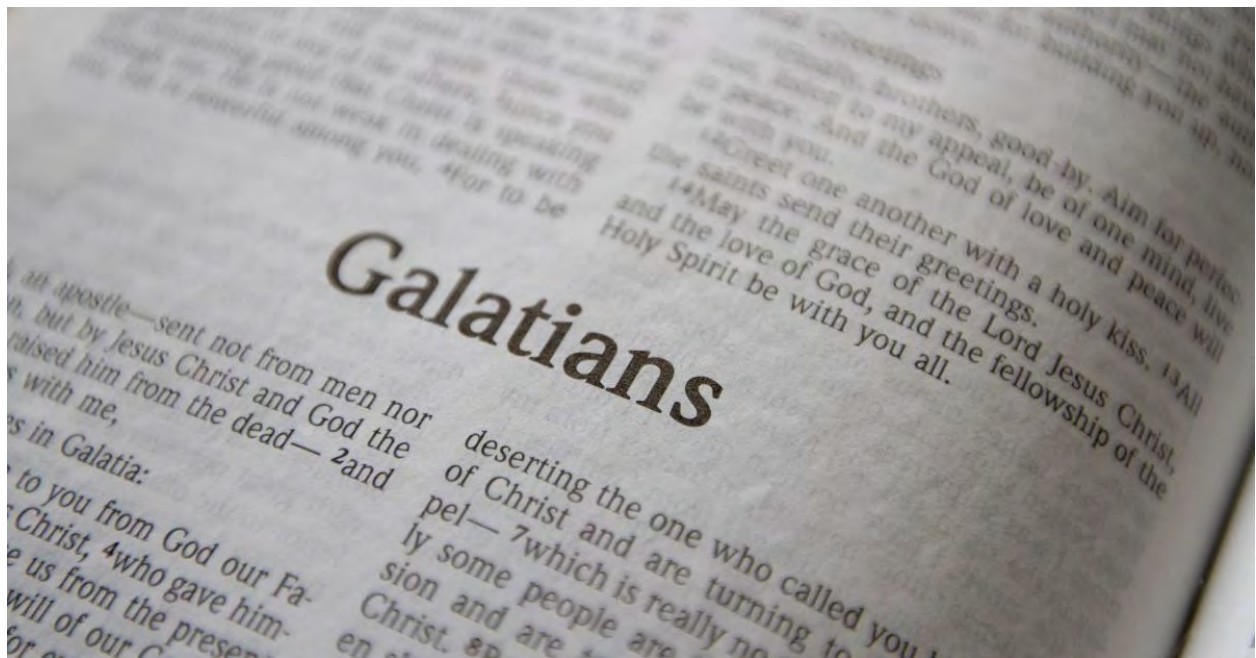


“CHRIST LIVES IN ME”

GALATIANS 2



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Galatians 2

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Galatians 2: Introduction

The Galatians, we learned from chapter 1, were beginning to drift from Paul's teaching to "another gospel" (1.6-9). Galatians 2 provides more information about that "different gospel" (1.6), where we learn that it had to do with the Judaizing insistence that merely believing in Jesus was not enough to be saved. One had to believe *and* submit to circumcision. Thus, theirs was a gospel of Jesus + circumcision.

But any "gospel" that is Jesus + anything else is not the Gospel but a perversion of it (1.7).

So, in chapter 2 Paul insisted on the need to stand firm in the true Gospel and not to yield to any other demands or temptations.

Christ lives in us. We must be unbending in our commitment to Him.

We hope you find this study of the book of Galatians to provide abundant stimulation for your walk with and work for the Lord.

For His glory and praise!

T. M. Moore, Principal
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1 Checkpoints

Pray Psalm 25.4-6.

Show me Your ways, O LORD;

Teach me Your paths.

Lead me in Your truth and teach me,

For You *are* the God of my salvation;

On You I wait all the day.

Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses,

For they *are* from of old.

Sing Psalm 25.4-6.

(Festal Song: [Rise Up, O Men of God](#))

Make me to know Your ways, teach me Your paths, O LORD!

My Savior, all day long I wait and seek You in Your Word.

