

There Is One Gospel

Galatians 2:11-21

Pastor Matt Dean

Today... we get a glimpse into an important conflict between two followers of Jesus — and the more important consequence of this confrontation: unity in the gospel of grace.

The issue was hypocrisy — and here is some helpful framework as we think about this together.

Legalism = right behavior with wrong belief

Hypocrisy = right belief with wrong behavior

Faith = right belief with right behavior¹

Peter and Paul were both apostles of Jesus – both called, both empowered... but there was a moment where Peter caved under pressure, where he was clearly in the wrong, and for the sake of the gospel, Paul opposes Peter to his face, in front of others...

Galatians was written about 5 years after this confrontation.... And Peter would write his letters to the church about 15 years after this confrontation... it was a necessary conflict that preserved the clarity of the gospel.

Paul Opposes Peter

¹¹ But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. (GK=CLEARLY IN THE WRONG) ¹² For before certain men came from James (JAMES WAS LEADING THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM), he (PETER) was eating with the Gentiles; but when they (JEWISH CHRISTIANS) 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.** (GK=PLAY-ACTING) 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?”**

Justified by Faith

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.

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. ²⁰ I have been crucified with

¹ Christ Centered Exposition, Galatians 39

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.

(Ga 2:11–21)

The Backstory: Acts 10-16

Gentiles Hear the Good News

³⁴ So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷ you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

⁴⁴ While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days. (Ac 10:34–48). (2016)

In Acts 13-16 – Paul travels through the southern region of Galatia... and here’s an example of the pressure that both he and Peter faced from Jewish people in regards to the gospel reaching non Jewish people...

In Acts 13... ⁴² As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. ⁴³ And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴ The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. ⁴⁶ And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,

"I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. ⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. ⁵¹ But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. ⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (Ac 13:42–52)

Acts 15 The Jerusalem Council

15 But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." ² And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. ³ So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. ⁴ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. ⁵ But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses."

⁶ The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. ⁷ And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. ⁸ And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, ⁹ and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

(Ac 15:1–11).

Justified by Faith

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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. 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.

(Ga 2:15–21)

Today – let's be clear:

A person is NOT justified by their “good” behavior / by the works of the law

A person is justified (declared legally right with God) through faith in Jesus Christ.

Martin Luther, reflecting on this confrontation with Paul and Peter says this, “For it is a great comfort for us to hear that even such great saints sin.... Samson, David, and many other celebrated men who were full of the Holy Spirit fell into huge sins. Job and Jeremiah curse the day of their birth. Elijah and Jonah grow tired of life and pray for death. Such errors and sins of the saints are set forth in order that those who are troubled and desperate may find comfort and that those who are proud may be afraid. No man has ever fallen so grievously that he could not have stood up again. On the other hand, no one has such a sure footing that he cannot fall. If Peter fell, I, too, may fall; if he stood up again, so can I.”²

Paul says it well – he says... THAT I MIGHT LIVE TO GOD...

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.**

What this looks like:

Jesus I can't _____ but you can.....

Jesus I don't have it _____ but you do.....

Jesus I could _____ but you won't do it....

Jesus I'm tempted to _____ but you are better.

² Galatians: Gospel Rooted Living, Todd Willson/Hughes 72

Charles Spurgeon said this... “You cannot work for Christ, except by the Spirit of Christ – and you cannot teach for Christ except to teach Christ”.

Jesus is the message. If you get the gospel – you get Jesus.

Jesus I have been crucified with you.

Jesus I no longer live but YOU Jesus live in me.

The life I now live in this body – I live by faith in YOU Jesus

You are the one who loves me and You are the who gave yourself for me.

Peter caved under pressure. Got confronted. Got humbled. And still trusted that the grace of Jesus was enough... Maybe that's you today. Confronted. Convicted. So be humble. Repent. Trust Jesus.

Take comfort in his words to the church. Peter wrote this 15 years after Paul confronted him.

5 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. ⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. **Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”**

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ **Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. “To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

(1 Pe 5:1–11)

Restore us Jesus.

Confirm us Jesus.

Strengthen us Jesus.

Establish us Jesus.

