

Topical Message
A Needed Reprimand
Pastor Leitu

KAPONO: Would you join me in a word of prayer, family? Lord, great are You, Lord. We thank You so much for Your word in this First Service, how it confronts us, Lord, how it makes us think. We say, Lord, we're not perfect, and that's why we need You, Lord. So we thank You for Your word that's being preached here.

Lord, we thank You for our pastors: Pastor Mac, Pastor JD, and Pastor Leitu. Lord, continue to strengthen, protect, guide, and watch over their families, Lord. And now as we get into Your word, Lord, would You clear our minds, prepare our hearts that we may not miss one single thing that You have for us this day? In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

PASTOR LEITU: Aloha!

[Congregation says, "Aloha!"]

You may be seated. With everything I got today, I'm going to preach the Word. Amen?

[Congregation says, "Amen!"]

Aloha for you here in the sanctuary and you online as well. Welcome to our Sunday Second Service. Pastor JD, as you know, is on a well-deserved vacation. Please pray for him and his family, especially Kellie, that she would continue to heal. Also, that the Lord's hand of protection would upon them.

We have two services on Sundays at 8:30 and 10:45. Our 8:30 service is our Prophecy Update, when pastor JD comes back. And our 10:45 service, we're going through the New Testament. We have our midweek study on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. We come together as a church for all-church prayer on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. here in the sanctuary.

Last time I taught, we were in *Chapter 2 of Galatians*. We made it all the way to *verse 10*. Today we'll pick it up in *Galatians Chapter 2:11* The apostles Peter and Paul are together in Antioch. There was a problem, but God sorted it all out.

Let's pray and ask God's blessing on His word today. Father, we come before Your throne today to thank You for Your word. Lord, we thank You for Your love letter, Your instruction book for Your people, Your kids. We thank You, Lord, that You also speak to those who don't know You, that they come to You, surrender their hearts to You, and be saved.

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So I come before You to thank You for Your word. Lord, lead us, guide us, give us ears to hear and eyes to see what You want to teach us today. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

I titled today's message 'A Needed Reprimand.' The *Book of Galatians* is written by Paul the Apostle. Paul wrote this book in AD 49, in Antioch. Antioch was part of Galatia at the time. He visited Galatia, which is present-day Turkey, and he started churches there, and they were growing.

Believers are being saved and they're being set free by the Gospel. They experienced the same transformations as Paul did. The church in Antioch was Paul's home church.

Not far from Antioch was the city of Tarsus, Paul's birthplace. Tarsus was a city in the country of Cilicia. Cilicia was named after a cloth called cilicium. This cloth was made from goats' hair, and it was water resistant. From this cloth, water-resistant items like raincoats and tents were made.

And we know that Paul the Apostle was a tent maker. Paul always worked to support his ministry. He never wanted money to be a stumbling block in his calling, so he never asked for money during his ministry, just as Pastor JD never asks for money from the pulpit.

Paul was born and given his Hebrew name of Saul to Jewish parents who possessed a Roman citizenship. Saul was also his Hebrew name, Paul, his Roman name. Roman citizenship in that day carried with it many privileges. Roman citizenship benefited Paul immensely during his ministry.

Before Paul accepted Jesus as his Savior, he was a religious leader who persecuted the Christian church. Paul was a powerful leader in the religion of Judaism. Judaism was then, and still is, the state religion in Israel today. He was a Pharisee, which meant that Paul also played a role in the daily lives and affairs of those in Israel. Many speculate that he was a member of the Sanhedrin, which wielded a lot of power in Israel in that day.

It is believed that Paul was also a lawyer. He was well-educated, and he sat under the teaching of Gamaliel. He was a bright student and ascended to the top of his class. Gamaliel was a Jewish rabbi, a well-respected teacher in that day. And Paul's parents sent him from Tarsus to Jerusalem for schooling.

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Tarsus was in present-day Turkey. So it was a far journey to Jerusalem. Some believe that the family moved from Tarsus to Jerusalem. But Gamaliel was the best teacher of his time. Paul's parents wanted the best for their son. Tradition has it that Gamaliel couldn't keep Paul equipped with enough books, as Paul was a voracious reader.

