accused of, a verdict will be read. The moment the verdict is read, if you're not guilty, there is a verbal announcement of your innocence.

- The moment an unbelieving sinner places their trust in Christ, there is a heavenly announcement. That heavenly announcement of Not Guilty is our justification. It is a verdict, given by God Himself, that He will no longer hold our sins against us.
- Justification is not forgiveness; forgiveness is the fruit of justification.
- Justification is not the atoning, substitutionary death of Jesus Christ; that is the basis of our justification.
- Justification is not imputation, where the righteousness of Christ is transferred to us; that is also the basis for our justification
- "...we know" [ISV] - Paul reminded Peter that both of them knew that God does not justify people because they keep the Law, part of which involved dietary restrictions
- Paul here quotes from his words to Peter when he withstood Peter at Antioch (v11) in order to show the Galatians that, whatever the legalists may have pretended, Peter and he were in perfect accord doctrinally
- Paul appealed to the common belief of Peter and himself as a rebuke of Peter's inconsistent practice

#### (ii) Response to charge of license (2:17-18)

- 17 But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? **Far from it!**
- 17 But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!
- 17 Now if we, while trying to be justified by the Messiah, have been found to be sinners, does that mean that the Messiah is serving the interests of sin? Of course not!
- 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.
- Paul's critics charged him, in addition with not being a true apostle, with making salvation/justification too easy....these Gentiles don't have to go under the Mosaic Law?
- They reasoned that if everyone followed Paul's teaching, where they didn't have a code of conduct that they had to follow, everyone would simply live like the devil. They believe Paul's teaching gave people a "license" to sin.
- This is what legalists always say...if you take away the rules and regulations from being part of our justification, then everyone will live they way they want to live and the church will go to hell in a hand basket. Sin will run rampant.
- Paul says here that he is preaching Jesus Christ, and if you're charging my preaching with somehow causing sin, then you are making Jesus Christ a minister of sin
- "...Far from it!" - *megenoita*, the strongest negation in the Greek language
- In answer to the charge that Paul is preaching license to sin, Paul gives the absolute strongest counter to that available in the Greek language

— Paul says that it is an absolute impossibility that his gospel, summarized in v16, preaches, teaches, implies, or promotes a license for believers to sin

18 For if I rebuild what I have *once* destroyed, I prove myself to be a wrongdoer.

18 For if I rebuild what I have *once* destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

18 For if I rebuild something that I tore down, I demonstrate that I am a wrongdoer.

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

- Paul then turns and indicts the Judaizers/Pharisees with the same charge: that they are promoting a license to sin

— The Judaizers were promoting sin because they were placing people back under the Law. The Law of God naturally arouses our sinful passions (Rom 3:20; 4:15; 5:13,20; 7:7).

The reason why God gave us the Law was to make us aware of our sin nature.

— It's interesting that every time God says don't do something, what arises in my heart is a desire to do that very thing

— The Law of God both reveals that my behavior is sinful, but it also exposes the fact that my heart is sinful. The Law arouses sinful attitudes and sinful actions in my heart.

— So Paul is saying that while the Judaizers/Pharisees are accusing him of preaching license, in fact their desire to put everyone back under the Law will do nothing more than expose to an even greater degree the sinful actions and passions of people.

(iii) The believer's union with Christ (2:19-20)

19 For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live for God.

19 For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.

19 For through the Law I died to the Law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with the Messiah.

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

- Paul now begins to explain the source of the believer's day by day holiness: our baptism (identification) into Christ

— Once the unbelieving sinner trusts in Christ, they are baptized (identified) into Christ (Rom 6). Consequently, when Christ died, I died. When Christ was crucified, I was crucified. When Christ was buried, I was buried. When Christ arose, I arose. When Christ ascended back to the Father's right hand, I ascended with Him.

**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.

**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.

20 I no longer live, but the Messiah lives in me, and the life that I am now living in this body I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

