

## Lesson 7 – Galatians 2:11-14

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### Review/Introduction

Salvation from sin is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Christ plus anything is a different, distorted gospel.

One of the major issues of the early church was the integration of Jew and Gentile into one body. The Jews had been taught from childhood a salvation by works because they valued human tradition as equivalent to Scripture. They taught a lifestyle of obligatory works which they equated with being a follower of the one true God. This thinking moved into the church and some Jews who had believed were teaching a gospel of Christ plus Jewish legalism.

The threat of a different, distorted gospel is as real today as it was in Paul's day. All who come to Christ are tempted to bring a works-based mentality to their new relationship with Christ. Christ plus rules for salvation (in the fullest since which includes sanctification) is something that must be rejected. Paul is writing to present and defend the gospel of grace.

Paul is writing to the Galatians defending the doctrine of justification by faith alone. They are in danger of abandoning justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. He started his defense by showing that the gospel that he preached, the true gospel, was not learned from other people nor found in Scripture-invalidating tradition nor did he invent it. He received it directly from the Lord Jesus. Yet it is connected to the apostles

Paul's testimony shows that only God could change a persecutor into a preacher thus demonstrating that the gospel that Paul preached is the true gospel. Last time we looked at Paul's commendation by the other apostles to preach the same gospel as they. Today, we look at Paul's confrontation with Peter. Paul will use this confrontation of hypocrisy to launch into the theological defense of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

### Paul's defense of his slavery to Christ – Paul's authority demonstrated (2:11-14)

#### 1. Paul confronts Cephas (2:11)

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

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<sup>11</sup>But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. (ESV)

Paul had met with the reputed apostles and elders, James and Cephas and John, at the Jerusalem council. The council had been called to determine the fate of the true gospel. Was justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone or must the gentiles add works of the law to grace to be saved? God sovereignly preserved the truth of grace, faith, and Christ alone; NOT Christ plus something.

At the council, James and Cephas and John, recognized that God had chosen Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles just as Peter had been to the Jews. God was effectually working in and through each man to accomplish the work He desired. James, Cephas, and John then "extended to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship". They all shared a common interest in the mission of making disciples with the true gospel.

<sup>7</sup>But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised <sup>8</sup>(for He who effectually worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), <sup>9</sup>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. (Galatians 2:7-9)

“But” or “however” introduces a new subject with a contrast to the previous Jerusalem council. Paul is an apostle who received the gospel through revelation, not from other apostles. Part of his apostolic authority included the responsibility to correct other apostles.

There is nothing in the text that necessitates that this incident with Peter occurs after the Jerusalem council. There are four times that Paul is in Antioch before he wrote Galatians that are possibilities for this confrontation.

1. The one-year ministry in Antioch with Barnabas before taking the collection to Judea.
2. The time between taking the contribution to Judea and the first missionary journey.
3. After returning from the first missionary journey.
4. After returning from the Jerusalem council.

| Date          | Event   |
|---------------|---|
| 33/34         | Saul encounters Jesus on the way to Damascus (Acts 9:1-21)                                    |
| 33/34         | Spent “several days” in Damascus “confounding the Jews” (Acts 9:19-22)                        |
| 33/34         | Went away to Arabia to be with the Lord (Gal 1:17)  |
| 36/37         | Back in Damascus preaching Jesus (Acts 9:23; Gal 1:17)  |
| 36/37         | Escape from Damascus (Acts 9:23-25; 2 Cor 11:32-33)   |
| 36/37         | To Jerusalem to become acquainted with the apostles (Acts 9:26-29; Gal 1:18)                  |
| 37            | To Caesarea, then Tarsus, ministering in “regions of Syria and Cilicia” (Acts 9:30; Gal 1:21) |
|               | Peter’s vision, Cornelius, report to Jerusalem (Acts 10:1-11:18)                              |
| <b>~41-43</b> | <b>Barnabas and Saul minister in Antioch for one year (Acts 11:19-26)</b>                     |
| 47            | Barnabas and Saul take the contribution for the brethren in Judea (Acts 11:30)                |
| <b>47</b>     | <b>Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch with John Mark (Acts 12:24-25)</b>                     |
| 48-49         | First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:1-14:28); Saul begins to go by “Paul” (13:9)                |
| <b>49</b>     | <b>Paul returns to Antioch (Acts 14:21-28)</b>  |
| 49/50         | Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29)  |
| 49/50         | Paul took Titus to Jerusalem (Gal 2:1)  |
| <b>49/50</b>  | <b>Paul returns to Antioch (Acts 15:30-34)</b>  |
| 49/50         | Epistle to the Galatians written from Antioch   |

There are no direct statements in Acts or the epistles as to when this confrontation occurred. However, we can discern some things about the event.