Paul was very zealous for Jewish religion and its traditions, so much so that he opposed the Gospel. He fought against Christianity with the same zeal and the same strength that he had for his beloved religion of Judaism.

Judaism was being threatened by Jesus and the Gospel in that time. Jews didn't believe or understand that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. We know, as believers, that Jesus is, in fact, the Messiah. Paul despised Christianity and so he continually persecuted the church.

In the *Book of Acts*, we see him approving of Stephen's death. Stephen, a godly man, was falsely accused and lied about. He was bullied and brought before the Jewish Tribunal.

Being led by the Holy Spirit, Stephen recites and recounts past crimes that the Jewish leadership has committed throughout its history. Having spoken the truth, he then says this in the *Book of Acts*, *Acts 7:51-53*. **“You stubborn people! You are heathen at heart and deaf to the truth. Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? That’s what your ancestors did, and so do you! Name one prophet your ancestors didn’t persecute! They even killed the ones who predicted the coming of the Righteous One— the Messiah whom you betrayed and murdered. [He was speaking about Jesus] You deliberately disobeyed God’s law even though you received it from the hands of angels.”**

These priests and Pharisees are infuriated. They knew that their ancestors had killed the prophets. They knew their history of rebellion against God. These are the same men that put Jesus on the cross. Lest we forget, though, it was our sin that nailed Jesus to the cross. The Romans who had conquered and occupied Israel along with the Jews in Jerusalem, put Him on that cross. But it was our sins that Jesus went to the cross.

So these same men who put Jesus on the cross, they rushed to murder Stephen, this man of God. But they needed approval before they could stone Stephen. They got the approval from Saul, his Roman name, Paul.

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We read in *Acts Chapter 7:57-60*, **“Then they put their hands over their ears and began shouting. They rushed at him and dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. His accusers took off their coats and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul. As they stoned him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” He fell to his knees, shouting, “Lord, don’t charge them with this sin!” And with that, he died.”**

Stephen was the first Christian to be martyred in the Bible. While being stoned, he asked God to forgive these sinners. Jesus said the same thing on the cross. Jesus said the same thing on the cross. We see that in the *Book of Luke, Chapter 23:34*. Jesus said, **“Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.”**

In the next chapter, Saul continues to persecute the church. *Acts 8:1* tells us **“Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen. A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. [Continuing with verse 2 and 3] (Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.) But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.”**

In *Acts Chapter 9*, Saul continues with his torment of these believers in Jesus. First, starting with *verse 1*, **“Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord’s followers. So he went to the high priest. He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them— both men and women— back to Jerusalem in chains.**

[Continuing with verse 3-6] **As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?” “Who are you, lord?” Saul asked. And the voice replied, “I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”**

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Saul has an encounter with the risen Lord Jesus. Jesus, who was in heaven, makes a special appearance. He has a calling on a special individual named Saul. Jesus came to knock this fanatical man off his high horse. This intense and passionate man is humbled by the Lord.

One moment he's following a misguided religion, really a false religion, the next he's born-again and he has a new heart and a new attitude. One minute Saul is seeking to hunt and persecute Christians, the next he's a believer in Jesus Christ. Jesus changes his heart and his attitude.

2 Corinthians Chapter 5:17 tells us, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

He now uses his Roman name, Paul, instead of his Hebrew name that his parents gave him. He's now enjoying a true love relationship with God. He's discovered the truth that Jesus is the Messiah. All the Scriptures of the Torah are starting to make sense to Paul. All the studying of all the books that this bright man had read is opening his heart and mind to the Gospel truths. He's worshiping the same God, but now he's worshiping God in Spirit and in truth.

John Chapter 8:31-32 tells us, **“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”**

Paul was always zealous for God, but now he knows the truth. There's a peace in his life where there once was turmoil. He's found he's been freed from the yoke of Judaism, Israel's religion.

2 Corinthians Chapter 3:17 tells us, **“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”**

There's a freedom wherever the Lord's spirit is. There was none in Judaism, only legalism. In Judaism, legalism was rampant and flourishing.