- Notice what our union/baptism into Christ does for our daily lives...
- "I have been crucified with Christ" - notice the past tense; we are not currently crucifying our flesh, our flesh was crucified in the past, it has already taken place
- What then is the source of power and holiness for the believer in our daily life? It is not going under a set of external requirements in order to get our flesh to work harder to be good. This is legalism, and is what the Judaizers/Pharisees were promoting.
- This is the predicament for the vast majority of Christians today...they know they are supposed to be holy, but they get very little teaching on *how* to be holy, so they develop their own private *Mishnah* to keep themselves in line and alleviate guilt.
- But the fact is the more people try to obey these things, the more their sinful passions are aroused because the Law of God doesn't just judge our actions, it also judges our heart and our motives.
- This is why so many people today are confused and frustrated in their Christian life. Christianity seems to work for everyone else, but it doesn't seem to work for me. The reason many Christians feel this way is that they aren't working out this verse. Instead, they are trying to follow some external scenario or set of rules, sometimes made up by themselves. Paul is not happy with this scenario.
- "...Christ lives in me" - the secret to growth as a Christian: you begin to allow Jesus Christ, who is already inside of you via the Holy Spirit, to begin to live out *His* life in you. You begin to yield yourself more and more to the desires and will of the Holy Spirit. We give the Holy Spirit the reigns of our life and we allow Him to work in and through us.
- If the Holy Spirit prompts me to do something, I don't fight that prompting but rather yield to it and do it. This is how we live out the life of Christ: we are aware of the Holy Spirit's indwelling ministry, and we listen and are attentive to the promptings that He gives to us. And when those promptings come, we don't fight them but humbly carry them out.
- J. Dwight Pentecost, who spent his entire life studying the spiritual life, boils it down to one sentence: "The spiritual life is the life of Jesus Christ lived out in the child of God by means of the Holy Spirit."
- The spiritual life is not religiosity, it is not performance, it is not obeying a set of rules and regulations. The spiritual life is the life of Jesus Christ lived out in our life, through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- "...I live by faith" - Paul is saying that the same faith in the same Savior that got you saved in the first place, is the same faith in the same Savior that will help you grow and mature in

Christ. That same faith will help you live Christ's life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

— The point of Galatians is right here: we are sanctified in the exact same way we are justified: by faith alone in Christ alone, through the power of the Holy Spirit

— This was the great stumbling block that was put in front of the Galatian believers: they thought, I'm now a Christian, but now I have to work out my daily life through my own strength, by going back under the Mosaic Law

— But Paul says No: the life I live now, I live by faith (not by works)

— The Christian life is a response to the love of God, as exemplified by the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ

The whole Christian life is a response to the love exhibited in the death of the Son of God for men.

### **The Law**

The Law is perfect: Which is why imperfect men cannot keep it.

The Law is holy: Which is why sinners are condemned by it.

The Law is just: Therefore it cannot show mercy to the guilty.

The Law prohibits; Grace invites and gives.

The Law condemns the sinner; Grace redeems the sinner.

The Law reveals sin; Grace atones for sin.

By the Law is the knowledge of sin; By Grace is redemption from sin.

The Law was given by Moses; Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

The Law demands obedience; Grace bestows & gives power to obey.

The Law says do and do not; Grace says "It is done."

The Law says, Continue to be holy; Grace says, It is finished.

The Law curses; Grace blesses.

The Law slays the sinner; Grace makes the sinner alive.

The Law shuts every mouth before God; Grace opens the mouth to praise God.

The Law condemns the best man; Grace saves the worst man.

The Law says, pay what you owe; Grace says, I freely forgive you all.

The Law says "The wages of sin is death"; Grace says, "The gift of God is eternal life."

The Law says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die"; Grace says, Believe and live.

The Law was done away in Christ; Grace abides forever.

The Law puts us under bondage; Grace sets us in the liberty of the sons of God (Rom 12:1).

(iv) Legalists make Christ's death unnecessary (2:21)

21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

21 I do not misapply God's grace, for if righteousness comes about by doing what the Law requires, then the Messiah died for nothing.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

- Paul says that the logical implication of the doctrine of the Judaizers/Pharisees, that a person is justified by faith but sanctified through works of the Law, was that Christ died needlessly

— If a person could become holy, either through justification or sanctification, by simply obeying the Law, then what in the world was the point for Christ to come into this world and die? The doctrine of the Judaizers made the death of Jesus Christ irrelevant.

— These Judaizers/Pharisees, through their doctrine, have taken Jesus' death, the crown of thorn thrust into His head, the 39 lashes from a Roman soldier, the nails hammered into His hands and feet, the spear that pierced His side, the mocking and ridicule that He endured...they took all of this and swept it under the rug and treated the death of Jesus Christ as a common event.

— This is why the Bible is clear that the only path to holiness, either positionally or practically, is only through Jesus Christ. One of the applications of John 14:6 that many teachers miss is that not only is Jesus the only path to God, but Jesus is the only path to holiness, both positionally and practically.

— If holiness and righteousness could come to us any other way than through Christ, then Jesus' whole ordeal of the cross was needless and irrelevant. One of the most heretical doctrines out there today is that Jesus is only one of many different ways to get to God or to obtain peace. That is a lie from the pit of hell...there is no other way!