It seems unlikely that this occurred right after the Jerusalem Council. The Council’s decision (which Peter played a significant part in deciding/communicating) would have been fresh with Peter and abandoning that decision so quickly would have been unlikely.

Similarly, with Barnabas and Paul’s first year ministry in Antioch as Peter’s vision and the conversion of Cornelius would have been fresh on his mind.

It also seems unlikely that Paul would have been easily willing to set off on the first missionary journey if there had been a theological uproar at Antioch just prior.

Certainly not dogmatically, but the best understanding seems to be after returning from the first missionary journey. Antioch was a strategic church being the first church of mixed Jews and Gentiles. When the apostle Paul left for the first missionary journey, the apostles and elders in Jerusalem most likely would have spent time there to protect and encourage the church. This is the sense of the usage of “came”. The usage looks at the sum total of the event with specific emphasis on a point.

Paul “opposed Cephas to his face”. “Opposed” means to stand or set against. It describes an army opposing an attacking force; standing between the enemy and one’s own country or loved ones. Paul, James, and Peter all use the term to describe “resisting” the devil (Ephesians 6:13; James 4:5-8; 1 Peter 5:8-9).

<sup>13</sup>Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to **resist** in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (Ephesians 6:13)

<sup>6</sup>But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” <sup>7</sup>Submit therefore to God. **Resist** the devil and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:6-8)

<sup>8</sup>Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>But **resist** him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. (1 Peter 5:8-9)

In all those cases, the attack comes from the devil. The term is insightful. Paul viewed the “attack” as having come from Peter. Peter’s behavior was an attack on truth which Paul had to stand against bravely and uncompromisingly. Paul did not write a letter or send a delegation, but stood against Peter “to his face”.

Paul had to act because Peter “stood condemned”. “Stood” is the “be” verb with the usage of continually. “Condemned” means to know against (to know something against one) and then to find fault with, blame or condemn, to determine or judge to be utterly wrong or guilty. Peter’s conduct was inconsistent with truth and therefore evident to all.

What about you? Are you empowered as you walk in the Spirit to “oppose” when the brethren’s behavior is not consistent with truth?

<sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, **with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another** with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

<sup>14</sup>We urge you, brethren, **admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.** (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

<sup>14</sup>And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and **able also to admonish one another.** (Romans 15:14)

❖ **Are you striving bravely and uncompromisingly to fulfill the one another’s?**

## 2. The confrontation's cause (2:12)

<sup>12</sup>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.

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<sup>12</sup>For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. (ESV)

“For” explains why Peter stood condemned.

“Eat with” is a compound word meaning to associate together and to eat. The focus is not so much on the eating, but on the intimate association.

<sup>2</sup>Both the Pharisees and the scribes *began* to grumble, saying, “This man receives sinners and **eats with** them.” (Luke 15:2)

<sup>11</sup>But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to **eat with** such a one. (1 Corinthians 5:11)

The usage indicates that Peter's regular practice was to repeatedly commune with the Gentiles. Peter interacted with the brethren in intimate, genuine fellowship whether Jew or Greek, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, male or female.

<sup>11</sup>*a renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. (Colossians 3:11)

In Colossians 3, the formulation of “there is no” indicates there is continually, absolutely no distinction within the body of Christ. There is no possibility of distinction.

There are no cultural, ethnic, racial, past religious, financial, or social distinctions within the body of Christ. Regeneration by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone removes distinctions. It makes those who were once separated by the sin of bigotry or discrimination (distinction), brethren in Christ.

The lack of distinction, the breaking down of sinful barriers between people, is a powerful testimony to the divine origin of the gospel. There is no place for discrimination within the body of Christ since Christ is everything for the believer, the head of the body, and therefore we desire to honor and glorify Him. Each member of the body of Christ is united through spiritual baptism with Christ and one another.

<sup>12</sup>For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. <sup>13</sup>**For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.** (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

❖ **Are you striving for body unity and intimacy without distinction?**

But “when certain men from James” came to Antioch, Peter acted differently. The assumption here is that the pro-circumcision group that came were somehow aligned with James. It seems hardly likely that the elders and apostles in Jerusalem would send a group of heretics to Antioch to undermine the true gospel. More likely is that this group falsely claimed allegiance with James, Jesus’s half-brother, in order to infiltrate the church.

