

Today's study: Ga 2:11–21 (ESV) Apostolic confidence**1. As we've seen Paul and his message is under attack in Galatia**

- A. False teachers have arrived from Jerusalem trying to bring the Galatian believers back under the law
 - 1). Teaching that salvation was a combination of faith in Christ and our own works
- B. To promote their message they were attacking Paul on two fronts – his calling and his message
 - “He is not a man called or sent by God therefore he is teaching a message not given by God”
 - 1). So we have been seeing Paul fight back
 - a). To prove He is an Apostle commissioned personally by Jesus Christ
Who is proclaiming a message that was given to him by God

2. Paul's defense of his ministry and message so far

- A. Chapter 1 – he shows his *Apostolic credentials*
 - 1). His calling and message came directly from God and not from man
- B. Chapter 2:1-10 – he shows his *Apostolic confirmation*
 - 1). While man had nothing to do with his call into ministry and the message he proclaimed
The Apostles in Jerusalem did confirm that calling and message were from God
- C. This week. Chapter 2:11-21 – his *Apostolic confidence*
 - 1). Paul recalls how he exercised Apostolic authority over the mighty Peter
 - a). Proving his authority was equal to the other Apostles – even Peter!

3. Outline

- A. No more Pork for Peter
- B. No more Patience from Paul
- C. The Problem of Pleasing God through our Performance

I. NO MORE PORK FOR PETER

Ga 2:11–13 (ESV) But when Cephas (**Peter**) came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ⁽¹²⁾ For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they 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.

1. Background

- A. This great Apostle (Peter) comes into the church in Antioch that is exploding!
 - 1). Something happens no one would expect – a *public clash* between these two great men
 - 2). It's all over Peter separating himself from the Gentiles because of what they were eating

Peter's Problem: He was being disobedient to God**1. Acts 10 – Peter is staying in Joppa – he has a vision from God**

3 x's sheet lowered down from heaven with all kinds of animal's the law said was unclean

3 x's Peter hears God say “Rise Peter kill and eat”

3 x's Peter responds “I can't - I've never eaten anything impure or unclean”

God responds “Do not call anything impure that God has called clean”

- A. Immediately 3 men come to the door seeking Peter to go with them to the house of Cornelius (a gentile)
 - 1). He is interested in hearing the Christian message – God tells Peter to go with them

When Peter arrives at the house of Cornelius – we see he got the message of the vision:
Ac 10:28 (ESV) And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to

associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, *but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.*

Thought: Up until then Peter would have never eaten with a gentile – for at least two reasons

- A. The OT dietary law did not permit him to eat what gentiles ate
- B. AND Jewish tradition and prejudice did not allow him to associate with gentiles in this way
 - 1). A Jew eating with a gentile was considered to be an evil act
- C. BUT Peter understood from the vision that God had overturned all of that
 - 1). Plus he had been with Jesus when Jesus proclaimed that all foods were clean (Mark 7:19)

Transition: When Peter came to Antioch he proved by his actions he believed all that

- A. He ate with the Gentiles – ate what they ate and loved it – “More bacon please”
 - B. So the church is enjoying unity – and the joy that produced
- But suddenly all that changed! Why?

2. Peter was afraid of man

Ga 2:12 (ESV) For before *certain men* came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; *but when they came he drew back and separated himself*, fearing the circumcision party.

- A. these legalists falsely claiming to have been sent by James in Jerusalem come in
 - 1). Trying to impose the law on these gentile churches
- B. Peter saw them – was intimidated by them – compromised what he knew to be true to please them
 - 1). He separated himself from the Gentiles – and started to live like he used too
- C. Here is the problem of peer pressure! Can cause even this great Apostle to compromise

Thought: We are always making the choice who will we fear more – God or man

- A. Fear man and you will end up compromising

Pr 29:25 (ESV) The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.

- B. But when we care about what God thinks more than man we are set free

CHS: He who fears God has nothing else to fear.

- 1). You just submit to Him – trust Him – you stop worrying about the rest

Transition: So Peter was a man pleaser – Paul wasn’t – see that in his willingness to confront Peter

No More Pork for Peter

II. NO MORE PATIENCE FROM PAUL

Ga 2:11 (ESV) But when Cephas came to Antioch, *I opposed him to his face...*

Ga 2:14 (ESV) 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?”

