

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This morning, we continue our study through the book of Galatians – we are going to go over chapter two this morning.

Now, over the past two weeks, we saw Apostle Paul establish some foundational truths – these foundational truths are going to be pertinent to the rest of the letter to the churches in Galatia.

- One of the things that he established was that he was an **apostle by Jesus Christ and not by man.**
- He established that the gospel that he preached was by revelation. That it wasn't a man-made gospel.

- And another thing that was established was his conversion.

He went into detail on presenting his own life as a testimony to the power of grace – as he went from a legalist wanting to persecute Christians to a servant of Christ who wanted to save the believers from the bondage of legalism.

And we saw at the end of the chapter how the churches in Judea attested to Paul's conversion.

And of course the reason that these foundational truths had to be established was because these Judaizers – these legalist had infiltrated the church and started to preach that grace was not enough.

They started to preach that these new gentile believers had to also become Jews and follow their traditions and laws.

But church, that is not why Jesus Christ came.

That is not why Jesus Christ came.

Jesus Christ came to fulfill the law.

Paul will tell us next week that -

The law was our schoolmaster to direct our lives to Jesus Christ – so that we can come by faith and receive His love and grace and mercy.

So in chapter two, Paul is going to continue to give his defense of the gospel of grace. And he is going to use two events – from his own personal testimony to counter the charges that were being brought by the Judaizers.

Let's pray...

[Gal 2:1-21 NKJV] 1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with [me].

In chapter one, we read the account of when Paul went back to Jerusalem for the first time after his conversion.

Verse 18 of chapter one reveals to us that it was three years after his conversion.

And this was important because Paul was trying to make the case to the churches in Galatia that the gospel that he preached was not a second hand gospel – it was not a gospel that was passed on by the other apostles.

And Paul makes this second trip to Jerusalem 14 years later – and he doesn't go alone – he brings with him Barnabas and Titus.

Now, last week – we learned that when Paul made his first trip to Jerusalem, that it was Barnabas who opened the way for Paul to fellowship with the other disciples – the disciples were not very receptive to Paul at they were still afraid of him and did not believe that he was truly a disciple.

However, Paul also brings Titus with him – and Titus becomes exhibit A for Paul.

You see, Titus is a Greek – he is a gentile, and he is not circumcised according to Old Testament laws. Yet he is a brother in Christ by faith.

So what were the reasons behind this second trip to Jerusalem???

We find the answer in verse 2,

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

Paul did not go to Jerusalem because he had second thoughts about his gospel and wanted to make sure it was true. That would have played right into the hands of the Judaizers.

By no means, Paul goes to Jerusalem after being directed by the Lord to do so.

The gospel is given to him by revelation and we see the Lord continue to direct his steps many years later in Paul's ministry.

So, Paul shows up to discuss the gospel of grace with those who were of reputation?

These would be the leaders of the church in Jerusalem.

James, Peter and John.

You see, Paul's purpose in going up to Jerusalem, according to verse 2, was to confirm that he had not run in vain.

Paul's ministry would have been in vain if the Judaizers were right; that is, if the apostles in Jerusalem disagreed with Paul and insisted on circumcision for Gentile believers.

This would mean that the apostles of Christ had contradictory messages, and no church could be established on such a fractured foundation.

Paul did not need to confirm his own gospel; he needed to confirm that the other apostles agreed, and that there was unity within the early church.

3 Yet not even Titus who [was] with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

Paul's point here in verse three is that the leadership in Jerusalem accepted Titus (a Gentile convert) even though he was not circumcised in accord with the Mosaic Law.

Therefore, **this shows that the Jerusalem leadership accepted the gospel of grace as Paul understood it.**

Now, before we go on, I would like us to turn to the book of Acts 16,

Because in chapter 16 of the book of Acts, Paul takes a different approach when it comes to Timothy.