Peter had previously eaten with Gentiles because the gospel breaks down those cultural barriers. This started in Acts with the calling of Cornelius.

<sup>44</sup>While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. <sup>45</sup>All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. <sup>46</sup>For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, <sup>47</sup>“Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?” <sup>48</sup>And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days. <sup>11:1</sup>Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. <sup>2</sup>And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him, <sup>3</sup>saying, “**You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.**” <sup>4</sup>But Peter began *speaking* and *proceeded* to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying, (Acts 10:44-11:4)

But here at Antioch, Peter “*began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof”. Peter did not become a Judaizer. The text does not say that Peter somehow abandoned salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. However, his actions lined up with the works mentality of the Judaizers. In addition, his actions demonstrated that the gospel was not powerful enough to overcome distinctions aligning himself with the non-gospel of the Judaizers.

Peter “*began* to withdraw” means to consciously retreat from a position. In classic Greek it was used to describe a dog tucking his tail or a ship sail being furled, or strategic military disengagement drawing back from the enemy to secure safety. The usage indicates Peter’s withdrawal was gradual under the pressure of the pro-circumcision group (i.e., the Judaizers) hence the addition of the NASB’s “*began*”.

Peter also “*began* to hold himself aloof”. This means to mark off the boundaries or to set one apart for some purpose. Peter gradually separated from the Gentiles.

#### ❖ **Are there those in the body from whom you withdraw and hold yourself aloof?**

Peter’s behavior was particularly insidiousness in that this probably occurred at the church’s “love feasts” (1 Corinthians 11:17-34). These were meals that preceded partaking of the Lord’s supper together – a time of body unity through self-examination and repentance.

Peter’s behavior was prompted not by love of the brethren, but by the fear of man, in this case the Judaizers.

Some points to be thought of here. First, just like Peter and Barnabas, it is possible to display a hypocritical works mentality with respect to salvation and/or sanctification and still be saved. But, by doing this we practically demonstrate that the gospel is not true. This is sin so it must be avoided. As we can see from Peter’s example, it is insidious so we must always be on the alert.

Second, is the example of how a small, but vocal and persuasive minority which has resonating ideas can have a sway on the most mature if they are allowed to have a foothold in the church (e.g., masculinity/femininity movement, family integrated church movement, social justice movements, etc.). Again, we must be diligent and on the alert against such sinful influences.

❖ **Are you on the alert for the insidiousness of false ideas that lead to sin?**

3. The insidiousness of the hypocrisy (2:13)

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

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<sup>13</sup>And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. (ESV)

Peter's hypocritical behavior negatively influenced the behavior of others. His influence was so great that the remaining Jews at Antioch joined with him in hypocrisy.

"Hypocrisy" originally referred to putting on a mask and playing a part on stage. It means to pretend to act from one position when one's conduct is really displaying another.

Hypocrisy is saying one thing and doing another. It is applying rules to other people that you do not apply to yourself. It is purporting to live one way and actually living another.

<sup>1</sup>"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. <sup>2</sup>For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup>Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? <sup>4</sup>Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? <sup>5</sup>**You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.** (Matthew 7:1-5)

It should be noted that Paul does not call Peter, the Jews, and Barnabas "hypocrites". He says they "acted hypocritically" (ESV). The difference between a hypocrite and someone acting hypocritically, is what happens when they are confronted with their hypocrisy. A hypocrite refuses to recognize the claim-to-behavior disconnect.

<sup>2</sup>by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, (1 Timothy 4:2)

Someone who has sinned and is acting hypocritically will repent when confronted with the claim-to-behavior disconnect.

❖ **How do you respond when you are confronted with hypocrisy?**

In the account here, the hypocrisy is to say you are a believer and then make distinctions among the brethren. Peter, by doing so, aligned himself with the Judaizers' false gospel of Christ plus works which has no power to break down distinctions. Only the true gospel breaks down distinctions.

You can imagine Paul's heartbreak with a reputed "pillar's" hypocrisy. But then Barnabas, his co-laborer in taking the gospel to the Gentiles, was also "carried away" in hypocrisy.

“Carried away” means to be led together. The idea is to experience with others the force of that which carries away, to be carried away with as with a flood. Here it is in the passive voice suggesting that Barnabas did not play an active role in the hypocrisy, but that he was swept away from what he knew was right.

❖ **Do you find yourself carried along with the sins of others?**

4. Paul’s method of confrontation (2:14)

<sup>14</sup>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?

<sup>14</sup>But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?” (ESV)

Now Paul recounts his confrontation and correction of Peter. This event demonstrates Paul’s authority as an apostle of the gospel that he received as a revelation, not from Peter or the other apostles.

