

# Galatians 1:18-2:21

## Disruption

Image Church // Galatians: Week 2

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### Intro

Good morning Image Family...

We're in week two of our series, where we're walking through the book of Galatians...

#### If you have your Bible, grab it and turn to Galatians 1

- **BTW**, If you don't have a copy of God's Word, we have one for you at the connections center, so make sure to grab one!

**Build the tension...** *Gaines falling out of the boat...*

- *Point: Disruption that rocked the boat...*
- *For some of you, you're spiritually disrupted this morning...*

### Galatians 1:18-2:21

Remember Paul's writing to the churches of Galatia...

He's addressing a huge problem that affected an entire region... They had turned away from the gospel that had founded them to a distorted version of it that was being pandared by a group of people called the **Judaizers** that were advocating for **Jesus + works of the law = Salvation and transformation**...

We ended with Paul **defending the validity of the gospel he preaches by pointing to his personal story and the clarity and legit transformation that came solely by the power of God**, not men!

Let's pick back up in **verse 18** as Paul continues to talk about his journey validating the gospel that He preaches...

Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to get to know Cephas [Peter], and I stayed with him fifteen days. **19** But I didn't see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. **20** I declare in the sight of God: I am not lying in what I write to you. **21** Afterward, I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. **22** I remained personally unknown to the Judean churches that are in Christ. **23** They simply kept hearing: "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith he once tried to destroy." **24** And they glorified God because of me.

What was happening is the **Judaizers** were going around trying to discredit Paul, saying that Paul wasn't really an apostle. *He claims to preach the true gospel, but what he has is a secondhand version of it that he picked up that's twisted and flawed...*<sup>1</sup>

- Paul's saying that's not the case. Just look at my story and my journey...
- Paul was busy preaching the message Jesus had given him long before he had contact with the influential apostles in Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

Now, here's the thing we're going to see as we move into chapter 2, Paul's going to walk through **2 conflicts that he's using to drive home the implications of the gospel**...

#### **Chapter 2, verse 1...**

**2:1** Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.

So, after 17 years, Paul went up to Jerusalem to finally consult with the other Apostles, and when he went, he took *two people* with him. One of them was a guy named **Titus**...

- We'll see why Titus is important in just a minute.

*Here's why he goes to Jerusalem, verse 2:*

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from John Piper, sermon. *This is not man's gospel*. Feb. 13, 1983.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Thielman, "Galatians," in *Romans-Galatians*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, vol. X, ESV Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 590.

**2** I went up according to a revelation and presented to them the gospel I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those recognized as leaders. I wanted to be sure I was not running, and had not been running, in vain.

Paul goes to Jerusalem because he wants to know what they're teaching when it comes to the gospel...

Paul's not going to Jerusalem looking for **validation** because he's concerned that what he's preaching is inaccurate. He's looking for **confirmation** that the Christians and Apostles in Jerusalem are unified around the gospel he's preaching

- That salvation is **by faith alone in Christ alone**.

Paul wants to make sure that he's not laboring to teach this gospel (**faith alone in Christ alone**) only to find out that another version of it is being taught elsewhere that disrupts his efforts...

So, Paul takes **Titus** up to Jerusalem as a **test case** to reveal where the others stand when it comes to the gospel...<sup>3</sup>

So here's what happens, **verse 3**:

<sup>3</sup> But not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

Here's why **Titus** serves as a test case... He was a **Gentile** (*not a Jew—he's a different culture*), and he wasn't circumcised...

- We're going to see why this matters...

Look at **verse 4**:<sup>4</sup> This matter [of circumcision] arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus in order to enslave us.

Circumcision was a **Jewish** thing.... It's a law that God had called his people to in the past, before Jesus, in order to set them apart and remind them of their covenant with God and ultimately point to what Jesus would bring with was the circumcision of the heart...<sup>4</sup>

*What's circumcision? I don't have time to go into detail, but Pastor Aaron does, and he would LOVE to stick around after the service and explain it to you—he has charts and diagrams and all you'll need to understand.*

Anyway, there were also **Judaizers** in Jerusalem (*the false brothers-widespread- Alabama Fans*) who were going around saying that you had to believe in Jesus **and** had to be circumcised in order to be saved...