Remember mercy, LORD, and steadfast love to me!

But all my sins before You let them not remembered be!

Read and meditate on Galatians 2.1-3.

Preparation

1. Why did Paul go to Jerusalem? Who was with him?

2. How long into his ministry was he before he did this?

Meditation

Paul had been to Jerusalem once already, three years after his conversion (1.18), when Peter and James confirmed his faith and preaching. Though Paul can sometimes seem pretty sure of himself and without need of anyone to tell him what's what, we note that, from the beginning of his walk with the Lord he submitted to others who knew and loved Jesus as he did.

Fourteen years after that first visit, Paul returned. By now he had been preaching among Jews and Gentiles in southern Asia Minor (Acts 13, 14). False teachers from a sect of Jewish believers followed him around and tried to convert the new believers to Judaism by insisting that circumcision was as important as faith in being saved. That is, one could only be saved by faith plus works, faith in Jesus and the work of being circumcised.

Paul and Barnabas disputed this, of course, and they decided to take the matter to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for an authoritative ruling (Acts 15). Initially, Paul met with a small gathering of faithful saints, to make sure he was right about what he was preaching (Gal. 2.2). Titus, a Greek was with him and Barnabas, and the Judaizers, true to their false view, insisted that he be circumcised. Paul refused. The matter was then taken into the broader arena of elders and apostles for debate. Paul's side prevailed.

Paul was certain the Gospel he was preaching was the one Jesus had taught him personally. Just so,

we can be certain that the Word of God, through which Jesus teaches us, is reliable, true, and indispensable for sanctification and good works (Jn. 17.17; 2 Tim. 3.15-17). But even Paul checked his teaching with those who were in Christ before Him. We should do the same. The treasury of Scripture and of orthodox Christian teaching—samples of which we provide for you each day—are both important in our walk with the Lord. The Spirit uses both these checkpoints to keep us from drifting—like the Galatians were—from the truth.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

What are our modern-day litmus tests for Christianity?

What is it that divides believers today?

What extra *Buy one Get one free* notion are we adding to the Gospel?

Is it baptism? You know, were you sprinkled or dunked?

How about communion? Is there a set age-limit before a baptized believer is eligible?

How about your beliefs on the Second Coming of Christ? Do you think we'll all be stamped with 666 and mayhem will reign for a thousand years, or is Jesus coming back with a shout very soon?

What about skirt length? Above or below the knee?

Or here's a zinger, what about the use of percussion whilst singing?

Really, there are so many "circumcision choices" for us one hardly knows where to begin.

All this without even adding in the questionable use of tobacco, alcohol, or playing cards.

When we investigate the perfect Law of God, we do not see one mention of any of the above topics (Ex. 20.1-17). Whole heart and life love for God, and then our fellowman, is what the Law includes.

And the glorious Gospel is not fueled or compelled by anything other than Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and His current reigning Kingship over us. "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4.12). "I AM the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn. 14.6).

How do we humans manage to mess up and obfuscate a Truth so plain, clear, and beautiful? "Christ Jesus, being in the form of God...made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men...being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the Name which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2.5-11).

Circumcision, and all its modern-day equivalents, are not mentioned. Only Jesus.

His love. His beauty. His courage. His gift. His power. His majesty. His glory. His goodness. Only Jesus.

He is the only way to salvation. He is the only reason for our righteousness.

We cannot add any behaviors to get saved. We cannot add any manmade assets to enhance our sanctification.

We can only trust and obey.

There is enough that we are wholeheartedly supposed to do (Eph. 2.8-10; Jn. 14.15; Ex. 20.1-17) that we need not add on any ungodly encumbrances—extra-curricular rules—that divide the Body

of Christ or add burdens that do not need to be carried by God's children (Matt. 23.4, 23).

If there is any place for circumcision, it is this: "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul that you may live" (Deut. 30.6).

Please check this teaching by the Scriptures Old and New: they are an accessible Checkpoint, ready for you to delve into—the "Word of God, through which Jesus teaches us, is reliable, true, and indispensable for sanctification and good works."

