

Galatians 2:11-21 – A Loving Rebuke

Robertson, TSK, GreekLexicon, Henry, Gaebelin, Handfuls, Bezuyen, Rienecker, Geneva, Vincent, INT, JFB, Family, Abbot, PNT, Trapp, Clarke? Beloved in the Lord: Today, you will see one more way in which Apostle Paul **proved his equality and authority with other apostles in Jerusalem**. **By doing this he confirmed the Gospel he was preaching** - that **no one was saved by faith AND works**, but rather, that **man was saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone**.

In order to prove his equality and authority and that he was speaking the truth, Apostle Paul rebuked Apostle Peter, a pillar of the church, who had fallen into error and brought him back to the right view of the Gospel. This is the message of today.

Our headings are:

Apostle Paul Rebuked Apostle Peter

Apostle Paul Reiterated the Full Gospel

Our goals are: **That you will resist the pressure to compromise the Gospel, that you will publicly condemn those who teach false doctrines about salvation, and that you will faithfully proclaim him who rescued you from the miry clay and set you on the Rock!**

Apostle Paul Rebuked Apostle Peter

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

1. Apostle Peter became a hypocrite.

He preached to the Gentiles, lived with them, and regularly ate with them, but he tried to hide that fact from Jews who still held to Jewish traditions and ceremonies alongside the Gospel.

These Jews believed man was saved by faith AND works of the law - ceremonies.

Now God directly told Apostle Peter not to treat anything (or anyone) that he had made as unclean. (Acts 10)

The council in Jerusalem in Acts 15 established that Jews were no longer required to stay away from Gentiles. Both Jews and Gentiles believed the same Gospel, they had the same faith, they were in the same family, and they had the same Savior.

So Apostle Peter knew that salvation for all men was by grace alone, through faith alone, and in Christ alone. And yet, he did not want the Jews to see him being close to Gentiles. He betrayed his Gentile brothers. **He had already done this when he denied knowing Jesus!** Maybe he **thought he was avoiding a scandal, but fell into a bigger one.**

And Barnabas, following the example of this “pillar of the church,” did the same thing! He became a hypocrite too.

2. Seeing Apostle Peter’s hypocrisy, Apostle Paul rebuked him to his face.

This was bad for Peter (it was a sin), **it was bad for the Gentiles** (they would not see the unity of the church), **it was bad for the Jews** (they would think their ceremonies were not finished when Christ died), and **it was bad for God**, as he would not get the glory due him.

The wall of partition was torn down between Jews and Gentiles but Apostle Peter was keeping it up.

Ephesians 2:14 For **He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation**, 15 having **abolished in His flesh the enmity**, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to **create in Himself one new man from the two**, thus making peace, 16 and that He might **reconcile them both to God** in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and **preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near**. 18 For through Him **we both have access by one Spirit** to the Father.

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?

3. Apostle Peter tried to play games with Apostle Paul, but he confronted Apostle Peter more strongly, and this time, in front of witnesses saying: “You understand Gentiles are your brothers – you eat and live with them (you don’t follow the Jewish ceremonies) – yet by hiding, you act as if Gentiles have to live like the Jews and fulfill their ceremonies!

The Gentiles would think something was missing from their lives...and feel obligated to keep the ceremonies.

15 "We who are Jews by nature, and **not sinners of the Gentiles (origin)**, 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.

4. But suggesting the Gentiles had to keep the ceremonial law to be saved, Peter was in fact teaching them man is justified by

works of the law AND by faith in Jesus.

This was a lie that could lead to hell, so you see why Apostle Paul had to rebuke him so strongly and to his face!

It was faith in Christ (not any works) that saved every saint in the Old Testament. (Psalm 110, Hebrews 11, Psalm 2, John 8)

5. Lessons – some general ones first:

a. A serious public sin requires a strong public rebuke. Don't talk behind someone's back. Rebuke him. Take it if you are rebuked.

b. There is no room for racism or discrimination in God's church, even if someone had a terrible past. You are not superior because you were a Christian longer or raised in a Christian family. You are all blood brothers in Jesus.

c. Confront your erring brother in a loving way. Even if you are good friends with him, speak up. His good and God's honor are at stake.

d. There is weakness in all men, even in ministers of the Gospel. The higher the position, the worse the sin. Every man, no matter how high is spiritual position, sins against God. Don't ever think you have to blindly do as they say. And be prepared to respectfully challenge them when they are wrong. But let it be grounded in truth and love.

e. Don't be men-pleasers as Apostle Peter was. Don't die for approval. Stand up for truth. Don't compromise. Speak the truth. You are not called to be liked.

f. When you set a bad example, look how easy it is for others to follow (as Barnabas). Think about this when you talk to your wife, as those little eyes are on you. Think about this when you talk on the phone...

g. Don't let anyone think that salvation is by faith AND works. Fight them, not with blows, but with the Bible. It is robbery of God to teach that. God doesn't like robbers. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God! Good work saves none.