The Public Confrontation

1. In front of everybody Paul takes on the mighty Peter

Question: Why publicly? When do you confront privately and when do you confront publicly?

- A. This was an open sin that was sweeping the whole church into it – the sin was public

Look what it’s doing to the church: Ga 2:13 (ESV) And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that *even Barnabas* was led astray by their hypocrisy.
- B. If Peter had sinned privately Paul would have confronted him privately
 - 1). But because his sin was public and affected the whole church – the whole had to be involved
 - a). The whole needed to see the sinfulness of what was happening

2. Here is the argument

Ga 2:14 (ESV) ...“If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

“Peter you know you’re not being straight with the truth. You KNOW you can eat with Gentiles. I know you know because you’ve been doing it ever since you got here. Now this group of legalist show up and suddenly you’re Mr. Law! Suddenly you separate yourself from your Gentile brothers and sisters!”

“It’s a bit hypocritical isn’t it? If you yourself felt no need to live like a Jew before these legalists arrived - why are you now trying to make the Gentiles live like Jews after they’ve arrived?”

“If you yourself felt no need to observe the dietary laws of the OT – Why are you now trying to force the Gentiles to observe them?”

Transition: So Paul rebukes Peter over His actions (v. 14)

A. Now in v. 15-16 Paul uses the opportunity to instruct the church on justification

The Doctrinal Clarification

1. Paul uses criticism in v. 15 to expose the error in Peter’s thinking

Ga 2:15 (ESV) We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;

- A. There was still a lingering prejudice in the heart of the legalistic Jew (and in Peter’s)
 - 1). They still thought the Jew were spiritually superior to the Gentiles
 - 2). They were God’s holy people the Gentiles were second class
- B. Paul uses criticism to expose Peter’s heart – you’re thinking like that again – open your eyes

Transition: In v. 16 Paul reminds Peter how a person is saved

- A. And what you eat or don’t eat has nothing to do with it

Ga 2:16 (ESV) 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*.

1. Justification defined: Such an important word for the Christian

- A. A legal word that comes out of the courtroom = *To declare righteous. To declare not guilty*

2. Justification is based on an amazing two-fold work of God

- A. Where he moves the sin and guilt of the believing sinner into the account of Christ
And applies what Christ did in His death as full payment for what that sinner deserves
- B. At the same time He takes the righteousness Christ earned in His life of perfect obedience
 - 1). Moves that over to our account and declares us to be righteous because of what He earned
- C. The believer now stands before God clothed in the righteousness of Christ – with nothing against them
 - 1). Though our sins were as scarlet in Christ they are white as snow

3. Paul reasons with Peter

“What you really believe and how you’re living doesn’t line up. There’s a disconnect there.”

- A. See the word “We” twice – We – “Peter you and I”

Ga 2:16 (ESV) 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.

- 1). *We know* a man is not justified (declared to be righteous) by keeping the law
We understand it is a free gift given to any who will place their faith in Christ
- 2). Therefore *we have* put our faith in Christ to be made right with God
- B. Quite a statement at the end of v. 16 – all inclusive – sweeping everybody in
Ga 2:16 (ESV) ...because by works of the law *no one will be justified*.
 - 1). Nobody will be made right with God through their own works – own performance
 - a). Their own morality. Service for God. Church attendance
 - 2). The law – keeping a set of rules - is unable to save anybody

- a). Whether it is the Mosaic law found in the OT
Or the Islamic law found in the Koran
Or any other kind of legal system – based on man’s performance

Point: The problem is – God demands righteousness – righteousness is perfect compliance to the law

- A. And we keep breaking the law – we keep falling short
- B. Paul in Romans 7 “Oh wretched man that I am. I keep doing things I don’t want to do”
 - 1). I know how I should live – I know how I want to live = the desires of the new heart
 - a). But I never hit that perfect standard – there are these inconsistencies
 - b). I miss my devotions now and then – still get angry now and then
Have impure thoughts now and then
- C. His place of peace – Praise be to Jesus Christ – for there is no condemnation for those who are in Him
“There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ”
 - 1). Why? They stand before God clothed in Christ’s righteousness
 - a). God views them through Christ’s perfect performance – clothed in His righteousness

4. The argument so far

- A. Peter you know man is not justified by the works of the law
AND you proved you believed that by how you chose to live when you first came to Antioch
 - 1). You ate with the Gentiles – ate what they ate – You were a bacon lover!
 - 2). You were enjoying that wonderful freedom Christ gained for you on the cross
 - 3). But these legalists came in and to please them you’ve picked up that old list of rules again
- B. Your acting like God accepts you through your works rather than by Christ work
 - 1). AND through your actions your damaging the message of grace
And your ripping apart this wonderful church that was built upon that message of grace

Transition: Paul now points out the shocking implications arising from Peter’s actions

- A. Peter the way you’re living validates the message of these legalists
AND there are two implications that flow out of legalism that are immense here

The Shocking Implications

Ga 2:17 (ESV) 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!