Reflection

1. What is the Gospel, as you would share it with a non-Christian friend?
2. When we say that salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life are all of grace, what are we saying about works?
3. Good works of various kinds have a place in the Gospel, but where?

Observe the apostle's faithfulness in giving a full account of the doctrine he had preached among the Gentiles, and was still resolved to preach, that of Christianity, free from all mixture of Judaism. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Galatians 2.1-10*

Pray Psalm 25.8-15.

Thank the Lord for daily teaching you from His Word and for those faithful friends and teachers who have helped you along the way in your walk with and work for the Lord.

Sing Psalm 25.8-15

(Festal Song: [*Rise Up, O Men of God*](#))

Upright and good are You, You lead us in Your way.
The humble You instruct in truth and guide him day by day.

The paths of God are all of love and faithfulness.
All they who keep His covenant the LORD will surely bless.

For Your sake, LORD, forgive. All they who fear You, LORD,
shall know Your blessings day by day and follow in Your Word.

Your friends are they who fear and seek Your holy face;
Your covenant with them You share and save them by Your grace.

2 Unbending

Pray Psalm 119.129-131.

Your testimonies are wonderful;
Therefore my soul keeps them.
The entrance of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple.
I opened my mouth and panted,
For I longed for Your commandments.

Sing Psalm 119.129-131.

(No Other Plea: [*My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*](#))

Your testimonies, LORD are sweet; I hide them in my soul.
Your words give light unto my feet, and make my thinking whole.
I open wide my mouth to You: LORD, feed me with Your Word!
I vow that all You say I'll do: I love Your precepts, LORD.

Read Galatians 2.1-5; meditate on verses 4, 5.

Preparation

1. How did Paul regard the “false brethren”?
2. How did he respond to their demands?

Meditation

What had “occurred” was that “false brethren”—members of the sect of the Judaizers—upon learning that Titus was Greek, had no doubt asked whether he had been circumcised and insisted that, if not, he must be.

Paul did not regard these men as true believers. The reason is simple: They did not believe the Gospel as he and the other apostles taught it. The Judaizers taught a version of “Jesus +” which, in the end, amounts to a form of salvation by works. In Paul’s mind, no one who believed and taught that way could be a Christian.

Why not? Because Jesus-plus-works of any kind makes salvation a matter of one’s own doing. Either Jesus saves us, by grace through faith, or he does part of the work and we finish it up by whatever. Believing this way detracts from the uniqueness of Jesus’ work and puts us on the glory platform with Him. We share the gold medal of salvation because we both had a hand in it.

No way says Paul. Not for a moment. To give into this demand would have put Paul and Titus and everyone else in bondage to the lie. They would have forfeited their freedom to rest in Jesus and His work alone for salvation. And their message would have been fatally compromised.

Paul was unbending. Not “even for an hour”—perhaps to think about it?—would he yield, but he told them right to their faces, immediately, “No way!” By boldly resisting this temptation—after all, they were in Jerusalem, on the home turf of these slick deceivers—Paul preserved his integrity and

his message. And he insured that his ministry to folks like the Galatians would continue unimpeded and uncompromised.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

When Ahasuerus the king had a bit of a kerfuffle with his wife Vashti, he sought out wisdom from the wise men in his court “who understood the times (for this was the king’s manner toward all who knew law and justice...)” (Esther 1.13).

And Paul’s response to the Thessalonians’ bad decision-making, was to praise the Bereans’ good: “These were more fair-minded (noble KJV) than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17.11).

“To know wisdom and instruction,
To perceive the words of understanding,
To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity;
To give prudence to the simple,
To the young man knowledge and discretion—a wise man will hear and increase learning,
and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel... (Prov. 1.2-5).
“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and
The knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Prov. 9.10).

When we are grounded in the Word of God, daily seeking His wisdom and conversing with Him in prayer, when our every thought and decision is made within the thinking realm of His Kingdom and glory, then we will never be led astray no matter how stealthy, sly, or sneaky our enemy happens to be.

We must not be “low information” Christians: those who behave like children, “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...” (Eph. 4.14).