We've all heard that word “legalism.” Some understand it clearly, and maybe some don't. This is the best definition I've heard of the word “legalism.” Legalism is a set of rules that

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man made up that God never intended for man to follow, rules that made religion feel like a prison, rules that God never intended for man to follow.

In Judaism man-made rules were treated as if they were instructions from God, and they were not. Christians are not to be — Christians are not to dance or watch TVs, are examples we see today of legalism.

So what's wrong with legalism? Legalism can bring with it a spiritual pride. It can bring with it a haughtiness, thinking oneself better. Legalism says that you're closer to God because you keep yourself from certain behaviors and deny yourself certain pleasures. God never forbid these things, but in a legalist's mind, He did. Legalism often comes packaged with a joyous — a joyless, excuse me, joyless Christian life.

Writing, concerning legalism, Paul writes to the Colossians, *Colossians Chapter 2:20-21*.

“Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? [Legalism]

[Verse 22] These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility, and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual pleasure.”

So the church in Antioch was growing and thriving. Jews believed and were being set free from religion. Jews experienced a love for God they never had before. There was a joy that they did not experience in Judaism. Even Gentiles who didn't know God were being saved.

The Holy Spirit was entering the Jews and the Gentiles alike. Gentiles were being transformed the same way that Jews were. There was also peace in the hearts of these new believers. Gentiles filled with joy as they were separated from the false religions and the idolatry that they were brought up with. Jews and Gentiles were in fellowship and breaking bread, something that had never happened before Jesus came. Jews considered Gentiles unclean and barbaric.

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If you don't know what a Gentile is — maybe you're visiting today, never been to church. Gentiles are people groups in the world who are not Jewish. Jews never mix socially with Gentiles.

Jews because of their freedom, are now eating together and breaking bread with Gentiles. They're probably eating foods that were previously banned because they were considered unclean. Some may have even eaten pork, an abomination for Jews. There was potlucks and sweet times of fellowship.

Jews and now Gentiles were Paul's brothers and sisters. He wanted to protect his church, did Paul, like all good pastors do. Yet the Gospel was being attacked by Judaizers. Judaizers were Jewish men who believed in Jesus, but they had their own agenda. They were stuck in Judaism and legalism. They refused to believe that salvation was by faith alone in Jesus Christ.

Many were Pharisees, leaders in Judaism who ruled in society. They professed Christianity but were teaching a false doctrine. The Gospel was being maligned by these false teachers. They taught faulty religion, and converts were being led astray. The word “Judaizer” means to live according to Jewish ways.

They wanted Jewish converts in Jesus to remain and keep the laws and traditions of the national religion of Judaism. They also wanted the Gentiles to become and live as Jews. They even called for Gentiles to be circumcised. Under pressure from Judaizers, Jews are leaving the church. Jewish converts were pressured by fellow countrymen and went back to their dead religion that could not save anyone. Many Gentiles said no thank you to circumcision or becoming a Jew, and they walked away from the church.

Earlier in the *Book of Galatians*, Paul wrote of this: that the *Galatians* are turning away from God. He said in *Galatians Chapter 1:6-8*, **“I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to Himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends [Pretends] [Pretends] to be the Good News but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ. Let God’s curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you.”**

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The enemy always wants to thwart God's work in the world. I had a memorial that I was supposed to do last Saturday, and I so wanted to reach this family with the Gospel.

Everything that could have gone wrong the weeks before went wrong. I even got sick, and I couldn't attend. And I really wanted to attend. And I really wanted to share the Gospel with this family. But I wasn't able to.

And as I said, the enemy is always wanting to thwart God's work. He uses seemingly godly religious men to do his bidding, as are these Judaizers. Paul had numerous encounters with these Judaizers. They followed Paul wherever he went, even on his mission trips.

As Paul wrote, you're being fooled by pretenders. You want to add to the simple message of the Good News. By adding anything to the Gospel, you're corrupting it. Why go back to a belief system that can't save you? This is what God's word tells us about the Gospel.