But the question is, **what will the other Apostles and leaders say?**

**Verse 5:** *Paul says:*

<sup>5</sup> But we did not give up and submit to these people for even a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would be preserved for you. [*Remember he's writing this to the churches in Galatia*]<sup>6</sup> Now from those recognized as important (what they once were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism)—they added nothing to me.

**IOW:** Paul didn't need anything from them; he wanted confirmation that they were unified around **faith alone, in Christ alone**...

<sup>7</sup> On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter was for the circumcised,<sup>8</sup> since the one at work in Peter for an apostleship to the circumcised was also at work in me for the Gentiles.<sup>9</sup> When James, Cephas [Peter], and John—those recognized as pillars—acknowledged the grace that had been given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to me and Barnabas, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.<sup>10</sup> They asked only that we would remember the poor, which I had made every effort to do.

Ah, so here's the verdict! The leaders in Jerusalem agree with Paul, affirming the same gospel that he preaches that salvation comes through **faith alone, in Christ alone!**

- And that circumcision or any other works of the law are **not** necessary for salvation...
  - *Titus was fired up and went away worshiping!*

<sup>3</sup> G. Walter Hansen, *Galatians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series, Ga 2:1.

<sup>4</sup> Romans 2:29; Deu. 30:6

\*Now, what you need to see up to this point as Paul writes all of this out for the churches in **Galatia**, is the purpose of why he's sharing it!

- He's showing them that the very thing that's plaguing them has already been addressed and confirmed that the gospel is **not faith + works = Salvation...**
  - **It's faith alone in Christ alone that = salvation!**

In addition to that, there's another implication of the gospel that we need to see that comes from what happens with Paul and Titus in Jerusalem...

- The gospel is not only for the Jewish people. It's for the **Gentiles** too!
- **IOW**, the good news of Jesus isn't a message for only a certain group of people. It's a message for **all people** that can be received through faith in Jesus' finished work!

### **Illustration:**

**Years ago**, I had the chance to go on a mission trip to Haiti for the second time... We had been working with an **orphanage** there, where I have some very special memories...

- Orphanage was on a hillside in the middle of nowhere... We had to ride in the back of a truck for **2 hours**...

If you needed any supplies, you had to drive two hours back to the city...

- We needed some supplies... Guy that worked there asked if I wanted to drive...

I said sure... So, we hop in this little Nissan that's a straight drive—for the **millennials** *You may not know this, but your car automatically shifts gears for you. For this vehicle, you had to manually shift gears with a stick with a knob on it that came out of the floor...* Crazy right...

- *Used to be a right-of-passage to know how to drive a stickshift.*

So, I start driving, and it's like nothing I have ever seen before...

- No yellow line with my side and your side, no stop lights, no right-of-way, no speed limit... It's a free-for-all...

You have these massive school buses that were giant taxies, and these huge dump trucks, **and a million scooters**...

And everybody's laying on the horn... Not a honk, like **a push and hold**... And they were loud— had to be upgraded!

It was like a real-life **Mario Cart Derby**...

- Instead of the things you shoot out of your car on Mario Care—there's scooters...

Cars everywhere, people all over their horns, and on my tailgate...

- At this point, I'm ticked. This is grounds for massive road rage here in America (*not that I would do that*) ... I'm just getting disrespected up and down the road...

Then the guy I'm with **finally** decides to tell me that, by the way, **no one means it aggressively**... The horn just means I need to get by, I am going to pass you... It's actually viewed as more of a courtesy...

- There are no undertones to the tailgating or anything else...

**\*Here's the thing, anytime 2 different cultures come together in close proximity, there will be misunderstanding, confusion, and conflict.**

And if we're not careful, and **we don't have gospel clarity**, this can lead to **disruption** and **disunity** in the church...