For example, there are many today that fall for the ploy of “tolerance” as opposed to following God’s Law of loving liberty. They believe the lie that says liberty means to tolerate anything and everything that someone wants to do; that this is showing love—but it is not. Just because your child really, really wants to drink poison does not mean you must allow it—tolerate it—which would not be showing love, but hatred.

However, unless we have the barometer of the Law of God deeply imbedded in our hearts and minds, we will be led astray by whatever seems to be the absurdity du jour. If only Christians would lovingly stand for the Law and live our lives accordingly, we would have a tremendous witness just by keeping it.

“Those who forsake the law praise the wicked,
But such as keep the law contend with them” (Prov. 28.4).

We must be as unbending as Paul: to preserve our integrity and our message and to make sure, above all, that our ministry to those in our Personal Mission Field will “continue unimpeded and uncompromised”. To “deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to

the slaughter” (Prov. 24.11).

The power to do this work comes directly from the Holy Spirit; and the wisdom to do it comes through the Word of God: “I will run the course of Your commandments, for You shall enlarge my heart.

Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end” (Ps. 119.32, 33).
Unbent.

Reflection

1. What’s one way you have been growing in the Lord and in His Word of late?
2. Can you think of a situation in which you might be tempted to “bend” a little in your faith? How can you avoid that happening?
3. Whom will you encourage today to continue “unbent” in devotion to the Lord and His Word?

*There had crept into the church of Christ men who were preaching not Christ but Judaism, but who were nevertheless pretending to be Christians because that way they could make a greater impression on the simpler sort of people. For that reason Paul compares them with saboteurs who worm their way into castles and cities in order to betray the freedom of the army or of the cities to the enemy. Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), *Commentary on Paul’s Epistles**

Pray Psalm 119.132-136.

Thank the Lord for His Word. Pray that His Word will guide your every step today. Pray for specific situations and for the counsel of God’s Word to guide you in them.

Sing Psalm 119.132-136.

(No Other Plea: [*My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*](#))

Look on me, LORD, with mercy as on all who love Your Name.
Direct my steps to keep Your paths, and all Your Word proclaim.
Yes, let Your Word my shelter be; rule over all my soul,
and keep me from iniquity; my every way control.

Redeem me from oppression, LORD, from those who hate Your way,
that I may keep Your holy Word and serve You day by day.
Shine on me with Your glorious face; Your servant, LORD am I,
so teach me by Your holy grace; Your Word to me supply.

LORD, see the world in lawlessness, how love has grown so cold.
Look down, O LORD, to save and bless; let grace and peace take hold.
Though many look on You with awe, rejoicing in Your Word,
I weep for those who void Your Law and spurn Your grace, O LORD.

3 Pillars Together

Pray Psalm 68.26-31.

Bless God in the congregations,
The Lord, from the fountain of Israel.
There is little Benjamin, their leader,
The princes of Judah and their company,
The princes of Zebulun and the princes of Naphtali.
Your God has commanded your strength;
Strengthen, O God, what You have done for us.
Because of Your temple at Jerusalem,
Kings will bring presents to You.
Rebuke the beasts of the reeds,
The herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples,
Till everyone submits himself with pieces of silver.
Scatter the peoples who delight in war.

Sing Psalm 68.26-31.

(O Store Gud: [*How Great Thou Art*](#))

Bless God in all His holy congregations, even the Lord, the Fountainhead of grace.
He calls His people forth from all the nations and gathers them before His glorious face.

Refrain vv. 32, 33

Sing to the LORD, O kingdoms of the earth! Ancient of Days—praise Him on high!
Behold He speaks; His Word is going forth; Ancient of Days—praise Him on high!

Read Galatians 2.1-10; meditate on verses 6-10.

Preparation

1. Who affirmed Paul's ministry?
2. What did they see to have been given to Paul?

Meditation

Paul did not resent having to submit his message for review to Peter, James, and John. He respected them as apostles—before him, but not superior to him. He and they had the same calling from the Lord; Paul's was just a little later in time than theirs, but he was equal to them in authority from the Lord.