Romans Chapter 3:25-27 tells us, **“For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed His life, shedding His blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when He held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, [Verse 26] for He was looking ahead and including them in what He would do in this present time.**

God did this to demonstrate His righteousness for He himself is fair and just, and He declares sinners to be right in His sight when they believe in Jesus. Can we boast then that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith.”

As Paul wrote, why go back to a religion that has no good news? Why go back to a belief system that cannot save you?

Let's pick it up in our study in *Galatians*, *Galatians* Chapter 1:2 — 2:11, excuse me, and 12.

“Now when Peter had come to Antioch, [Paul speaking. Paul writing] I withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, [These Judaizers] he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.” [The Judaizers]

The New Living Translation reads this way. **“But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. When he first arrived, he ate with**

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the Gentile believers who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision."

In *verse 11*, Paul reprimands Peter for his hypocrisy. This encounter with Paul here in the chapter was an embarrassing moment for Peter. It wasn't one of his brighter moments in ministry. Peter and Paul had become good friends. They fought battles together and they won. But what Peter did was very wrong, and Paul rebukes him.

Before we go any further, I want you to know my heart concerning Peter. I love Peter, and he's a hero of mine in the Scriptures. Like Peter, I also fall short. I have many of my moments. Like Peter, I'm thankful for the love and grace of our Lord.

Peter, as we all know, was a great man of faith. Peter was very close, and he loved Jesus. Peter was one of the apostles closest to Jesus. He was part of the inner circle with John and his brother James. Peter followed Jesus for three years and learned so much from Him.

Jesus empowered him to be able to heal the sick and the lame. Jesus also encouraged him to take care and feed His sheep. Throughout his ministry, Peter did just that. He loved, and he cared, and he shared the Gospel with God's people.

Paul's education came from the religious books and the rabbis. Peter's came from God himself, Jesus in human flesh. He also became the leader of the 12 apostles.

Though bold and courageous, Peter did have his moments, again, times when he faltered and weakened. He took his eyes off of Jesus, and he quickly sank into the sea. We remember the story of the rooster crowing when he denied that he knew Jesus three times to a young girl. We read at the time that he wouldn't let Jesus wash his feet.

So *verse 11* is a gloomy moment in biblical history, seeing one great apostle reprimand another. But the Gospel is being threatened by religious zealots. Paul discerns the threat. But Peter is in fear of these Judaizers. These are men who won't let go of Judaism and legalism. They came to bully the believers at the Antioch church. These men want to obliterate the Gospel and Paul with it.

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Verse 12 tells us that on Peter's arrival in Antioch, he hung out with the Gentiles. He even broke bread and ate with them. He prayed with them and even taught them what Jesus taught him. They most likely had great Bible studies together. But then the Judaizers show up from Jerusalem. Peter was fearful of them.

These men were friends of James, a half-brother of Jesus. You know, we remember James as an unbeliever, Jesus' half-brother. Now he's a prominent leader in God's church in Jerusalem. Judaizers were in shock when they saw Peter and his behavior that he was eating with the Gentiles, and he was loving on and fellowshiping with them. He may have been even eating pork chops with them. Jews never ate pork chops, you know. But with this freedom in Christ, they had that freedom now.

These Judaizers were a constant problem. They were legalists to the core. And they want to destroy God's flourishing church by adding rules and customs along with the traditions of men, rudiments that would bring confusion amongst believers.

These times of the church at Antioch were crucial moments. The pressure was too much for Peter, and he acquiesced. He gave in to the intense pressure from the Judaizers. He took his eyes off of Jesus. He separated from the Gentile believers, and he no longer had fellowship or ate with them. There was a church split as the people saw the hypocrisy.

So many of these Judaizers, well, they were self-serving. They loved the attention they got from the people. They loved the power that they wielded, and they didn't want to let it go. They were glad to see the Gentiles leave the church, for they hated the Gentiles. They did not have that same heart that God had for people. They're the same group who called for Jesus to be crucified.

