

I. Intro

- A. Focus Scripture: **Gal. 2:20-21**
- B. Background (Map)
 - 1. Letter (Circular)
 - a. Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, Antioch
 - i. Modern-day Turkey
 - b. Paul was an apostle (very similar to modern-day church planter, but multiplied by a million)
 - i. Paul evangelized, planted the churches and moved on
- C. The Crisis
 - 1. Other Teachers had come from Jerusalem (Good)
 - a. The gospel they preached was not good news at all.
 - b. Physical circumcision and keeping Jewish feasts was ALSO required for salvation.
 - c. The love displayed on the cross was not enough.
 - i. Jesus paying the penalty for our sin was not enough.
 - ii. Grace was not enough
 - d. Add some extra credit with the grace of God.
 - i. God is insufficient, so let me help God out.

*Clear perversion, distortion and contradiction of the gospel that Paul had preached and delivered to them.

2. Aim of Galatian Letter (**Gal. 1:3-5**)

*³Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,⁴ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (**Gal.1:3-5**)*

- a. Grace and Peace to You (**Gal. 1:3**)
- b. Glory to God (**Gal. 1:5**)

- c. Jesus gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us (**Gal. 1:4**)
- 3. It's shocking that you would turn away from the One who called you to another gospel (**Gal. 1:6**)

⁶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another... (Gal.1:6)

II. Legalistic Assault

- A. **Accusation:** Paul's authority was bogus.
 - 1. Discrediting the gospel required that Paul's calling be discredited as an apostle.
 - 2. Perverters came from Jerusalem and projected the image that they represented the leadership in Jerusalem.
 - a. Paul wasn't in the "In Crowd", so that invalidates the message in his mouth.
- B. **Paul's Response:** Commissioned by Jesus Himself (**Gal. 1:11-12, 18-24**)
 - 1. Paul had personal relationship with Christ and his calling wasn't simply a product of earthly associations.
 - a. After receiving the call, Paul took his time on the back sides of deserts (without showing his face).
 - b. Took Paul 3 years to show his face to Peter and James.
- C. **Accusation:** Paul's message (the gospel) was incomplete and different from the message of the apostle's in Jerusalem.
 - 1. Discrediting the gospel, required second that the false teachers attack the accuracy in comparison to the "Jerusalem message"
- D. **Paul's Response:** Paul details his experience with the Jerusalem elders.

III. Jerusalem Confirmation: Nip Potential Dissension in the Bud

*¹ Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem **with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.** ² And I **went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.** (Gal. 2:1-2)*

- A. Went to Jerusalem (**after 14 years**) to connect with dear brothers and verify the consistency of the Gospel Message
 1. Went by revelation (**v. 2b**)
 2. Took Barnabas (Jew) and Titus (Gentile) (**2a**)
 3. Communicated the true gospel to the Jerusalem leaders (**v.2c**)

B. They Tried It (**Gal. 2:3-4**):

*³ Yet not even **Titus** who was with me, being a Greek, **was compelled to be circumcised.** ⁴ And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to **spy out our liberty** which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might **bring us into bondage**) (Gal. 2:3-4)*

1. There are those who would if they could, put you in the bondage of personal effort, and outward works....
2. Circumcision was the outward sign of the covenant between God and his people.
3. Nothing changed in the message from the O.T. to the N.T. God was still the God who values circumcision. The problem is that outward circumcision was never His end game. Outward circumcision of the male genitalia was only a sign pointing to inward circumcision of the heart.
 - a. Outward circumcision is good. But it can never please God. Outward circumcision can only serve as a reminder that God is lovingly pursuing us with a razor-sharp scalpel to cut away our flesh.
 - b. God has issue with our hearts.
 - c. Outward rules and relying on personal effort only enslaves. It brings glory to self instead of glory to Jesus.

- d. Performance gospel instead of the true gospel.
- 4. Paul wasn't willing to give an inch when it came to the gospel.

⁵ to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. (Gal. 2:5)

- a. Submitted to the brothers in Jerusalem.
- b. Stayed out of their lanes in respect to the authority that God had already placed in the original apostles.
- c. But when it came to the truth of the gospel, there was nothing to negotiate.
- d. Non-essential doctrines, traditions, liturgical practices that allow for difference of opinion and expression. But the gospel...?

C. Jerusalem Results (Gal. 2:6-9)

⁶ But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.