[Act 16:1-5 NKJV] 1 Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, [the] son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father [was] Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took [him] and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were

**determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. 5
So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and
increased in number daily.**

**Question – Was Paul being inconsistent here by refusing to
circumcise Titus, yet agreeing to circumcise Timothy?**

No, because there are two different situations.

In the case of Timothy, as we just read, he was part Jew and part Greek.

His lack of circumcision would have hindered his ministry among the people of Israel.

Remember, Jews and Gentiles could not even eat together at the dinner table.

But as for Titus, he was full breed gentile. And for him to submit to circumcision, it would have indicated that he was missing something from the Christian experience.

“Paul did not condemn circumcision as if it were a sin to receive it. But he insisted, that circumcision had no bearing upon salvation and was therefore not to be forced upon the Gentiles.”

4 And [this occurred] because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),

The only reason that the issue of the circumcision of Titus was ever brought up was because these individuals who professed to be Christians but were not – they had infiltrated

the meetings between Paul and those of reputation and tried to force Paul into circumcising Titus.

5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Paul is adamant that he did not compromise with the Judaizers.

He did not give in to the demands of these legalist.

You see, Paul realized that if the message of the gospel was compromised, it wasn't just bondage for the Gentiles, but it was bondage for everyone who named the name of Jesus.

6 But from those who seemed to be something--

whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God

shows personal favoritism to no man--for those who seemed [to be something] added nothing to me.

Paul had meeting's with these leaders of the early church in Jerusalem that had a very high reputation.

Many of them walked with Jesus. They were witness to His miracles.

Paul's response is – I was not overly impressed or intimidated by them.

They did not add one word to the gospel that Paul preached or to the apostolic authority that had already been given to him by God.

7 But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as [the

gospel] for the circumcised [was] to Peter 8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),

In verse seven, we have mention of the gospel to the circumcised and the gospel to the uncircumcised.

These are not two separate gospels – it is the same gospel that is supposed to be preached to both peoples.

However, God was going to use Paul to preach this gospel to the gentiles (uncircumcised) and God was going to use Peter to preach this same gospel to the Jew.

I asked you to make a note of both occurrences of the words, worked effectively in verse 8.

And I want you to note who is the one doing the work – it is God.

The same God that was working in Peter was working in Paul.

God had displayed miracles through Peter's life, healing people, even raising people from the dead.

God also displayed miracles in Paul's life as well.

9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we [should go] to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Giving someone the right-hand of fellowship is kind of like forming a partnership with Paul and Barnabas, signifying that they were all in this together.

Even though they had been assigned their own specialized ministry.

10 [They desired] only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

The only request that the leaders of the church in Jerusalem bring to Paul is that they remember the poor.

This is in reference to the poor in Jerusalem.

And we see Paul's obedience to this request throughout his epistles.

Turn with me to 1 Cor 16,

Paul is writing to the church in Corinth,

[1Co 16:1-4 NKJV] 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first [day] of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. 3 And when I come, whomever you approve by [your] letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. 4 But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.

So this is the first example that Paul provides the churches in Galatia – now we get to the second one.

So Paul and Barnabas head back to Antioch after their private meeting with James, Peter and John.

And shortly thereafter Peter comes around for a visit.

Now, the big difference between the churches in Antioch and in Jerusalem was that the church in Antioch was comprised of mostly gentile believers while the church in Jerusalem was comprised mostly of former Jews.

11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

So Peter shows up in Antioch and he has no problem breaking bread with the gentile believers. However, whenever anyone from the church in Jerusalem showed up, Peter would not eat with the gentile believers.

Church, this is text book hypocrisy.

Especially since Peter was there at the private meeting with Paul, Barnabas and Titus and he didn't speak out regarding Titus being uncircumcised.

If that isn't bad enough, we also have the accounts of what happened in Acts 10-11.

Turn with me to the book of Acts 10,

We are not going to read the entire thing – you could do this tonight.

But in Acts 10,

God gives Cornelius a vision and tells him to send his men to get Peter.