“Straightforward” means to walk with straight feet, to be straight-footed and so to go directly forward, walking uprightly and correctly. Figuratively, the conduct of the ones who were acting hypocritically were not in step with the gospel. The ESV’s “conduct not in step with the truth of the gospel” captures the sense well. Here is the essence of hypocrisy. Walking in a manner inconsistent with the new life in Christ.

God saves through the gospel for the purpose making His children worshippers. In doing so, He makes them new. Peter, the Jewish Christians, and even Barnabas were walking out of step with new life in the gospel – hypocritically.

<sup>17</sup>Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a **new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

<sup>9</sup>Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, <sup>10</sup>and have put on **the new self who is being renewed** to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— (Colossians 3:9-10)

<sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; <sup>9</sup>not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

❖ **What areas might you not be walking in step with your new life in Christ?**

Peter’s actions resulted in a division between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. This was a public event. All the Jews and Gentiles, the entire body, was a part of it. Peter’s public sin required a public rebuke. Paul corrected Peter “in the presence of all”, with the entire congregation present.

There is a reason for the public rebuke.

<sup>19</sup>Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. <sup>20</sup>Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, **so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.** (1 Timothy 5:19-20)

Paul begins his rebuke of Peter with demonstrating his hypocrisy. Peter is a Jew but living like Gentiles and not like Jews. He is living free in Christ. He has been living like the Gentiles not obeying the law.

He has been in intimate association with the Gentiles, free from the law. Yet his behavior in succumbing to the pressure of the Judaizers to separate from the Gentiles meant that he was supporting the Judaizers' heresy and "compelling" the Gentiles to live like Jews.

❖ **Are you careful to make sure your life does not lead others astray?**

"Compel" refers to external pressure and coercion as opposed to willingness. Paul used this word three times in Galatians (2:3; 2:14; 6:12); all regarding succumbing to the pressure of the Judaizers.

<sup>3</sup>But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was **compelled** to be circumcised. (Galatians 2:3)

<sup>12</sup>Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to **compel** you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. (Galatians 6:12)

❖ **Are there times you succumb to negative peer pressure?**

Paul did not succumb to the pressure of the Judaizers, but Peter did. Paul is demonstrating that he is equivalent to Peter in his apostleship.

<sup>5</sup>For **I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles.** (2 Corinthians 11:5)

<sup>11</sup>I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, **for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody.** <sup>12</sup>The **signs of a true apostle were performed among** you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. (2 Corinthians 12:11-12)

Paul is making another point here. In giving his testimony in Acts before Agrippa, Paul uses the same word, "compel", for what he did to the Christians as a persecutor. The Judaizers are not true preachers of the gospel, but enemies of it.

<sup>10</sup>And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. <sup>11</sup>And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, **I tried to force them to blaspheme;** and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities. (Acts 26:10-11)

❖ **Are you careful in word and deed to not attempt to compel others to be legalistic?**

Paul's rhetorical question to Peter, "how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?", drives home the hypocrisy of Peter, the Jewish believers, and Barnabas. The obvious answer is that Peter cannot. Not only can the Gentiles not be compelled because of Peter's hypocrisy, but they cannot be compelled because as true believers we cannot yield to legalism after receiving grace.

## **Conclusion**

Paul is writing to the Galatians who are in danger of abandoning justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. God changed Paul from persecutor to preacher, from slave to sin to slave of Christ. Paul did not learn the gospel from other people nor Scripture-invalidating tradition nor did he invent it. He received it directly from the Lord Jesus. Paul's dramatic change from persecutor to preacher, from slave to sin to slave of Christ, demonstrate the power of the gospel. The result of God's work in Paul's life was that God is glorified. Paul did not get the gospel from the apostles, but was welcomed as an apostle with the same gospel as the apostles. Paul's confrontation of Peter demonstrated his equality with the other apostles and that the Judaizers were enemies of the gospel.

## **Additional Study**

1. Read Galatians once this week a chapter at a time (one chapter a day for six days).
2. Today's Questions
  - Are there ways in your life that make distinctions either in action or thought? Commit to repent and walk without distinction
  - Are there times when you bow to peer pressure? How could you have better glorified God in those times?
  - Are there times when you go along with the crowd to not have to stand for the gospel? How could you have better glorified God in those times?
  - Examine the spheres of your life: private, family, work, church, secular activities, etc. What behavior do you see that is hypocritical? In what ways must you change to glorify God?
  - What might the criteria be for public vs. private confrontation of sin?