

Gal 04 – Standing For “Faith Alone” – Gal 2:11-21

One of the lessons we learn from Cain & Abel – way back in Gen Ch 4 is that we CAN NOT bring the fruit of our own efforts to be made right before God

Remember – Abel brought just what God requested - in simple obedience - & w/ right heart . . .

But Cain proudly brought the fruit of his own labor (own efforts) – instead of what God requested . . .

& in his pride – Cain was mad when the fruit of his own labor was rejected by God . . . in fact – mad enuf to kill somebody

Guys - Cain’s offering of self-effort (Gen 4) is the first recorded act of man trying to bring his “Self-Righteousness” to God . . .
“look what I’ve done for you . . . I deserve your blessing . . .”

& [as John MacArthur says] – every person who’s every tried to come to God;
1) on the basis of his **own merits** –
2) on the basis of any kind of **Self-Effort** –
3) or on the basis of any kind of **Religious works** –

is simply following in the unbelieving, grace-rejecting steps of Cain

& from Genesis to Christ – Cain’s example of expecting Righteousness by Self-Effort (works) . . . had grown out of control in the Jewish Religion

& from those who most trusted in their “Self-Righteousness” by their works – came the Judaizers . . .

who claimed to follow Christ – but certainly not at the expense of their trying to earn their righteousness by their own works

& tho they would not want to hear it then – & they don’t want to hear it now . . .

ANY attempt to “Earn” a “Right Standing” w/ God – by our own efforts (works) is simply a continuation of the Rejected offering of Cain . . .

Cain was the 1st to bring his own efforts to God, & expect God to accept them
God help us not follow in the Rejected Footsteps of Cain

This sec in **Gal 2** – is about Standing Up for Justification by “Faith Alone”
with nothing that we can add to it . . . by Grace Thru Faith, alone

It’s about us receiving the Riches of God based on Christ’s Merit alone –
not because of anything we DO – but ALL that He’s done on our behalf

In addition to this greatest of truths –
we also see today quite a display of religious hypocrisy
& from the Apostle Peter no less . . .

Let’s Pray

Remember – Paul’s cont’g his defense of himself & the Gospel of Grace –
& 1 of the things this text shows is . . .

not only was he Peter’s equal (*1st wk*) – but here he even reprimands Peter

Sometime after the great Jerusalem council (from last wk),
Peter had come to Antioch, where Paul & Barnabas were “co-pastoring”

& when Peter 1st came - they were all enjoying great fellowship together –
. . . until “certain men” came from Jerusalem . . .

Gal 2:11-12

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.

Paul didn’t **initially** “withstand” Peter to his face –
it was only when Peter’s actions changed (contrary to the gospel)
that Paul was forced to confront him

see - Jewish law forbid both eating Gentile food - & eating w/ Gentiles . . .

But when Peter 1st came he was eating whatever was set in front of him –
& eating w/ whoever was sitting next to him . . .

Peter learned that FOOD couldn't make a person righteous – or unrighteous
He had heard Jesus say in **Mk 7:18** *whatever a man eats does not defile him*

& Peter had that dramatic dream in **Acts 10** –
where the Lord told him to eat food considered unclean . . .
to prepare him to give the gospel of grace to the house of Cornelius

Peter was the one who withstood the Judaizers at the Jerusalem council
1st wk in **Acts 15:0** – *[God has] made no distinction between us and [the
Gentiles], purifying their hearts by faith.*

But here – in **V.12** it says “**certain men**” came from James . . .

James was leading the Jerusalem church in Peter's absence –
& it may sound like James sent these “certain men” . . .

but these men were clearly Judaizers . . .
so they came w/ their pomp & religion – but certainly did not come
on the authority of James – tho they may have implied it

in any case – the “Self-Righteous” Religionists showed up – & **Peter CAVED** !

Guys – this is the **OLD Peter** –
that old Peter we saw vacillate in the gospels . . .

One moment being inspired by God – the next inspired by Satan (**Mat 16**)
1 moment saying he'd die w/ Christ - the next denying him 3 times . .

I hate to point it out to you – but **THAT** was
the 1st leader of the Christian church – & he was far from Infallible

the end of V.11 says : “*because he was to be blamed*”
& he was to be blamed – because his actions were very wrong . . .

