

## Galatians 2

### V.1-2

-Paul describes the story that took place in Acts 15

-Paul and some others were sent to talk to the elders in Jerusalem because the church was in an uproar about the law and circumcision

-At the meeting in Jerusalem, some converted Pharisees try to revert back to the law and say that believers must be circumcised and adhere to the law of Moses

-it is actually Peter who stands up and sets everyone straight

-there aren't many times that church meetings are mentioned in the bible

-but here it was necessary for church leaders to try to avoid a church split

### V.3-4

-Titus understood his freedom in Christ

-Peter writes:

**1Pe 2:16** *Act* as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as bondslaves of God.

-false believers snuck into the church to deliberately try to bring them back into bondage under the law

-this may not sound like a big deal but it is

-reverting back to the law will lead you to the same eternal damnation as worshipping demons or any other cultic or false religion

-but trying to adhere to the law is rooted in the bible and is linked to a great man, Moses, so it sounds and feels like you are doing something noble

-it is in man's nature to try and follow the law.

-we seem to be designed in a way that we feel like we have to earn something

-just accepting salvation as a free gift means we can't be prideful about how good we are

-it means we can't act like we are better than anyone else

**Rom 8:3** For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh

**-Gal 3:10** For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse;...

### V.5

-Paul says they took a stand against those trying to lead them back to the law

-these false teachers chose to come into the wrong church

-if there is anyone they don't want to debate the law with, it's Paul

**Php 3:4** although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:

**Php 3:5** circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;

**Php 3:6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

-but no matter if it's the law, immorality, lying, cultic practices or false religion, it is the job of the shepherd to keep the flock safe

### V.6

-this is a reassuring verse

-no matter how spiritual someone is,

- no matter how many they have lead to the Lord
- no matter if you came to faith on your deathbed
- God has no favorites
- he doesn't love pastors or missionaries or evangelists any more than He loves the school teacher, janitor or mechanic
- interesting that the people of high reputation (probably religious leaders) didn't contribute to his ministry
  - what religious people like to do is to give where they can be seen
  - that was so others can see how "spiritual" they are
  - many of these people are still around today

#### V.7

- God gives each one of us a calling or a place to minister
  - Paul was called by God to witness to the gentiles and Peter was called to witness to the Jewish non believers
  - sometimes we see others doing something for the Lord and think that is what we need to be doing
    - so we try to copy what someone else does but the results are never good
    - don't try to do what someone else does
    - find what God has called you to do
    - ministry takes all different shapes and forms
    - you don't have to be a pastor, evangelist or missionary to be fulfilling your calling from God
    - you can teach and train your kids
    - you can be a witness at work
    - you can use some of the money that you have been blessed with to serve and help others

#### V.8

- it is obviously the same Spirit working in each man to witness to different groups of people through different situations
  - the messengers are different, but if it is the same Spirit, the message will never change
  - this is one message that never needs updating or changing
  - it is as relevant today as it was 2000 years ago
  - this is a good way to test if the message you are hearing from someone is the truth:
    - is it completely consistent with the message of the bible?

#### V.9-10

- Peter, James and John could have easily tried to pull a power trip on Paul
  - they were the ones who had lived with Jesus, walked with him and learned directly from Him
  - but genuine mature believers are not worried about someone else starting a ministry that might compete with theirs
    - all they want is to see lost people get saved
    - churches today shouldn't try to attract as many people as possible just for the sake of having more people
    - minister to the group of people God has called you to
    - like Paul did to the gentiles and the others did to the Jews
- their only concern was to encourage Paul to remember the poor
  - Paul's response shows that he wasn't just planning to put that on his list of things to do
  - he was eager to help those in need

-in Acts 11:28-29 it records that they followed through with that

**Act 11:27** Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

**Act 11:28** One of them named Agabus stood up and *began* to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the *reign* of Claudius.

**Act 11:29** And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send *a contribution* for the relief of the brethren living in Judea.

**Act 11:30** And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

-giving should naturally be a part of a Christians life if they have the means

-**1Jn 3:17** But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

**Jas 2:15** If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,

**Jas 2:16** and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that?

V.11-13

-this is one of the things that makes the bible so great and so believable

-if this book was written by people in order to make Christianity look appealing, they wouldn't have included all the failures of some of the most influential leaders of the faith

-Here we see Peter giving in to peer pressure and actually being ashamed of the gospel

-remember, Peter's ministry is to the Jews

-as long as the Jews weren't around, he had no problem eating and socializing with the gentiles

-but when they showed up, we would no longer eat with them for fear of what the Jews would

think

-haven't we all done this?