- *That's exactly what we're going to see happen next...*

Paul's going to hold up a **second conflict** for the churches in Galatia, where he **confronts** a major *inconsistency* when it comes to the gospel that's causing a huge divide in the church...

- *Remember, Paul's desire for Galacia is gospel clarity!*

Look at **verse 11**:

**11** But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. **12** For he regularly ate with the Gentiles before certain men came from James. However, when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he feared those from the circumcision party.

Here's the back story: In **Acts 10**, Peter had a dream, and in his dream, God lowered down this big sheet, and in it were all kinds of animals that were formerly deemed as **unclean** by the OT law...

- Like circumcision, there were other laws that God gave His people to set them apart as His people **and** to point to a greater reality, God's holiness, man's sinfulness...
- What animals they interacted with and ate played a part in this

Well, in Peter's dream, God lowers down this sheet, and in it are all the **unclean animals**...

And then God says one of the greatest lines in all of scripture... *I have it framed on my wall*... He says to Peter, **get up, kill and eat!**

- Thanks be to God because we now have:
- Shrimp, crabs, oysters, rabbits, squirrels, if you've never had **rabbit** or **squirrel**, you're missing out on the goodness of God!
- And glory to God, we also get **bacon** and **BBQ!**

And at first, Peter resists and is like I don't know about all this.

*Obviously, he had really never had bacon*... But what God shows him is that because of Jesus, there's no need for this **distinct separation** anymore!

So, Peter had started eating with the Gentiles who, typically ate things that used to be considered "unclean." He's out every out getting *high on the hog- literally*... Crushing some **BBQ** and **Bacon**, loving life with these people...

**But** then, all of a sudden, some **Jews from Jerusalem** show up, and Peter shuts it down... He just stops...

He pulls back from eating with the Gentiles because he's a **coward** who's *intimidated* by these guys from the **circumcision crew**...

- *By the way, I have no idea how they identified themselves!*

And they were coming in holding up the law and telling the Gentiles to conform, in essence, to Jewish culture in order to be real Christians...

*So Peter stops eating with the Gentiles (all non-Jews) and watch what happens next in **verse 13**...* Then the rest of the Jews joined his **hypocrisy**, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. Here's the thing I want you to see, straying away from the truths of the gospel is not a victimless crime...

And what we get here is a sad example of how easily it is to drift from what you know to be true of **God's Word** and conform to the opinions and influence of other people...

*But Paul isn't having it... look at this is **verse 14***

**[Paul says] 14** But when I saw that they were **deviating from the truth of the gospel**, I told Cephas in front of everyone,

*Which, by the way, this had to have been incredibly awkward...*

One of my friends and mentors says this: **Gospel unity** is not the same as **Southern politeness**, where everyone just smiles at everyone and tries to ignore any controversy or unpleasant conversation. Sometimes you have to love people and the gospel enough to get awkward with them.<sup>5</sup>

That's what Paul did... There was a major inconsistency between **what the gospel taught** and **how people were living**, so Paul confronts it...

And he keeps going to make his point clear to Peter and everyone else who's listening... **Look Peter**, "If you, who are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel Gentiles to live like Jews?"

<sup>5</sup> JD Greear, sermon. *Freed to Unite: Freedom in the in-between*. Oct. 1 2017.

What Paul's saying is, Peter, you're a Jew, but you've been happily living like a Gentile in the way you're **eating** and **interacting** with other Gentiles... Now all the sudden, you've stopped... How can you compel the Gentiles to do something that you haven't even been doing??

And Paul keeps going, and he says, **Peter, 15 We are Jews by birth and not "Gentile sinners,"**

He's using **Jewish terminology**...

