

**Galatians 2:11-16**  
**Walking in Step with The Gospel**

**I. Intro**

**If you could change one thing about you, what would you change?**

**How would you change it?**

Here's the thing about change, all of us want something to change in our lives, but for all the years that we have lived our lives, nailing down how to really change, and being able to produce and reproduce lasting transformational change, is something that evades us.

Over the last several weeks we have been working through the book of Galatians and we have been processing the difference between Broken Religion and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Here's how they would answer that question:

Broken Religion will teach you that if you want to change your life, you need to try harder to do it. You need to just do it. Just be nice, just love Jesus, just enjoy your life, stop being angry, stop looking at porn, stop caring about money.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ teaches that if you want change in your life, it is going to be by the Gospel of Jesus becoming a reality in your life.

What does that mean? I'm glad you asked, because Paul explains it in our passage this morning. You see the reason Paul is so adamant about the gospel in these first few chapters is because if we change the gospel, we won't experience lasting, anchor deep change. Anything besides aligning ourselves with the gospel for change, is aligning ourselves with something that will be superficial and fleeting, and many times, destructive.

**When you align your heart with the gospel of Jesus Christ, the change you long for will be inevitable.**

Here's what we are going to do today:

What happened to Peter?

How does Paul invite Peter to change?

How do we change?

**II. What Happened To Peter?**

Peter was a disciple of Jesus. And one on the inner circle.

After Jesus raised from the dead and ascended into heaven Peter played a major role in the church and proclaiming of Jesus Christ. He preached the very first sermon of the church and over 3000 people were saved.

Peter saw many Jews come to follow Jesus. But God had more in store for the world than just saving Jews...

In Acts 10-11 Peter has an encounter with God where God shows Peter how vast and significant the gospel of Jesus Christ is.

You see the Jews, all their lives followed lots of laws, some from God, but many man-made, and they followed the laws because they thought it made them righteous. The laws were about work, about morals, about marriage and even about food. They had to eat a certain way. They were not allowed to eat unclean things, because that is part of what made them righteous. They also had to make sacrifices regularly though, because they couldn't keep the law, and failed at... For many Jews, this also led to a

self-righteousness. We are better than all other people, because God choose us. We are better than the heathen, better than the Gentile.

Well in **Acts 10:12-16** God changes all of that.

Peter has a vision and through the metaphor of unclean animals, God tells Peter to accept the Gentiles. And so Peter goes and preaches the gospel to a non-jew, a Gentile, named Cornelius and Cornelius becomes a follower of Jesus.

This was life changing for Peter because not only did Gentiles not have to keep the Old Testament law of circumcision or the ceremonial laws to have the same spiritual blessings as Christian Jews, he figured out because of Jesus the Jew is also now free from those laws.

Imagine spending your whole life believing that Gentile people were bad, evil, and a group of people not to be associated with, and then all of a sudden, the Gospel of Jesus declares to your heart, all people are equal... they are sinners who can't keep the law, but by faith in Jesus, Jesus brings everyone into the kingdom of God.

This is what God changed for Peter. Jesus' work was so vast that now the law isn't what makes you righteous, and what that means is anyone, anyone in the whole world, can be justified! So what happens to Peter here is huge!

And this is the backdrop for Galatians 2.

And now in Galatians 2, what happened to Peter? Peter is backsliden.

#### **Galatians 2:11-14**

Peter was a believer. Peter understood and knew the reality of the gospel of Jesus and how it changes lives.

God appeared to Him in a dream to tell him anyone - Jew or Gentile- who puts their faith in Jesus is saved.

But something happened to Peter. Fear became the motivation of his heart and he aligned Himself with the circumcision party which was basically declaring, once you believe in Jesus you have to be circumcised and follow these laws. Peter aligned himself with a group that was teaching broken religion. Why? Because he was afraid. Of what? We don't know... Maybe because the party was violent, or he was afraid they wouldn't see him as a great leader, or he was afraid he couldn't defend himself and would look foolish.

In the end, the gospel was not enough for Peter. He needed something from this group that Jesus couldn't provide, and so fear drove him to hypocrisy.

Here's our problem when it comes to change.... We are just like Peter.... the vast majority of the people in this room believe in Jesus Christ, believe that he is the Son of God, that he rose from the dead, and that he died on the cross for us... but you don't believe Christ's love is enough to cleanse and beautify you all by itself; you believe something else will give you what you need.