Apostle Paul Reiterated the full Gospel

1. So what does Apostle Paul say about the Gospel?

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!

a. Literally: "If we teach we are saved solely by grace through faith in Christ alone, and then at the same time, indulge others (Jews) who say we are saved by works and ceremonies also, which cannot save them, then we are saying Christ is corrupt. That type of justification is hopeless. (Justification is a judicial declaration that you are cleared of all your sins because Christ was punished for all of them!) **Furthermore, if men run to Christ to flee from the terror of the law as the Bible teaches, but if Christ then required man to still fulfill ceremonies in order to be saved, then Christ would be promoting a lie** – a serious sin. But he doesn't!

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

b. (An explanation of V17 – proving Christ is not a minister of sin.) If Christ tells a man to restart keeping the law, and ignores the fact he bore all of man's sin already, Christ is putting the man under the curse of the law and could be charged with deceit. Christ would be a transgressor. He isn't!

19 "For **I through the law died to the law** that I might live to God.

c. But a man who is a believer has died to the curse of the law and now lives through Christ. If a man could not keep all of the law...every single one perfectly every day, he was as good as dead. So to suggest that a man must keep the ceremonial laws to be saved was high deceit.

Romans 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, **you also have become dead to the law** through the body of Christ, **that you may be married to another** — to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

Terror of the conscience is gone from one who is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

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.

3. Apostle Paul then spoke of the positives of being saved from the curse of the law, showing the full Gospel. All the conditions of the law, which resulted in punishment, were nailed on Calvary's tree. He was in Christ when he died. So when Christ rose from the dead, the law no longer had power. If the law had no more power, there was no need to fulfil the ceremonies of the law.

Romans 6:6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

This is a mystical union believers have with the Savior.

Faith, not the flesh, is the real element in which we live. There is no life apart from the work of Christ.

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

4. Then Apostle Paul pointed out that the one who was fighting to keep the law and all the ceremonies were in reality attacking the necessity of the atonement of Christ.

Apostle Paul rejected ceremonies as part of salvation because he did not want to *frustrate* the grace of God.

Romans 11:6 And **if by grace, then it is no longer of works;** otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace...

5. Lessons:

a. Obey Christ because you have been saved by his complete and glorious atonement, but don't try to use your obedience as if you earned anything, especially our salvation, by it.

b. Since you are justified by faith in Jesus, don't worry that you can't please God. You can't! Keep praising God that Jesus pleased him for you.

c. Believers live in a state of perpetual dependence – dependence on Christ – for everything. You identify with Christ! To live apart from God is death.

d. All of life is then lived for the glory of Christ.

Conclusion:

Apostle Paul **had the equality and authority to speak as the other Apostles** and he had God's truth in his mouth. **What is more important is the importance of that truth! Salvation was by grace alone, by faith alone, and in Christ alone.** Those who did not believe that (the Judaizers and new Christians) and those who did not live that way (Apostle Peter and Barnabas) were roundly rebuked. **Apostle Paul had to speak up because the salvation of man and the resulting praises of God were at stake.**

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. We all want to live in strife-free lives, but sometimes it is not possible. Because of sin, strife is present.

2. When you see others teaching false ways of salvation and causing strife, taking away from the work of Christ, challenge them. Correct them. If you don't, men will be deceived and will either be totally lost in hell, or if they manage to survive as a Christian, they won't give the Savior his rightful glory.

3. Most of Christianity today is adding some human work to salvation. Be warned. This is not merely theory.

Finally: You might think God is pleased with you being a "good person," but you aren't good and your so-called "good works" don't please God. Only Jesus' work of living and dying for sinners pleases God. So if you want to go to heaven when you die, ask God to count Christ's work as yours. You go to hell with your "good" works.