The argument: If the teaching of the legalist is correct and your actions make it seem like they are

1. First implication: Justification in Christ by faith alone leads a person into sin

- A. Rather than being made right with God they are actually becoming greater sinners – why?
 - 1). Because it causes them to forsake the law
They start doing things like eat what Gentiles eat – those things the law said was *unclean*

Transition: So Peter’s actions indicated that the message of grace actually lead to greater sin not righteousness

- A. But it gets worse – there is a second implication

2. Second implication: This teaching implies Jesus promoted sin

Ga 2:17 (ESV) But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, *is Christ then a servant of sin?* (NIV - Does that mean Christ promotes sin?)

- A. That’s the only conclusion you could arrive at if you believe this legalistic teaching was correct
 - 1). Because Christ declared all foods to be clean
AND reinforced that to Peter with the vision of all the animals lowered on that sheet
 - 2). But if all foods aren’t clean – like the Judaizers taught – and Peter confirmed by his actions

- a). Then Christ is a promoter of sin NOT righteousness – He is causing you to break the law

Point: Paul says “Peter you can’t have it both ways

- A. If you agree with their teaching – You declare Christ and His teaching leads to sin
- B. Paul’s conclusion at the end of v. 17 – Does Christ lead us into sin? ***Certainly not!***
“The thought is horrendous isn’t it Peter? But that is what your actions are proclaiming!”

Transition: Now he hammers the thought home in v. 18

- A. It is not Christ who leads us into sin when we embrace justification by faith alone
 - 1). We become sinners when we turn away from grace and embrace the law again

Ga 2:18 (ESV) For if I rebuild what I tore down, ***I prove myself to be a transgressor.***

1. Peter, Christ doesn’t promote sin (we both know that)

- A. The truth is YOU are promoting sin
- B. By refusing to eat with the Gentiles – you’re rebuilding what was once destroyed (system of works)
 - 1). Rebuilding what you know God tore down in Christ at the cross
 - 2). So you have become a promoter of sin – You are leading people away from grace
 Leading them back to approaching God through their own performance rather than Christ’s

Transition: He finishes his argument by showing the foolishness of returning to the law

III. THE FOOLISHNESS OF RETURNING TO THE LAW

We Died to the Law So We Could Live for God

Ga 2:19 (ESV) For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.

1. The law (any set of rules) cannot produce life in us

- A. What law does is produce a desire to rebel instead
Ro 7:5 (ESV) For while we were living in the flesh, ***our sinful passions, aroused by the law,*** were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.
 - 1). How sinful we are – hear command – “Oh yeah. Make me!” – produced desire to do opposite
- A. The legalist is under a system that can’t work – we naturally don’t like rules

Point: God’s solution – kill that old me that acts like that – put it on the cross with Christ

Isn’t that what he says: Ga 2:20 (ESV) ***I have been crucified*** with Christ.

- A. In a spiritual sense when Christ died on that cross I died with Him – that old rebellious me
Ro 6:6 (ESV) ***We know that our old self was crucified with him (why?)*** in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.
 - 1). So that we could live for Him!
- B. Amazing solution – Kill that old me that religious me that related to God through my performance
 - 1). AND create a new me by grace that relates to God through Christ performance
 That views everything through Him and what He did to earn my acceptance and blessing
 - 2). Create a new me that desires to serve Him – that is motivated by love because of what He did
2 Co 5:17 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
- C. So I am a new man – that old rebellious me that has been put to death – can no longer bully me
 - 1). I am a new me that wants to live for God and desires God

Transition: But I have to appropriate that new life - watch how this works itself out

We Connect to This New Life by Faith

The source of life: Ga 2:20 (ESV) I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, *but Christ who lives in me...*

1. Christ is alive in me now – He wants to live His life out through me

- A. John 15 – I am the vine and you (the believer) are the branches
 - 1). The vine sends life into the branches and they produce fruit – everything necessary is provided
 - 2). The branches don't strive – *they receive and they produce*

Question: But how does that happen? How is this life of Christ worked out through me?

