

# When Truth Costs You

Sometimes, "speaking the truth in love" has an edge to it that we'd rather not talk about. Sometimes love has to say the costly thing. And if all we ever hear about "truth in love" is the encouragement half, we'll grow up soft — we'll become the church that's so afraid of the hard conversation that we let each other walk right off a cliff and call our silence "grace." So today we go to Antioch, watch Paul do the hard thing, and ask what it cost and why he did it anyway.

## I. When Peter Was Wrong

- A. An ordinary occasion .... could happen to any of us.
  1. Galatians 2:12: he **regularly** ate with the Gentiles before certain men came from James.
  2. This was Peter's *habit*. This wasn't a one-time slip.
- B. When the Jews from Jerusalem came, Peter *withdrew and separated himself*, because he **feared** those from the circumcision party.
  1. Peter knew better. But fear of awkwardness, disapproval, and the like pushed him away.
  2. We know exactly what this is. The fear of rejection is real.
- C. Galatians 2:13: *Then the rest of the Jews joined his **hypocrisy**, so that even **Barnabas** was led astray by their hypocrisy.*
  1. Because of *who he was*, his compromise pulled the entire table with him. The other Jews got up. Even Barnabas!
  2. This is hypocrisy. Peter *knew* the Gentiles were his brothers; he just stopped *acting* like it when the pressure came. Now — what do you do?

## II. When Paul Stood Up

- A. Galatians 2:11: *But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him **to his face** because he stood condemned.*
- B. Galatians 2:14: *But when I saw that they were deviating from the truth of the gospel, I told Cephas **in front of everyone**, "If you, who are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel Gentiles to live like Jews?"*
  1. *To his face* — that means Paul didn't do the cowardly thing, which is to talk *about* Peter instead of *to* him. He walked up to the man himself and said it to him directly.
  2. *In front of everyone* ...the only way to un-preach it was to stand up in front of the same everyone and say: no.
- C. What this cost Paul.
  1. Friendship? Credibility with the Jerusalem church? Division?
  2. Yet, his love drove him to speak up. Something was at stake that was worth more than his comfort.

## III. What Was at Stake

- A. Galatians 2:14: *But when I saw that they were deviating from **the truth of the gospel**, ...*
- B. Peter's actions destroyed the gospel by bringing back works of law.
- C. Galatians 2:16: *by the **works of the law** no human being will be justified.*
  1. Not Christ plus. Christ *alone*.
  2. If Paul had kept the peace, everyone in that room would have gone on believing a lie about how to be right with God.
  3. In this case, silence isn't peace. Silence is complicity. And love has to speak.

## IV. As We Close...

- A. Real love, is sometimes willing to pay the price.
- B. Who is God asking you to walk up to, face to face, in love?