

Lessons from Galatians

Righteousness by Faith Series



Lesson 2—Laboring and Living as Christ

Galatians 2:1-21

- I. **Introduction:** *We left off from chapter 1 with God being glorified after the churches recognized the power of the Gospel to transform Paul. Now in chapter 2, we'll start off with a description of Paul's visit to Jerusalem at a later date in his ministry (14 years later). This chapter will discuss some experiences Paul had on this visit to Jerusalem including a run in with Judaizers, a conflict with a Prejudiced (or cowering rather) Peter, and Paul taking a stand for the Gospel truth. The Law and "Christian Liberty" will be discussed.*
- II. **Evangelistic efforts in Jerusalem (v.1,2)**
 - a. (v.2) "by revelation"—Similar events have happened to Paul (ex. Paul was told to go to Macedonia **Acts 16:9, 10**, when he had been thinking to go elsewhere).
 - b. "That Gospel" (the one he's been preaching/ and defending in chapter one—the "Everlasting Gospel" and none other)
 - c. "**Privately to them which were of reputation**" (There is wisdom in this—these men had a face to save—certainly they could not reason honestly and openly, evaluating truth for what it is while under the pressuring eye of friends and fellow religionists). It would not be so effective in any other way. Another example is how **Nicodemus** "came...by night" to Jesus (John 3:1,2). Later he became a believer and helper of the early church along with Joseph of Arimathea—another wealthy man).
- III. **Dealing with the ideas of false brethren (v.3-7)**
 - a. A comment on "circumcision" (v.3) is brought up because of what he has already discussed in Chapter 1 about this issue of Jews trying to make Gentiles be circumcised.
 - b. "False brethren" (v.4). This experience at Jerusalem was like the "troublers" mentioned in Galatians 1:7 (which the Galatians were now facing).
 - c. They had come to "spy out" the Liberty of the Christians. They did not necessarily care about following the teachings of Christ, but were only curious as to what people were doing. Didn't this happen to Jesus as well? (*Mark 12:13; Luke 11:54*). Yes, many times!
 - d. What was this "Liberty" (v.4)?—freedom from Mosaic Law and ritual. "Circumcision is now that of the heart".
 - e. These desired to bring them into "bondage" to various unnecessary rules and regulations (like in Acts 15:1,24, 28), which were no longer important in Christ, because Christ had fulfilled these things.
 - f. (v.5)—did not give place at all.—It's probably better that way. Sometimes we cannot give even an hour of our time to a useless pursuit, or even to show the slightest bit of acceptance for something that we know is wrong. Just live and proclaim the gospel!
 - g. (v.6)—"Those who seemed to be something...added nothing to me." Even those of large reputation did not call for the special attention of Paul. God does not play or show favorites, therefore, it did not matter that some of greater reputation wanted to talk and push their ideas upon the Christians or upon Paul. Paul was not swayed by their "prestigious" influence. He only desired to please God. Our desire should be to please God as well, not to please men (Proverbs 29:25).
 - h. Don't allow the crowd to dictate the truth—**do what you know is right and others will come around** (as w/Peter, James, and John in v.9)
 - i. Truth is not about Popular or majority opinion—it is about what God says. (**As history has shown us, the majority can often be in the wrong**)—Ex.'s Israel in time of Elijah, the Jews in time of Jesus. The majority were not right. What did Jesus say about this? (Matthew 7:13, 14) "Wide is the gate...narrow is the way." Always check truth by the BIBLE. Make sure we are getting our teachings clearly from God's word!
- IV. **Paul's ministry and acceptance as a fellow missionary with the others (v.8-10)**

- a. (v.8) A slightly different approach was taken for ministries to these different people. The truth however, was not different! God’s message of truth does not change no matter who you, I, or anybody else is!
- b. Peter, James, and John (the inner circle of Jesus—the ones who saw Him on the Mt. of Transfiguration, Ref. Matthew 17:1).
- c. Paul and Barnabas were chosen to “remember the poor” who were in Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30), which they did gladly, during the time of famine that was coming upon Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas made collections from among the Gentiles so that they might send monies to help the poor and hurting Jews at this time. In our personal ministries for others, although, we may have a particular calling to one group or place, like to the “Gentiles,” yet, we have need to share acts of ministry to other groups or places too.

V. Peter was rebuked in Public for a Public sin of cowardice and false representation (v.11-14)

- a. Here Peter set a bad example. Even “Barnabas was carried away...”(v.13) **(People follow our example even if it’s a bad one).**
- b. Peter was playing “two sides of the coin” (a little embarrassed and ashamed to be seen with the Gentiles in front of unfamiliar Jews who were known to dislike the Gentiles)—a very natural reaction for any of us perhaps, but a wrong one. **We must be HUMBLE and know what we stand for SO that we WILL stand for the RIGHT when it comes down to it.** (we mustn’t be afraid to stand up and be counted with God’s faithful people...have courage to stand for your convictions of right). **What about the Gospel truth of Jesus?** How do we act around certain friends? (“yeah, I love Jesus,” perhaps you say, and you’re so holy around some friends—but so UNRIGHTEOUS around others and denying of Jesus)—this deserves a REBUKE. **“...said before them all”** (v.14) –Public sins deserve a Public Rebuke. (Jesus had to do this w/Peter before as well. Matthew 16:21-24).

VI. Paul deals with the Law (v.15-21)

- a. “A man is not justified by the works of the Law” (v.16). (talking about this in context of circumcision, but pushing it even a step further)—You cannot earn your salvation, but you cannot live as a sinner either. Christ justifies us by faith, and by faith, we choose to live a righteous life through Christ’s indwelling power.
- b. (v.17, 18)—**Christ is not a minister of sin.** Jesus does not give any man a pass to build up freely and live in a life of open sin! If we “build again” those sinful things, we will be forfeiting the sanctifying and justifying power of Christ. Jesus Christ will help us to overcome sin, but if we insist on building up a life of sin, and desire not to overcome, nor strive for this, then we’ll be forfeiting our salvation in Christ (see Hebrews 10:26,27...this verse does not mean making a mistake in sin as in 1 John 2:1; it means choosing to live a lifestyle of sin. We must be overcomers— Revelation 3:5,21).
- c. (v.19) “Died to the law...that I might live unto God.” What does this mean? Died to the law of sin and death, that he might live a righteous life in Christ (Romans 8:2-4,10-13). Also, you might say that having “died to the law” that Paul is not living by the “works of the law” in an attempt to obtain salvation. No, instead, he’s trusting in Jesus Christ, and Christ’s works for salvation. But, because of this, he feels all the more desire to live a righteous life. Paul makes an effort to always be clear of what he is and isn’t teaching. **(See Romans 3:31; 6:1, 2; 7:7, 12** to be clear about Paul’s attitude and teaching towards the Ten Commandments—it is not a negative one at all. We should fully uphold these). In this verse we might also observe that Paul lawfully ignores circumcision. (But also, he lawfully trusts in Jesus’ Righteousness rather than his works for salvation).
- d. (v.20)—“crucified with Christ”—no longer lives a selfish, sinful life. (Abiding in Christ—like in John 15—vine and branches.) Christ lived a sinless life on this earth! If Jesus Christ is living out His life within you, then what kind of life will you choose to live? A righteous one no doubt!
- e. (v.21)—Christ died to save us because we could not save ourselves from sin. Righteousness does not come to us “through the law.” No, rather, it comes to us by faith through Christ.

***Taking it Home:* Where is your faith today? Is it in Christ’s Righteousness? And how does that faith cause you to live? Is it your choice to trust in and follow to God? _____**