

Consistency Without Compromise (Part 2)

2:11-14, 15-21

Peter -> even at this stage of his life and ministry is still struggling with fear. He is worried about others thoughts and opinions. He is retreating from what he knows to be right.

Our initial thought might be... How can you be so foolish?

Meets Jesus - John 1:40-41

Jesus heals Peter's Mother in Law - Matthew 8:14-15

Peter the rock - Matthew 16:18

Transfiguration - Matthew 17:1-3

Denies Jesus - Matthew 26:69-75

Powerful message after Pentecost - Acts 2:14

Asked to follow Jesus - Matthew 4:18

Peter casting his nets - Matthew 4:18

Walks on water - Matthew 14:28-29

Defends Jesus (someone loses an ear) - Matthew 26:51

Love Restored - John 21:15-17

Cornelius - Acts 10-11:18

- Believers in Jerusalem are under pressure due to Jewish nationalism.
- People were compromising truth for a nationalistic agenda.
- They were being led astray by their hypocrisy.
- Even Barnabas.

And yet we are invited to look straight into the mirror of humanity.

We easily forget.

We are easily intimidated.

We easily chase after the wrong things.

We easily depend on our own strength and ignore the Holy Spirit.

If all of these things can be true of Peter, they most certainly can be true of us.

Question: How has what Jesus revealed to us in the past create a "decision making savings account" for us in the present? In life how do we withdraw from the abundance of God's goodness instead of relying on our own inconsistencies?

Barnabas -> had been an advocate for Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-28).

He was a mentor to Paul at Antioch (Acts 11:25-30).

He was a highly respected colleague in the evangelization of Cyprus and Southern Galatia (Acts 13:2-14:26).

He was certainly in favor of Gentiles receiving the gospel and not having to become Jewish.

vs. 13, Led astray / caught up in the emotion / it carries with it a nuance of irrationality.

Jewish Christians weren't willing to push back against the pressure.

They simply went with the flow.

Herd mentality is strong.

Will the truth of the gospel be stronger?

Influence Matters -> Peter, Jewish Christians in Antioch, Barnabas

This type of behavior, without reason, is disastrous for the spread of the truth of the gospel.

Acceptance, trust, and team work happen because of the unity found in Jesus, not because of uniformity in worldview and practice.

How does the person of Jesus and the wisdom of God's word inform our beliefs and practice? (The church should be a place for robust and beneficial dialogue).

Fellowship of diversity

Who are the people of God? Those who are part of the right ethnic group or those who have embraced the Messiah?

Question: Are you around followers of Jesus who think differently than you? Do these differences provide healthy opportunities for refinement? Are you open to different perspectives? Are you willing to change your mind?

What are the external pressures that can begin to distract you from Jesus?

Peter's journey to understanding faith.

A long journey filled with challenges.

Powerful message after Pentecost - Acts 2:14

Cornelius - Acts 10-11:18

Even in Peter's "faith struggle" he persevered in maturity.
He wasn't above learning (even considering his title and life experience).

Peter's maturity of faith is most captured in his two letters 1 & 2 Peter.

Paul's journey to understanding faith.

A surprise, immediate understanding, short (This is the task).

Paul views his and Peter's conversion as identical.

The law was insufficient, and they have embraced Jesus Christ who is absolutely sufficient.

vs. 15-21, Summary to the Galatians of Paul's conversation with Peter.

It is against the truth of the gospel to not fellowship with Gentile believers.

Significant aspects of a person's relationship with Jesus
Righteousness, Justification, Faith, Works

Looking through the lens of Antioch

- Who are the people of God?
- Are they to be defined ethnically or Messianically?
- What are the every day activities and attitudes of those who have experienced the salvation of a resurrected Jesus?

vs. 15-16, Simply the process of becoming a Jesus follower.

vs. 17-21, How does this play out in everyday life?

vs. 17,

- If you don't follow the law you are a sinner (Leviticus 20:22-26)
- But if you stop following the law because of Jesus, isn't he causing us to be sinners?
- Absolutely not! Jesus is the new covenant. We are not approved by God because we follow Torah, we are approved by God because of faith in Jesus.

Salvation is acceptance by God through faith in Jesus.

Acceptance by God is not through the works of the Law.

Our faith impacts our community and how these two intersect relates to justice.

- Paul's emphasis is not guilt removal - primarily focusing on getting the stamp that labels me righteous and ok (not guilty) before God.
- Paul's emphasis is on the formation of a new community, new social relationships, a new landscape marked by the ethics (justice) of the kingdom.

vs. 19-21, Jewish Christians find spiritual life through death to the law. They have been crucified with Christ. It is the resurrected Jesus that gives new life to the believer.

In salvation, what is our identity?

Are we Jews?

Are we Jewish Christians?

Are we Christians?

Are we the first reformers of Judaism?

Are we starting the church?

How does the church reflect the justice of God because it has experienced salvation?

Becoming part of God's family puts your social identity at stake.

The life of the church (body of Christ) will be guided by God's Spirit and the teachings of Jesus.
It will not be guided by cultural and social expectations (even if they are deeply religious).

This is key to understanding the rest of Galatians.

What is our identity? How do we function in unity undeterred by our varied differences (Jew / Gentile, Slave / Free, Male / Female)?