So I can understand Peter's dilemma that's before him. Why did Peter fear these Judaizers? Maybe Peter had always revered these men. They may have been leaders in Peter's synagogue growing up in Israel. Maybe he remembered the cross and what they did to Jesus, the memory of the pain that Jesus went through at the crucifixion. Maybe Peter remembered and didn't want to go through that. In any case, he was in fear of mere men.

Proverbs 29:25 tells us, **“The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.”**

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You know, there are times in our life when we're pressured. Like Peter, we can either cower or we can stand. In moments like this, the Lord wants us to trust Him. We can be assured that God is watching and that He sees everything. I pray that we will trust the Lord and that we would stand.

Proverbs *Chapter 3:5-6*. **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”**

We read that Paul stood alone in the face of these Judaizers. Paul is right in his chastisement of Peter. The true Gospel is hanging in the balance, and Paul stands up. Paul knew what these men were all about, how they thought, and what they believed.

Paul was a former Pharisee himself, a strong leader. Paul may have served with these Judaizers in the temple. He may have attended the same rabbinical schools with them as well. Even though Peter and Barnabas had fallen short from grace, Paul understands their fear of these religious men. Earlier in the *Book of Galatians*, Paul testifies of his calling.

After his salvation, Paul went to Arabia to sort things out. Paul would try to sort out everything he learned, and he stored in his mind and how it all related to Jesus and the Gospel. He always had an extensive head knowledge of the Scriptures, but now he has the Holy Spirit in him, indwelling him. Everything he learned in God's word is starting to make sense to him. It's all coming together for him, and he's excited.

God revealed His Gospel plan to Paul while he was alone, spending quality time with the Lord in the desert. You know, spending time alone with the Lord is always a blessing for us as believers. I pray that the Lord would give you time, as so many of us are so busy. Paul's a new Christian with this same zeal that he had for Judaism. Once a persecutor of the church, but now he's a follower of Jesus Christ.

Again, the Lord revealed these truths to Paul. We read this earlier in *Chapter 1* of the *Book of Galatians* that we're in. Starting with *verse 11*, he says, **“Dear brothers and sisters, I want you to understand that the gospel message I preach is not based on mere human reasoning. I received my message from no human source, and no one taught me. Instead, I received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ. You know what I was like when I**

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followed the Jewish religion— how I violently persecuted God’s church. I did my best to destroy it.

I was far ahead of my fellow Jews in my zeal for the traditions of my ancestors. But even before I was born, [Verse 15] God chose me and called me by His marvelous grace. Then it pleased Him to reveal His Son to me so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles. When this happened, I did not rush out to consult with any human being. Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went away into Arabia, and later I returned to the city of Damascus.”

In *verse 15*, Paul says that God chose him for the ministry of the Gospel before he was born. God revealed who Jesus was to Paul, the Messiah. God chose Paul to spread the Gospel to the whole world, to the Gentiles.

It wasn't by any man that the Gospel came to Paul. It was by revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. We remember Jeremiah in Old Testament. God had a calling on Jeremiah's life. Jeremiah was maybe 16 years old, a young man. God's mission for Jeremiah was to warn the nation of Israel. He was to warn them of their rebellion against God. Nobody listened, and the nation went into captivity.

We read that in the Old Testament *Book of Jeremiah, Chapter 1:4-5* tells us **“The Lord gave me this message: ‘I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. [That’s amazing to me] Before you were born, I set you apart and appointed you as My prophet to the nations.’”**

Like Jeremiah, Paul realized that God had a plan for his life before he was even yet formed in his mother's womb. You know, God is omniscient. That means He's all-knowing, He knows everything. He knows all of the past. He knows all of the present and the future. Paul had no idea of the great plans that God had for him. You know, God has a plan for you that we know nothing of yet.

24 years ago, I was an alcoholic. I called out to Jesus, and I said, “Jesus, I need help.” And He sent someone to share the Gospel with me. A month after I met this man, I said yes to the Lord. I've been alcohol-free ever since. I'm saved and I'm rapture ready. I'm heaven bound.

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And so when I say that God has a plan for you, God has a plan for you. Hold on because God will do an amazing work in your life.