Ga 2:20 (ESV) 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...*

- A. I connect to that new life (that risen life) by faith – not by law
- B. **Faith** = Reliance. Dependence
 - 1). We live out our Christianity by a continual dependence upon Christ for all of it
Yielding moment by moment to His will and depending upon His power

Thought: This is so exciting to me! The Spirit produces this life in me – living it out through me

- A. God constantly calls me to do things I can't do – love like He loved – forgive like He forgave
 - 1). This frees me to admit – I can't do that – but through your Spirit you can do it in me
 - 2). So I depend upon you to live your life through me right now
 - a). Jesus you're not afraid of these circumstances that look so dark right now
Live your peace through me – I trust you to do that!
 - b). You're not a helpless victim to the temptations of this world
Live your victory through me – I rely on you to enable me against temptation
 - c). Loving others was not a problem for you
Live your life of love out through me right now

- B. I make the choice to live for Him – step out to obey
Depending upon the Spirit to meet me at that point of obedience with the necessary power
 - 1). As I do that I walk in the Spirit's power not my own!
 - 2). You must understand that – why? - because you can do nothing apart from Him

Transition: The old us has died – the new us is born – receive that by faith and begin to apply it

- A. One more we have a new motivation to live like this

Grace Motivates by Love. The Law Motivates Through Fear

Ga 2:20 (ESV) 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.*

1. Law is cold and harsh – no warmth – lacks love

It commands you to do things but cannot give you the desire to do them – the power to do them

- A. But the Christian serves God out of an inflamed heart – ignited by the truth of what He has done
 - 1). Ignited by His willingness to die for me – a sinner like me
1 John 4:19 (NKJV) We love Him because He first loved us.
- B. I see what He's done for me and I fall in love with Him – I desire to please Him
 - 1). This passion for God becomes the motivation for service
 - 2). This lifts Christianity above mere religion
- C. Law motivates by fear – *do this or die!*
Grace motivates by love – *I've done this so live!*

Transition: So returning to the law is foolish

- A. Because the life of Christ is lived out through us by faith NEVER by law
 - 1). By depending upon Him to do in us and through us what we can't do

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- B. Because the law uses fear to motivate – but grace motivates by love
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Returning to The Law Dishonors the Death of Christ

Ga 2:21 (ESV) I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, *then Christ died for no purpose.*

1. If you could be saved by your own efforts Christ died in vain! Needlessly. Why?

- A. He threw His life away doing something man could have done for themselves
- B. The argument; If you could be saved by keeping a list – being good enough – what you eat or don't eat
Then why would Christ have to go to the cross? Why would the Father put Him there?
- 1). If plan A worked – man's works could earn them heaven
 Why would God provide a plan B – and crush His Son on the cross! That's just cruel

Point: The only possible answer – God put Christ on the cross because there was no other way

- A. Because sinful man could not live in a way that would earn salvation
- 1). They were helplessly and hopelessly lost – they needed to be rescued
- B. Yet the religions of the world can look at this truth and say
 “Just give us a list – do's and don'ts – we'll keep that and be fine – God will accept our sincerity”
- 1). No He won't - He will accept the death of Christ and faith in His work ALONE!
- a). If there was any other way – He would have never sent His Son to the cross
- b). And to come any other way is to treat the precious blood of Christ with contempt
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CONCLUSION

Paul presents an airtight case against Peter's actions and against legalism

1. We see the courage a leader must have to confront error in the church

2. We saw the hypocrisy of Peter in turning back to the law

- A. And we see the reason he did so – he allowed the fear of man to overpower the truth he knew

3. We saw Paul's reminder of how we are saved

- A. It is justification by faith alone – Trusting in Christ's work not our own

4. We saw how foolish it is to go back under the law

- A. We have died to the law – we now live by faith in Christ
 Depending upon Him to live His life through us
- B. The reason we want to live that life is not fear but love
- 1). Grace motivates us by love – I see what God has done – that creates a desire to serve Him

5. Paul finishes up with a devastating blow to legalism

- A. If man can earn salvation through his own works then Christ died in vain
- 1). We dishonor Him and His work when we approach God through any other way than faith