There is a church that claims Peter was “Infallible” (& those who followed) –

& the way some in that church handle this text –
is to say that this was **NOT** the Apostle Peter –
but some other guy with the same name . . . (sorry . . .)

Lets re-read V.12-13

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.

This Peter – the leader of the Jerusalem church – & he had great influence

& when he caved to the religionists – he took others w/ him –
even Barnabus (Paul’s co-pastor) changed his behavior . .
& was carried away w/ Peter’s hypocrisy

& Paul could not let this go on – this was devastating -
Not only were these actions Prejudice & Hypocritical . . .

they completely undermined all Paul was teaching about Righteousness
thru faith alone – Not by **any** works - including Jewish regulations

So – it’s time for Paul to not only Rebuke Peter –
but to also teach a very strong lesson . . .

about “Crucifying” our own attempts to make ourselves “Right” before God,
by trying to add anything, to salvation by Grace thru faith **ALONE**

Gal 2:14A

*14 But when I saw that they were not **straightforward** about the truth of the gospel, . .*

The word **straightforward** means **LIT** – to “*walk straight, or uprightly*”
Peter, & the others were not *walking the talk* –

These were leaders in the church – & they **had been** experiencing
wonderful Gentile-Jewish fellowship in the Lord at Antioch

& now the entire church was watching these leaders “change their actions” to satisfy a group of religious legalists . . .

This was about to bring a very serious division into the church – so Paul took the extreme measure of addressing Peter publicly . . .

Gal 2:14 (entire)

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?”

Paul’s saying – hey Peter – you, being a Jew – before these Judaizers got here – you were living just like the gentiles - & had no concerns . . .

So now that these legalists are here – why are you implying by your actions that the Gentiles must live like your pompus Jewish friends . . .

Now - Paul had to address this hypocrisy publicly - because of the serious threat of fracturing the church thru this

Paul’s motive was not to humiliate Peter – but to correct his error in such a way that those he was causing to stumble would know – his actions were totally inconsistent with the Gospel of Grace

& in **vs’s15-16** – Paul’s going to hit Peter with the facts of how he & Peter himself had come to salvation in Christ . . .

& in doing so – he makes one of the most powerful statements in the N.T. re: justification thru faith alone . . .

Gal 2:15-16

*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’s saying – Peter, you & I are Jews, we of all people know what it’s like, to try to earn righteousness by our works –

& even w/ all our Jewish background – we’ve realized
a man cannot be justified by works, but only by faith in Jesus Christ . . .

& knowing that – even we had to lay down our own efforts in the law . . .
You & I Peter, we had to come to Jesus Christ alone,
we had to be Justified by Faith in Him alone –w/ NO WORKS ADDED

Peter – you & I **KNOW** that by the works of the law **no flesh** shall be *justified*
. . . *Peter . . . what are you doing*

At the Jerusalem Council – Peter had said the same thing to the Judaizers –
in **Act 15:10** he says - *Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke
on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?*

But now – for reasons we can only speculate on –
Peter is contradicting his words w/ his actions – (*& his actions are louder*)

Now – **3 Times** in **V.16** - Paul uses the word translated “**Justified**” –
which is **LIT** – *“to Render or Declare Righteous”*

the word best pictures a Judge declaring an accused person
“not guilty”, or “righteous” before the law –

JUSTIFIED – we say *“just as if I’d never sinned”*

It’s the word used when God declares a guilty sinner “Not Guilty” (Righteous) –
before His own Judgment seat . . .

& Paul is emphatically stating in V.16 ;

- (a) *“man is NOT justified by the works of the law – but by faith in Jesus Christ*
- (b) *“that we might be justified by faith in Jesus Christ- & not by the works of the law”*
- (c) *“by the works of the law NO FLESH shall be justified” . . .*

What do you think Paul is trying to say ???

Pls listen carefully – there are many Christians today – who will say;
“Oh yeah, I really believe that . . . “

but they go right on trying to **earn** their *righteousness w/ God* –
or go on implying that others must earn their Righteousness . . .

No amount of effort on our part can make us right before God –
Because the root of the problem is our sin NATURE . . .

Our actions are only symptoms of the root problem -
& you can not fix the root problem – by cleaning up the symptoms

The root problem – our sin nature (which separates us from God) –
can ONLY be dealt with – by us being Justified before God . . .