Verse 15 of our study tells us that peer pressured stumbled these Christians. *Galatians Chapter 2:13* says, **“That even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.”**

Even Barnabas, Paul's partner, was caught up in this hypocrisy. Peter's bad example influenced him. He should have known better. He spent so much time, did Barnabas, with Paul, battling these Judaizers. He let peer pressure sway him from what he knew was right.

Shortly before this account in *Galatians*, there was a disagreement amongst the Jewish leaders and Paul. Again, the issue concerned the Gospel and Gentile salvation. The church was in its infancy, but there was too many unsettled questions and issues concerning Gospel truth. Paul and Barnabas head to Jerusalem to settle these issues.

We see this in the *Book of Acts Chapter 15*. We also read and learn of this meeting in *Galatians Chapter 2* when we were in that study earlier, couple of months ago. Paul and Barnabas went from Antioch to Jerusalem, and they wanted to confer with the church leadership. This meeting was a pivotal moment in church history. The Gospel tenants would soon be decided on which way it would go, either the way of the Judaizers, or God's way. And we know who wins. Amen.

Again, there were issues. Again, there were the Judaizers who took issue with Paul. They believed that the Gospel was conceived by Paul. So they took aim at his ministry for annihilation. They didn't realize that the calling on Paul's life was planned for Paul before he was even born. They had no idea that Paul had been alone with the Lord in Arabia and that the Holy Spirit revealed these truths to Paul.

Gladly, the issue was settled in Jerusalem in favor of Paul and the Gospel. The Gospel and the leadership in Jerusalem were present. James, the half-brother of Jesus, presided, and he made the judgment call for the church leadership. Peter and Barnabas was present at this crucial meeting. Peter actually testified in favor of Paul and the Gospel.

The Judaizers who lost the battle are extremely disappointed. They lost the battle, but they're preparing for war. The Bible tells us that to the world, our faith is foolishness. The

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Judaizers couldn't understand Paul's changed life. He was a part of Judaism and a Pharisee with so much power and prestige. How could Paul betray the religion that benefited his life?

These men weren't born-again, so the Holy Spirit wasn't in them to give them spiritual understanding. They were blinded to the plans that God had to save mankind. All they could see was that salvation can only come by works, and good deeds, and by strict obedience to the Mosaic law. They couldn't see the love and the grace of God in the Gospels.

1 Corinthians Chapter 2:13-16 tells us, **“When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit’s words to explain spiritual truths. But people who aren’t spiritual can't [Believe... Excuse me] But people who aren’t spiritual can’t receive these truths from God’s spirit.**

It all sounds foolish to them, and they can’t understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things, but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others. For, “Who can know the Lord’s thoughts? Who knows enough to teach Him?” But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.”

We here in this sanctuary and you online also have that mind of Christ if you're born-again. If you're not saved, you too can have that mind of Christ. When you call on Jesus to be your Savior, the Lord will send His Holy Spirit to dwell in you. He will give you understanding of spiritual truths from God.

If you don't know God yet, if you're not born-again, you cannot understand these things. If you're not yet born-again, don't wait. Today would be a good day to call out to Jesus so you can be saved.

Now in *verse 14 of Galatians Chapter 2*, **“But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all...”**

So here you have Peter rebuking — I mean, you have Paul rebuking Peter in front of all the Jews, in front of all the Gentiles, in front of the church. **“I said to Peter before them all, ‘If**

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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 New Living Translation reads this way. **"When I saw that they were not following the truth of the Gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, 'Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?'"**

Paul is angry, and he boldly rebukes Peter and the other Jews. Peter, you've discarded Judaism with all these rules when you first believed, rules and laws that we Jews were never able to keep ourselves. You learned these truths from Jesus. Now you want these Jews to go back to Judaism, and you're forcing these Gentiles to follow Jewish traditions?

You know the word "hypocrisy" in the dictionary says this: It's the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform. You know, that's the nature of hypocrisy, trying to get others to do something that we ourselves won't do.