It might sound as if Paul was intending to bring Peter, James, and John down a notch by his use of "seemed" in verses 6 and 9. No. He's just keeping everything in perspective. They *seemed* to be pillars in the church because they *were*. They stood out as having an authority that even he could recognize. And yet they themselves, like Paul, were under the authority of God only.

But that authority was from God, as was Paul's. So, despite their "status" in the Church, Paul kept his eyes on the Lord "who worked effectively" in him as in the other apostles (v. 8). They recognized the hand of God in Paul's message and ministry and acknowledged him and Barnabas—

like themselves—to be pillars in the Church (v. 9). Paul gladly joined them, sent to the Gentiles while they were sent to the Jews. And in both contexts, caring for the poor was to be included in their ministries (v. 10).

There will be those in our churches who stand out for one reason or another. We acknowledge them and give them proper respect and deference; but we do not fawn over them, we do not erect a pedestal under them, and we do not hang on their every word as the last word in all matters. Only God and His Word have this place in our lives. He will work effectively in us only if we abide in Him and His Word and Spirit.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

God worked effectively in Peter, James, and John for their work to the circumcised; and God worked effectively in Paul and Barnabas for their work to the uncircumcised (Gal. 2.8).

And God shows no personal favoritism to anyone (Gal. 2.6).

We all experience the Good News of Jesus Christ by the same means (Eph. 2.8, 9); and we all are called to Kingdom work by the same God (Eph. 2.10). No one is left out and no one is exempt.

As we are going, we do the work: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut. 6.5-9). That dictum from Moses seems to cover just about every aspect of our lives—inside, outside, upside-down! (Cue the Berenstain Bears).

Kingdom work happens every moment of every day because that is when life happens. And as members and participants of His Kingdom we are always on task. The interesting thing about this interaction regarding ministering to this group or that is that God prepared each one of them for the job He had for them to do.

Their work fell in line with their gifts and skill sets.

The place where all gifts and skill sets aligned was for the care of the poor amongst them. Because if we are talking the Gospel but not as eagerly living the Gospel, we leave a bad taste in everyone’s mouth. As James taught us: “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (Jms. 2.14-17).

God, through Paul, is trying to teach us that hypocrisy is not the way to live out the Gospel—being one who feigns to be one thing but lives like another, exhibiting behavior that contradicts what we claim to believe—but instead, always abundantly bearing the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5.22, 23).

Standing with other believers, Pillars Together, we will have a bountiful witness in each of our

Galatians 2

Personal Mission Fields. Working effectively in the particular place into which we have been prepared to serve.

Reflection

1. Do you have a friend whom you regard as a pillar of your church? How can you pray for those who are?
2. What kind of “pillar” does God want to make of you in your Personal Mission Field? What would it take for others to know more of the Kingdom coming to expression through you?
3. Whom will you encourage today in working their Personal Mission Field? How will you do that?

Paul simply means, that the honorable rank which the apostles had attained did not prevent him from being called by God, and raised, all at once, from the lowest condition to be their equal. The difference between them, though great, is of no value in the sight of God, who does not accept persons, and whose calling is not influenced by any prejudices.
John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Galatians 2.6*

Pray Psalm 68.1-4, 32-35.

Call on the Lord to lead and protect you today, and to give you grace and strength sufficient for all your needs. Be specific in your prayers.

Sing Psalm 68.1-4, 32-35

(O Store Gud: [*How Great Thou Art*](#))

Let God arise, let all Your foes be scattered! Let those who hate You flee before Your face!
As smoke dissolves, as wax in flame is shattered, let all the wicked perish in disgrace!

Refrain vv. 32, 33

Sing to the LORD, O kingdoms of the earth! Ancient of Days—praise Him on high!
Behold He speaks; His Word is going forth; Ancient of Days—praise Him on high!

LORD, let Your righteous ones exult in glory, let us rejoice and praise Your holy Name!
Now let us sing the Savior’s old, old story—Who life to deserts brings, we now proclaim!

Refrain

To You, O God, are strength and exaltation; You fill the skies and dwell in holy awe!
To us You give strength, pow’r, and full salvation. Blessed be Your Name, our strong, majestic God!