& the Word is making it very clear here in **V.16** –
that can ONLY happen thru Faith in Jesus Christ . . .
*more on that – when we get down to **V.20***

“Justification” puts you in **“Right Standing before God”** –
It occurs immediately, the second you put your Faith in Jesus Christ
& no amount of your own effort can do that for you

before we leave V.16 – I’d just like to give you a quote from **John MacArthur**
on the subject of Justification by Faith in Christ alone . . .

Speaking of Gal 2:16 - Dr MacArthur says; *“All claims that salvation is through belief in Jesus Christ plus something else are blasphemous, satanic lies. [don’t you wish he’d just go ahead & be direct] – There can be no effective or acceptable human addition to Christ’s work. This passage is as forceful and unequivocal a statement of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone as can be found in scripture*

Now – Paul has made a powerhouse statement in V.16 –
& in vs’ 17-18 – he’s going to back it up w/ a hypothetical question . . .

Gal 2:17

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!

Paul's saying – Look Peter, if after we had been justified by faith alone –
if coming here & eating w/ the Gentiles & eating the Gentile food –
has made us become sinners again . . .

then wouldn't that make Jesus Christ a minister of sin . . .
because He clearly called us to fellowship w/ these Gentiles

If the Judaizers were right – if it was a sin to eat w/ the Gentiles, or their food –
then Jesus Christ must be a minister of sin –
because He's the one who called us to do it . . .

& then Paul slams the door on that ridiculous thought –
“*Certainly Not - May it never be*”

then he continues in Gal 2:18

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

If I were to go back & try to resurrect that “works based” Righteousness –
it's actually me that becomes the sinner –
for disregarding the sufficiency of the death of Jesus Christ

I would become a hypocrite & a transgressor for belittling the
all encompassing sacrifice of Jesus Christ –
by trying to add to it - my worthless Self-Effort

Now – V.19 – sets up the “well known” V.20 . . .

Gal 2:19

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

Paul's saying – All the law could do was condemn me to death -
& it **did** condemn me . . . & I **did** die –
& I died to the law . . . that I might live to God . . .

But **HOW** did Paul die to the law . . . ?

He died to the Law – When Christ died to the Law

the clear teaching of the N.T. (*espec Romans & Galatians*) is this;
when we put our faith in Jesus Christ – we become so identified with him –
that positionally we have died with him . . .

The word - is Baptizo – so identified with, as to bring on a permanent change

Rom 6:3-5 – some of my favorite vs's in the Bible

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

When Christ died – as the final sacrifice, fulfilling the law . . .
positionally - we died IN Him - to the law

& when He was Raised from the dead - to live for God . . .
We were raised from the dead IN Him – to live for God

& that's what Paul's referring to in Gal 2:20

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.

“I was crucified with Christ” –
In Christ, the full penalty of my sin has been paid in full –
Just as if I paid the full penalty myself . . .

So the law has no hold on me –
because it's full demands on me have been paid “in Christ”

& that old man – that was deserving of the full penalty of sin – He's dead !!
He died with Christ – he paid his full penalty of death – “in Christ”

& now – instead of that old man – now Christ lives in me –
I have been united together with the Resurrected Christ –
I now walk in the newness of life

& absolutely the ONLY way - to receive such a full & complete
Justification before God is thru Faith in Jesus Christ

it happens wholly & completely - by faith (*that's what Paul's been tellin us*) –
it happens by me putting my faith in the Son of God . . .

& this incredible new life – that I live by faith in the Son of God . . .
it came because Jesus Christ **loved me** - & **gave Himself** for me . . .

Not by anything I've done – not by anything I deserve . . .
but completely because **He loved me** - & **gave Himself** for me

& so now – my MOTIVE for any Devotion – for any Obedience to the Lord –
my Motive is **gratitude** – **worship** – **thanksgiving** –

because He 1st loved me – because he died in my place -
so I could be declared Righteous before God – **IN HIM !**

then Paul closes w/ a powerful – final statement . . .

Gal 2:21

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

I DO NOT – **I WILL NOT** – **I CAN NOT** set aside the grace of God –
I can not add one itty bitty little work of my own effort . . .

Because if I try to add 1 loda of righteousness by my own effort . . .
then Christ has died in Vain . . . & guys – Christ didn't die in vain

God forbid that we should so greatly insult the Son of the God –
by trying to earn with our own efforts –
what HE has already paid His life – to give us freely

Let's Pray