God gives a hungry Peter a vision as well of tasty animals that God orders him to kill and eat but because they are not kosher – because these animals are unclean

Peter refuses and God therefore rebukes him for it – telling Peter that nothing that comes from God is unclean.

[Act 10:24-28 NKJV] 24 And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped [him]. 26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man." 27 And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. 28 Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep

company with or go to one of another nation. **But God**
has shown me that I should not call any man common or
unclean.

So then Paul begins to preach the gospel to the household of Cornelius and then by God's grace we get to verse 44, **[Act 10:44-48 NKJV] 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we**

[have]?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

[Act 11:1-3 NKJV] 1 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, 3 saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!"

And Peter proceeds to spend most of chapter 11, defending God's grace upon the gentiles by pretty much reteeling the events from chapter 10.

So what appears to be happening in Antioch is that Peter doesn't want the same thing to happen all over again fearing

that those of the circumcision are going to start to question him once again – and that is why he is being a hypocrite.

13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Because Peter is being a hypocrite, other Jewish believers are being influenced by him and they are being hypocrites themselves.

Barnabas had already served with Paul ministering to the gentiles for some time. Yet, he too wound up caving in.

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before [them] all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of

Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?

**The truth of the gospel is that salvation comes only by
trusting in Jesus.**

This alone is what makes a person clean or worthy before the Lord, not circumcision.

And yet these Jewish believers were applying their old Pharisee ways to the Christian believer, separating themselves from these Gentile believers because they felt that they were going to somehow be “contaminated” by them.

And because of Peter’s actions and influence over the church, Paul had to call him out publicly.

Peter was living a double standard. He allowed himself to live like a gentile for a while, but later behaves in a way that tries to make the Gentiles do the changing.

15 "We [who are] Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Paul reminds Peter here that they, as Jews, did not find salvation through the law, but only through faith in Christ.

Our salvation is not based upon what we do for God, because that is always flawed and less than perfect.

Our salvation is totally based on the work that God has done for us, in sending Jesus Christ to die as an offering for our sin.

When we choose to receive God's gift, Jesus' payment for our own sins, then God is able to take the righteousness of Jesus, and give it to us.

[2Co 5:21 NKJV] 21 For He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

17 "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, [is] Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!

One of the things that these Judaizers would argue, “The doctrine of justification through faith in Christ only, apart from the works of the law, is a highly dangerous doctrine.

It fatally weakens a man’s sense of moral responsibility.

If he can be accepted through trusting in Christ, without any necessity to do good works, you are actually encouraging him to break the law.”

Their argument would be, “Since Christ is the One who supplies this grace that leads to lawlessness, He is actually enabling a sinful lifestyle – He is a “minister of sin.”

And of course, Paul responds with a resounding – no!

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

If one abandons justification by faith and returns to the law – the only thing that they are going to find out is that they are still sinners. Because that was the entire point of the law. To demonstrate to us that we are sinful and therefore in need of a savior.

19 "For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me.

V20 happens to be one of my favorite verses in the Bible.

It reminds me what to do in Christ, how I should live in Him, and how much He loves me in spite of who I was and who I am.

When Jesus Christ died on the cross – literally, we also died – figuratively to the old

way of living, that is, trying to be righteous by keeping the Law or living in fear of its condemnation.

21 "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness [comes] through the law, then Christ died in vain."

To have the belief that we can be justified by works undermines the work of Jesus on the cross.

It means that God is a liar – In Jesus' prayer in the garden (Matthew 26:39-42), He asked that if there could be any other way to accomplish what stood before Him at the cross, He asked to be spared the cross. But Jesus was not spared the cross, because there is **no other way to accomplish what He did.**

[Rom 10:4 NKJV] 4 For Christ [is] the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The whole reason the Jesus came to die was because man was helpless on his own to achieve the necessary righteousness to stand before God.

Man is totally helpless to fulfill God's standards of righteousness.

And that's why Jesus died.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