Refrain

4 The Danger of Drift

Pray Psalm 71.23, 24, 3

My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You,
And my soul, which You have redeemed.
My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long;
For they are confounded,
For they are brought to shame
Who seek my hurt...
Be my strong refuge,
To which I may resort continually;
You have given the commandment to save me,
For You *are* my rock and my fortress.

Sing Psalm 71.23, 24, 3.

(Solid Rock: [*My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*](#))

My lips with joy and praises ring; to You, Redeemer, praise I bring!
I praise Your goodness all day long; LORD, humble all who do me wrong.
Refrain, v. 3

A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
my Rock and Fortress ever be!

Read Galatians 2.1-13; meditate on verses 11-13.

Preparation

1. What did Paul do with Peter?
2. Why did he do that?

Meditation

We can't help but wonder how Peter arrived at this point. Perhaps he knew some of the Judaizers personally? Was he hoping to befriend them into a proper view of the Gospel? Did he "tone down" his disapproval of their salvation-by-works message?

Whatever it was, Peter's lapse in Antioch, where he moved away from eating and fellowshiping with Gentiles to save face before the Judaizers (who had come "from James"? How could that have happened?), was a compromise, and Paul wasn't going to let it pass. Especially not since he dragged Barnabas and certain other Jewish believers with him into his transgression (v. 13).

Paul "withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed" (v. 11). Indeed, he was. And the lapse and transgression were public, so Paul confronted him publicly (v. 14). Peter feared what "those who were of the circumcision" might think or say about him if they saw him eating with Gentiles (v. 12). Had he forgotten how God revealed to him that the Gentiles were no longer to be regarded as unclean? And how he had come to the home of a Gentile and led him to faith in Jesus (Acts 10)? Or how he and the others had approved Paul's ministry to the Gentiles during the council meeting in Jerusalem (Acts 15)?

Or had he simply given in to the fear of men? Paul may have had this incident in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians to be careful about being overconfident in your faith (1 Cor. 10.13). We must always be on guard, trusting in the Lord and looking to Him, so that we can recognize temptation, resist the devil, and grow in the Lord through obedience. Peter drifted then fell. Don't let this happen to you (Heb. 2.1-3).

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Prov. 16.25).

Whatever reason Peter glommed onto for the sake of his hypocrisy was wrong, even if it seemed right to him. Pragmatism never works in the Kingdom, for everything is evident and clear. God spells out our way without deviation—He never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13.8); and His Law is solid and secure. Unbending.

However, Peter began to deviate and bend on this point, and that was not a good thing. And if one is willing to give in at one place, it is not too long before other things become easier to equivocate upon. It is a slippery slope that our enemy loves for us to step onto, as he is always more than willing to give us a little shove.

“He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD” (Prov. 17.15). For Paul to have turned a blind eye to Peter's misguiding behavior would have been an abomination to the Lord.

“A righteous man who falters before the wicked is like a murky spring and a polluted well” (Prov. 25.26). Peter was sullyng his own good reputation and was guilty of leading other believers astray. His behavior can only be described as murky for himself and polluting for others.

But Paul stepped into the picture as a good friend, and an agent of the Holy Spirit for conviction (Jn. 16.8)

“Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed...Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful...Ointment and perfume delight the heart, and the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel...As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (Prov. 27.5 6, 9, 17).

Being a faithful and good friend is not easy. It sometimes requires guiding, heartfelt love that is not always well received. But if it is done in love, and there is a strong basis for love in the relationship, it may have the same good benefit that Paul's love had for Peter. And it was not done just for Peter's sake; but for the sake of all those who would possibly stumble because of his sin. Hypocrisy most assuredly leaves wounded bodies and souls in its wake.

The danger of drift is as real for the drifter as the observers; so, let us say with determination, as the psalmist said: “I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, to the very end” (Ps. 119.112).

“LORD, I hope for YOUR salvation, and I do Your commandments” (Ps. 119.166).

“With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!” (Ps.

119.10)

Don't ever let me drift or be the cause of someone else's drift. Never, Lord, no never.

