

Galatians 2 - “Free from Legalism”

April 18th, 2021 (Week #2 of 6)

One of the most striking promises of the Gospel is that we will have freedom in Christ. But what does this mean and how can it change our lives? Let’s dig into the book of Galatians and learn more about this remarkable letter where Paul is engaged in “the battle for the gospel”—the first great theological battle in the history of the church.

Let’s Get Started:

1. What stayed with you from Sunday’s sermon?
2. Was there any part of the sermon or reading of the scripture that drew you in and made you want to dig deeper?

Let’s Get in the Word:

- Read Galatians 2:1-10.
 - What is the significance of why Paul mentions his fourteen years between Jerusalem visits? (Galatians 2:1)
 - What do you think are the two primary reasons that Paul was meeting with the leaders? (Galatians 2:2) Hint: Acts 11 could reveal one of the reasons.
 - Why did Paul mention his reason to meet with the leaders was because of a revelation? (Galatians 2:2) Why was it important for him to present it this way?
 - When reading the latter part of verse 2, it sounds like Paul is doubting his approach to preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, almost like he needed validation from the leaders before continuing. (Galatians 2:2) Do you think this is true or was there some other reason he was approaching the leaders this way?
 - What is the significance of Titus being mentioned in this text? (Galatians 2:3)
 - What is the significance of Paul’s statement concerning the elevated position of the leaders? (Galatians 2:6) How does Paul use this to his advantage or to strengthen his argument?

- What does it mean when Paul says that Barnabas and he were given the “right hand of fellowship?” (Galatians 2:9)
- If you had to pick a single verse out of verses 1-10, which one verse provides the clearest reason or argument for why Paul wrote this letter?
- Read Galatians 2:11-21
 - The man called Cephas in this passage is actually Peter, the well known disciple of Jesus. What do you think the impacts to the early church would have been if Paul had not admonished Peter the way he did? (Galatians 2:11-14) What might have happened if he waited too long in addressing the issue?
 - Why does Paul describe sinners this way in Galatians 2:15? Why are Jews not considered sinners in this context, only Gentiles?
 - Read Galatians 2:19-20 again. Clearly for Paul this passage is more than a history lesson. What is Paul saying here? Why might it matter to our lives today?
 - What is the central theme in these verses aside from Paul rebuking Peter?

Let's Apply this to our lives:

- Do you have personal experience or have you seen others take a more legalistic approach towards their salvation? What are some examples you could share with your group and what were the impacts?
- What are some of the questions we could ask ourselves or others to help identify if we are being legalistic in our Christian walk?
- Do you still have unanswered questions around this topic?
- Could you approach defending the gospel today the same way Paul did in this scripture?

Challenge for the week: Could you describe, with minimal hesitation, to anyone who asks why a “works” based approach to justification is insufficient? How would you articulate this in a way that could help them understand the difference of being justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law?

Prayerfully ask God for someone to share the good news with that might have a works based faith approach (or no faith approach) to help them understand the true essence of the gospel.