### **III. How Does Paul Invite Peter To Change?**

Now, how do most of us invite people to change? STOP IT!!

That's not what Paul does... because that is the fruit of broken religion, to tell people what to do and how to act.

Paul could have said to Peter, 'Stop being afraid. You are being a hypocrite. You are not doing what Jesus would want you to do!' But he doesn't.... This is actually quite amazing what Paul does.

#### **Gal. 2:14-16**

What Paul does is quite profound actually. He says, I noticed that they were not in step with the truth of the gospel.

And then He reminds Him of the gospel, and invites Peter to get in step with the gospel, or re-align himself with the gospel of Jesus.

So let's go ahead and let the cat out of the bag, because this principle is huge!

**The way to experience liberating transformational change is to bring every area of your life in step with the gospel.**

This word here in the greek is a cool word. It's the word **Orthopodeo**. Two words that we know...

Podeo comes from the work podiatrist... so walk or step...

And the word ortho means what? To straighten or align... It's where we get the word orthodontist.

You go to an orthodontist when your dontists are crooked.

So let's tease this out... Paul is saying, Peter, you are out of alignment. fear is motivating you and there is a part of your heart that is not in alignment with the truth of what Jesus has done for you, and you need to walk in step, you need to re-align yourself with the truth of what Jesus has done.

Look at verse 15-16... Paul says to Peter... Peter, remember works don't justify you. Jesus has freed you from that. Let your heart be moved by that, align you heart with that Peter, and the fear that is driving you will go away. This group, the circumcision group won't even come close to giving you what Jesus already has. So let the justification of Jesus be real to you, walk in step with that truth.

How does all change come?

**When you align your heart with the gospel of Jesus Christ, the change you long for will be inevitable.**

You see the work of Jesus is so beautiful, so deep, so vast, that we need to work it out into every area of our lives: our thinking, our feelings, our behavior, our actions...

So what area of your life do you want to see change in? Change isn't going to happen by just doing it... Change is going to happen when you bring your life in step with, in alignment with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Every area of change is a gospel alignment issue!** That's why every week we sing about the gospel of Jesus, because it is where we need to align our lives. It's why every week we preach about the gospel of Jesus, because it is where we need to align our hearts.

Several years ago I was having a conversation with someone that was coming to the church for a while and they said to me, 'Brian, this might sound weird, but I get the gospel. I really don't need to hear it every week. I've pretty much got that figured out. I need more depth and help knowing how to live'.

You know why this passage is so encouraging to me?! Peter... the leader of the church... He needed to hear the gospel. He needed his heart to be aligned with the gospel. And friends the change we need in our lives, is not knowing some things we need to do, it's letting the gospel penetrate deep into our lives so that every area of our walk is in alignment to its truth.

#### **IV. How Do We Change?**

Earlier this week, Anthony one of our elders emailed me... hey Brian is there anything I can be praying for you?

I said, totally... I'm preaching this week, pray for that... He said how about something a little deeper...

You know, sometimes I hate thinking deeper... Anyway, I started to process the last couple of days and weeks and I realized that I had been really anxious lately. I had been anxious at work, at anxious at home with the girls and Dondra, anxious about getting things accomplished and doing a good job.

And so I'm working on this sermon and I really start thinking about it... You know, this is an example of this. There is something in my heart that is not in step with the gospel.

Now, Broken Religion says pray harder or just pretend you aren't anxious...

But the gospel invites me to something totally different. The gospel invites me into the presence of God to experience joy and freedom. But my heart out of alignment. I was starting to think that if things in these areas went well I would be joyful.

So to bring my life in line with the gospel, I did two things:

1. I asked Anthony to pray for me.
2. I started thinking about **1 Peter 5:6-7**, cast your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. And I started to think about how God cared for me... that what I should be most anxious about, my right standing before an eternal and righteous God, God sent His son to die for me. And that when that becomes more real to me, I can cast my anxieties on God... because He already showed me He cared for me, so of course I can trust Him now.

## **V. Conclusion**

So let me ask you again...

**If you could change one thing about your life what would you change? How would you change it?**

Get in step with the gospel...

**When you align your heart with the gospel of Jesus Christ, the change you long for will be inevitable.**

Can I invite you now, in 60 seconds of silence to just reflect and process, and let the Spirit of God show you where He would like to bring you in step with the gospel??