

What is the True Gospel?

God's Word warns us there are false gospels—counterfeit gospels—that cannot save. We saw last week in Galatians 1 that different gospels are no gospels at all. They may sound convincing, but in reality, they lead people to hell under the curse of God forever. (*Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15*).

So today, we're going to stop and ask the question: Are you on the right track? Is our faith in the true gospel—or a counterfeit? What is the true gospel?

Galatians 2 gives us the answer. Here's the truth this passage teaches:

GOD'S GOSPEL OF GRACE, FOUND ONLY THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS, IS THE TRUE GOSPEL

From this chapter, I want to give you six reasons why **6 reasons why** God's gospel of grace is the true gospel. (Grace = unmerited favor - Rom. 11:6)

Reason #1 - FREEDOM - The gospel of grace is what brings freedom. (Galatians 2:1-5)

Jesus came to set sinners free—free from the power of sin, free from the weight of the law, and free from the curse of judgment. No more crushing shame. No more impossible burden of religious rituals. No more fear of God’s curse. In Christ, we are set free. But freedom is always under attack.

1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.

*2 I went up because of a revelation **and set before them** (though privately before those who seemed influential) **the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.***

*3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. 4 Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out **our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus**, so that they might bring us into slavery—*

*5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that **the truth of the gospel** might be preserved for you. ESV*

Reason #2 – TRUTH – The gospel of grace is what the apostles endorsed (Galatians 2:6–10)

6 And from **those who seemed to be influential** (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential **added nothing to me.**

7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised

8 (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles),

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

10 Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do

Peter said at the Jerusalem Council: “We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 15:11)? and James immediately stood up and agreed with Peter.

John devoted his entire gospel of John to this truth, writing: “These are written so that you may believe

that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31). Jesus Himself said that future generations would believe in Him because of the testimony, because of the word of the apostles (John 17:20). All the apostles were united in one message: Jesus is Lord. He died for our sins. He rose from the dead. And eternal life is found only by believing in Him.

Reason #3 – INTEGRITY – The gospel of grace prevents hypocrisy and confusion (Galatians 2:11–14)

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

*13 And the rest of the Jews acted **hypocritically** along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their **hypocrisy**.*

14 But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and

not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?” ESV

Peter's actions suggested that Gentiles weren't really acceptable to God unless they kept the Jewish law. So Paul stood up to Peter publicly. He reminded him: Peter, you preach grace, but you're living as though law-keeping makes you right with God. That's hypocrisy, and it confuses everyone watching.

Reason #4 – JUSTIFICATION – The gospel of grace is what justifies a sinner before God.

(Galatians 2:15–16) Justification = to declare righteous.

15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;

*16 yet **we know** that a person is not justified by works of the law **but through faith in Jesus Christ**, so we **also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ** and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.”*
ESV

Reason #5 – The gospel of grace explains the purpose of the Law (Galatians 2:17–19).

One of the most common objections to the gospel of grace is this: *“If salvation is free, if it’s not about keeping rules or laws, won’t that just encourage people to sin?”*

17 But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!”

18 For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

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

The law was never given to give life. The law was never given to prevent sin. The law was never given to make us righteous. The true purpose of the law is to expose our sin and show us that we are not righteous.

Reason #6 – THE CROSS – The gospel of grace gives the cross real meaning. (Galatians 2:20–21)

*20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh **I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if

righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.” ESV

If you could save yourself by being good enough, then Jesus died for nothing. But He didn't die for nothing. He died to save you from sin, guilt, shame, the demands of the law, and death itself.