- *Gentile sinners* is how the Jews would have referred to the Gentiles to point out that they were excluded from the citizenship of Israel and the covenant- they were outside the law, therefore, deemed as sinners.<sup>6</sup>

**But watch the point Paul is making, verse 16...**

**16 and yet** [even though we are citizens of Israel and part of the new covenant and people who previously practiced the law **we know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we** [citizens of Israel who practiced the law] ourselves have believed in Christ Jesus. **WHY?** This was so that we might be **justified by faith in Christ** and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law **no human being will be justified.**

**IOW:** It's not the law that justifies. It doesn't matter what lineage you are or what race you are...

- **You're not found righteous through the law but through Christ!**
- We all need the same thing, and it's one thing JESUS!

**Verse 17**

**17** But if we ourselves are also found to be "sinners" while seeking to be justified by Christ, is Christ then a promoter, of sin? Absolutely not! The **Judaizers** think that eating with Gentiles is sinful because the **law** forbids it. But eating with Gentile Christians is not sinful. Actually, the gospel demands it.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Moo, D. J. (2013). *Galatians* (p. 156). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

<sup>7</sup> Hansen, *Galatians*, Ga 2:17.

Paul's saying if we're being faithful to live out the implications of the gospel, but we're called sinners, you know that's not a legit claim. Jesus would never promote sin!

**Now watch this**, Paul's about to make the shift from "**we**" language to "**I**" language as he begins to apply what's happened in his story to the Galatians... **Remember, he's writing all of this for the purpose of driving home gospel clarity for the churches in Galatia...**

**Paul says: 18** If I rebuild those things that I tore down, I show myself to be a lawbreaker.

Here's what you have to understand about this statement, the law finds its ultimate end in Christ, so to reinstate the law is to discredit and deny the finished work of Jesus...

What would make Paul a transgressor, or a lawbreaker, is to go back to the law, because in that, **he would be denying the work of Jesus...**

He's showing the Galatians **that the same is true for them...** if they believe this false gospel of **Jesus + works of the law=salvation** they're reinstating the law and functionally saying that what Jesus did is worthless because there is something else that they have to do in addition to it.<sup>8</sup>

**Then Paul brings it all together with this in verse 19**

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

The law finds its ultimate end in Christ... Because of Christ, Paul has a different outlook on the law...

**20** I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. **21** I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

<sup>8</sup> Moo, D. J. (2013). *Galatians* (p. 167). (Rom. 10:4; cf. Gal. 3:24–25)

He's pointing to his **identity** in Christ... When he trusted in Jesus' finished work, Paul went from *sinner* to *son*... He was separated from God, and now he's a co-heir with Christ!

And his **new identity** in Christ changes everything about how he now lives!

## Gospel

**And when we don't see that, here's what can happen:**

### 1. Missing the true nature of the Gospel leads to works-based, law-driven living

Works based law drive ideology is burdensome...

- Refer to Titus' situation... This would have been an additional burden for him...
- The beauty of the gospel is that no action is required...

*Don't hold up the very things Jesus died to free you from...*

**Let me show you how this plays out:**

- Appeal for how to interact with non-Christians...
  - Jesus first, not the law...
- Appeal for interaction with Christians... Not just stop doing something bad, but you're missing the gospel...
  - The why behind the what...
  - Help them see the gospel first, then the implications of it...
  - The error comes in when we miss the implications of what the gospel means for us...

Paul addressed the gospel first and then talked about the implications of it! **Galatians 2:14.**

### 2. Missing the true nature of the Gospel will lead to disunity

- When our lives aren't shaped by the gospel, our lives will be shaped by our **preferences** and the **pressing culture** around us...

Paul holds us the reality that the church should be a place of unity that's **brought together** by the blood of Christ and **held together** by the blood of Christ...

There's **no place** for nationalism, or racism, and the oppression that comes with it... Syncretism...

The church should be a **tangible display** of gospel unity... People should look at the church and see different people coming together as a reflection of the work of Jesus...

See, we have to understand that Jesus gave His life for people who were different than Him, culturally, socioeconomically, generationally... In order to be people who are different together for the glory of God!

**The pursuit of unity** should be a natural overflow of the gospel that's happening in the church... We have to lead the way because we have the only answer...

## Conclusion [VAMP]

Call to turn back to the gospel...

Call to repent and believe...

**PRAY**