Peter is trying to make the Gentiles follow a lifestyle, and he proves that he himself and Jews never followed, never could keep. Paul would add to his rebuke of Peter. Don't you remember that we settled this Gospel issue in Jerusalem? The church leaders, which included the apostles, agreed. And now you let these Judaizers intimidate you. Peter's fear caused him to make poor decisions.

Peter even compelled the Gentiles to become like Jews. The word "compel" means to force or to pressure someone. Some believe that Peter was even pressuring Gentiles to follow the laws of Judaism and to be circumcised.

You know, like Peter, many of us have fallen short, again, as I said earlier. Thank You, God. He always will have His way as He is in control of everything. Nothing catches Him off guard. Jesus foretold that the Gospel would reach the nations.

We see that in the *Book of Matthew*. *Matthew Chapter 24:14* tells us, **"And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."**

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In today's passage, Peter wasn't at his best. We know what peer pressure is like, as we all experience it. We know how uncomfortable it is to be pressured. So let us not forget the times when we have fallen short. We also know that Peter loved and did much for the Lord. He was forgiven for his failures, just as we're forgiven for ours. So we brush the dust off of sin from us and we move forward, fulfilling the calling that God planned for us before we were formed before we were even born.

Romans Chapter 1:1 — I'm sorry. *Chapter 12:1-3* tells us **“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice— the kind He will find acceptable.**

This is truly the way to worship Him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.”

People are watching our lives as Christians. They want to see if our faith is real. My prayer is that we would be good examples of our faith, that we would be good ambassadors who represent Jesus well. People need hope, and that hope is in Jesus. Let us remember the love that He displayed on the cross. Let us continue to share the Gospel.

Hebrews 12:1-2 tells us that **“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”**

The simplicity of the Gospel is God's plan. The Gospel is received by faith in Jesus and nothing more. You're set free from the guilt of sin to follow and love God. You're set free from religion and legalism to worship the Lord. You're promised heaven by God, and He never breaks His promises. Your life will change, and you'll be a new creation. You'll be a new person.

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You're so thankful that you love the Lord even more. See, you love the Lord so much, you don't want to hurt His heart. You don't want to disappoint Him by living a life of willful sin. So you don't need rules to tell you how to behave.

You live righteously because you love the Lord Jesus. You remember the cross and what He did for you. Daily you thank Him for sending His son. Daily you thank Jesus for giving His life as a sacrifice, that by His stripes on the cross we are healed. Daily you thank the Holy Spirit for the work He's doing in you, making us more like Jesus and less like ourselves. More of you, Jesus, and less of me.

Let's all stand. Kaponono, you can come up. At this time, I'm going to do something a little different. I want to give an invitation for anyone who has not received Jesus yet. It's a simple prayer that a friend led me 24 years ago in. He told me just to be sincere, and God will know.

By calling on Jesus, He will promise that you will be in heaven when your time is done here on this earth. He will send the Holy Spirit to dwell in you, to change you, to lead, and guide your life. You'll never be the same, as I shared. You'll discover a true joy and a true peace in life. So if that's your desire here today, here in this sanctuary, or anyone online, just repeat after me.

You can pray quietly amongst yourself or out loud. Either way, God will hear you. Again, just be sincere, and God will know. But first, let us bow our heads. For you who want to accept Jesus as your Savior, repeat after me now.

Pray, Father in heaven, thank You for sending Your son, Jesus. Jesus, thank You for the pain You went through so my sins can be forgiven. I thank You that I am promised heaven by You because I'm calling out to You. Lead my life by Your Holy Spirit. Make me more like You, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen. If you prayed that prayer and meant it with all of your heart, you here in the sanctuary, or you online, you are rapture ready and you are heaven bound.

Talk to a Christian about this decision you just made.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, we come before Your throne today to thank You for Your word. Thank You for teaching us, Lord, the boldness of Paul the Apostle. I thank You for also

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teaching us, Lord, that when we have our moments of weakness, as Peter did, that You're there holding us and loving us because You are God.

We never forget the cross, Lord, and what You did for us by sending Your son. We're grateful and we're thankful, and we're in awe of You. We follow You with all of our hearts. Thank You, Father. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.