- 1. Didn't Make Me or Break Me
 - a. Didn't Add anything to the simple message of the gospel that Jesus gave me
- 2. Jerusalem Visit ignited Unity (right hand of fellowship)

*⁷ But on the contrary, when they saw that the **gospel for the uncircumcised** had been committed to me, as the **gospel for the circumcised** was to Peter ⁸ (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), ⁹ and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, **they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship**, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. (Gal. 2:6-9)*

- a. Verified that the gospel to the Gentiles was no different than the gospel to the Jews.
- b. No other gospel. Every other gospel is a false gospel.
 - i. Jesus did all the work. We can add nothing to his all-sufficiency.
 - ii. Jesus still does all the work. We can do nothing to help him out. We only surrender, repent and receive all that He has for us.

IV. Human Nature to shy away from the Implications of the Gospel

A. Peter later came to Antioch to visit.

¹¹ Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; ¹² for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. (Gal. 2:11-12)

- 1. Peter initially fellowshiped freely with those who came to God by grace alone in Christ alone.
 - a. Enjoyed those who had simply trusted Christ for their everything.
 - b. Peter's actions helped to confirm the message that a man is justified by faith. Not human ability to follow rules, customs, etc.
 - i. The gospel is not only to be preached, but lived

B. Peter withdrew from uncircumcised non-Jews (which supported the message of human effort and works).

- 1. Peter started living out another gospel than the one he preached.
 - a. Demonstrated a gospel of works, effort, bigotry, elitism, etc.
- 2. Peter's demonstration (actions) pulled others into the bondage of a false gospel.

¹³ And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. (Gal. 2:13)

- a. The rest of the Jews
- b. Even Barnabas

C. Paul had to withstand Peter: The Gospel's Validity was at Stake (**Gal. 2:14-16**)

¹⁴ But when I saw that they were **not straightforward about the truth of the gospel**, I said to Peter before *them* all, “**If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles** and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? (**Gal. 2:14**)

- 1. Paul wasn't contending with a person (Peter).
 - a. Peter was cool.
 - b. Cool people (godly people) often regress to a false gospel
 - i. It's normal
- 2. Paul contended for the gospel
 - a. If you couldn't live up to the impossible demands of the law, but preach the freedom that Christ alone provides...
 - i. Why would you put others under the same burden that you could never bare?
 - b. If you recognized that your own efforts could never please God, why would you try to make others attempt to please God on their own efforts?

D. Justification by faith alone in Christ Alone (**Gal. 2:15-16**)

¹⁵ We who *are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, ¹⁶ **knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for **by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified**.

- 1. We know good and well that justification is by faith.
 - a. We know that personal works can never please God.
 - b. Faith (trust) in Christ is everything
 - c. Personal works are futile.
 - i. Personally trying to fulfill the perfect requirements of God is impossible.

2. I Won't Go Back (Gal. 2:17-18)

¹⁷ "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸ For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. (Gal. 2:17-18)

- a. There's a clear difference
 - i. Christ is just and the justifier
 - ii. I'm a sinner in desperate need of deliverance

*If I go back to me, it's all bad! Why would I go back to the very thing that was destroying me?

V. Conclusion (Gal. 2:19-21)

¹⁹ For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. (Gal. 2:19)

- A. I died.
 - 1. The law, sin, works is still alive and active.
 - 2. Col. 3:3: "*For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God*"
- B. The True Gospel always returns us to Calvary's Cross
 - 1. Confronted with lavish love of God displayed in Jesus taking on what we so rightly deserved.
 - a. Confronted with the scandal of the cross.
 - i. Declared right although there's nothing inherently right about us.
 - ii. That Jesus would be declared guilty and pay the debt for our sin, although He had no debt and He had no sin.

*In our limited minds, that just doesn't quite add up. But the gospel repeatedly drags us to the enormity of that truth.

2. Confronted with the horror of my sin.
 - a. Confronted with the inadequacy of my best efforts.

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which 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 set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.” (Gal. 1:20-21)

- C. My personal efforts. Personal desires. My personal glorification, God hates.
 1. God doesn't simply want to rehabilitate me.
 2. God doesn't simply want to reform me.
 3. God's greatest desire for me is that I be brutally and unapologetically murdered.
 - a. In place of me, the King of Kings be erected in His rightful place (the throne of my heart).
- D. Life ain't living if Jesus ain't doing the work. (He Lives In Me)
 1. As Jesus does the work, He is magnified.
 - a. He increases, I inevitably decrease.
 2. The truth of the Gospel is that Jesus loves me and gave Himself for Me.
 - a. In every way, it's all about Him.
 - b. In every way, it's all Him.
 - c. And He won't share His glory
 3. I do not set aside (discount) a grace so powerful and try to substitute my efforts in that place.
- E. I sincerely believe that when the gospel is preached... When the gospel message is proclaimed, it changes everything.
 1. **Mark 16:15**