-we will hang around with certain people and pretend we really enjoy their company

-but when someone comes along that we think more highly of, we abandon the other person or put all our focus on the "important person"

-or what do you do when you are hanging out with Christian friends and run into people you know from work or from some other secular setting

-is it awkward for you or do you make excuses why you are there?

-Jesus said:

**Mar 8:38** "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

-it is refreshing to see that even spiritual giants like Peter are vulnerable to this

-when you have the influence over people's spiritual lives like Peter did, you better be very solid and consistent

-those that follow you are watching your example

-the Jews joined Peter in his hypocrisy

-if Peter would have done the right thing and kept eating with the gentiles, the Jews might have followed his lead

V.14-15

-Not only does Paul confront Peter, but he does it in front of every one

-this is a big deal and Paul isn't going to pretend everything is ok

-standing for your convictions is something that the world has a hard time with today

- we are used to people telling little white lies, playing both sides and acting like politicians
- and if they get confronted at all, it's usually done in private to avoid causing a scene
- Sometimes causing a scene is exactly what's needed
- calling Peter out like that forced him to make a decision on where he stood and what he

believed

-We should all listen carefully to what Paul tells Peter

-he basically says: "if you are a believer but you live like the rest of the world, how are you going to convince the rest of the world to become believers?"

-if there is no difference in the way we act and live and the way our non-believing coworkers and friends live, how do we plan on influencing them for Christ?

V.16

-if anyone has authority to speak about trying to be saved by the Law, it's Paul

-describing his background, he says:

**Php 3:4** although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:

**Php 3:5** circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;

**Php 3:6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

-this is a verse that is worth highlighting

-"...by the works of the Law, no flesh will be justified"

-Stop trying to earn God's favor

-this is one of the hardest truths about the gospel: we don't have to DO anything to earn God's forgiveness and our place in heaven

-it's not about following the Law and keeping a bunch of rules

-when Jesus said

**-Joh 14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."**

-He wasn't referring to the Law, He was referring to his commandment

**Joh 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another"**

V.17

-since we say we are justified or righteous in Christ, but we all know that we are still sinners, does that mean that Jesus is ok with sin?

-In no way is Jesus ok or accepting of sin

**1Jn 3:5** You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

-He knew that we were unable to deal with our sin ourselves

-that was His whole reason for coming to Earth and dying on the cross

-He doesn't tolerate sin, He dealt with it once and for all at the cross

-unfortunately, we still live in our fleshly bodies in a sinful world

-we are forgiven of our sins but that doesn't give us a license to live however we want to.

**1Pe 2:16** Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as bondslaves of God.

V.18-19

-Paul used to be bound by the law

-When Jesus saved him, that part of his life was destroyed

**2Co 5:17** Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

- if he goes back to that, then sinning against God
- Our conversions weren't as dramatic as Paul's
  - but the same thing applies to us
  - instead of the law, maybe we were bound to lying, dishonesty, immorality, addiction, violence
  - if we choose to go back to what God has delivered us from, we are sinning
- notice Paul says he died to the Law so now he can live to Christ
  - when you are bound to something, it's like a marriage or a covenant
  - in a marriage, the covenant lasts as long as both parties are living
  - once one of the two dies, the other is free of any obligation to the covenant that bound them to the other person
  - when we die to ourselves, our fleshly desires, the law, now we are completely free to live for Christ

#### V.20

- Paul sums up everything he's been saying in verse 20
  - this is a huge commitment
  - if you have been crucified, you are dead!
  - the old you is gone
  - this doesn't mean you are a pre-programmed robot now or that you can't make your own decisions
  - but you no longer live just to satisfy your own goals and desires
  - now it is Christ living in you
  - this doesn't mean you become perfect overnight, but you surrender your will to His
  - if you are like me, you may wonder how Christ can be living in you, as many mistakes as you make

-Paul struggled with this exact same thing. Listen to what he says:

**Rom 7:15** For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

**Rom 7:16** But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good.

**Rom 7:17** So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

**Rom 7:18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not.

**Rom 7:19** For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

**Rom 7:20** But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

**Rom 7:21** I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

**Rom 7:22** For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

**Rom 7:23** but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

**Rom 7:24** Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

**Rom 7:25** Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

#### V.21

- so if you have ever had any hope of holding to the law or to think that by doing good, you are somehow pleasing God, Paul says that you are nullifying the grace of God
  - if any one could be saved by the law, then Christ died needlessly

-the law was never intended to save, but to point out humanity's need for a savior

-in the garden before Jesus went to the cross, he prayed:

**Mat 26:39** And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying,  
"My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

-what He was saying is "if there is any other way that mankind can be saved from hell without Me going to the cross, let's do that"

-But there was no other way so He went to the cross