Reflection

1. Why do you think people "drift" from the truth that is in Christ Jesus? What causes us to "drift"?
2. What can you do to keep from experiencing such drift in your walk with and work for the Lord?
3. How can you encourage your fellow believers not to drift? Whom will you encourage today?

When he saw that Peter and the others did not live up to that principle which the gospel taught, and which they professed, namely, that by the death of Christ the partition wall between Jew and Gentile was taken down, and the observance of the law of Moses was no longer in force; as Peter's offense was public, he publicly reproved him.

Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Galatians 2.11-14*

Pray Psalm 71.3, 12-18

Pray that the Lord will keep you from drifting away from Him, and that, by serving and bearing witness to Him every day, your faith will increase and you will grow more and more to be like Jesus.

Sing Psalm 71.12-18, 3.

(Solid Rock: [*My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*](#))

O God be not too far from me; my ever-present Helper be!

Consume and shame my enemies; let them reproached and humbled be.

Refrain, v. 3

A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
my Rock and Fortress ever be!

But as for me my voice I raise to sing in hope and constant praise!

With saving grace my voice will swell Your never-ending grace to tell.

Refrain

O LORD, I praise Your righteousness Who me from youth have taught and blessed.

Forsake me not when I am old, 'til I Your mercies all have told!

Refrain

5 Hard Medicine

Opening Prayer: Psalm 22.27, 28

All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the nations
Shall worship before You.
For the kingdom *is* the LORD's,
And He rules over the nations.

Sing Psalm 22.27, 28.

(Darwall: *Rejoice, The Lord Is King*)

All nations shall repent and hasten to the LORD.
All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.
The LORD is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

Read Galatians 2.1-16; meditate on verses 14-16.

Preparation

1. Where did Paul rebuke Peter? Why?
2. How are we justified?

Meditation

I agree with Calvin that verses 14-16 are the extent of Paul's rebuke to Peter. After this, he returns to his rebuke to the Galatians, warning them as he warned Peter in Antioch. Commentators disagree on this point, and some, as in the NKJV, want Paul's speech to Peter to go to the end of the chapter. It's not a big deal, but for purposes of clarification, you need to understand my view.

Paul's rebuke is short and to the point. Peter didn't need a lecture or a review of the doctrine of justification—as, apparently, the Galatians did. Paul charged Peter with dissembling, not by his words but by his deeds. Not wanting the Jews from Jerusalem to see him eating and fellowshiping with Gentiles, which he had previously been doing. This is the “manner of Gentiles” Paul had in mind. By breaking fellowship with them to be with the Jews, Peter signaled that the Gentiles should probably also become Jews, if they wished to be full and true Christians (v. 14).

Paul said those who are Jews “by nature” know that “a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ” (v. 16). Jews—like Peter and Paul—are, like Gentiles, “by nature” sinners (cf. v. 17). Because they were Jews and had the Law of God, they knew that justification cannot come by the Law because no one can keep the Law. Gentiles are sinners, too (v. 15), but they only had the works of the Law written on their hearts, from which they had turned away (Rom. 2.14, 15; 1.18ff). It was wrong for Peter to give the impression that Jews were somehow superior to Gentiles, and that Gentiles could improve their standing by “the works of the law” (v. 16), whatever those works might have been.

In the case of the Galatians, circumcision was the issue. That might seem like a small thing, but it

was a Jesus + matter, and where a right standing with God is concerned, Jesus is the only way (Jn. 14.6).

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Paul saw that Peter was not being straightforward about the Truth of the Gospel—he was equivocating, deviating, and obfuscating.

David, after being confronted by Nathan for his treacherous acts of adultery and murder, confessed, repented, and prayed: “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts...” (Ps. 51.6). David knew that he had lied to God— “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight” (Ps. 51.4). God demanded, and still demands, authentic, truthful, obedient living from His followers.

“Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth” (Ps. 119.142). In fact, “The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever” (Ps. 119.160).

“In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing from our God...truth is fallen in the street” (Is. 59.13, 14).

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness...” (Rom. 1.18).

Equivocating on the Truth, for any reason, is never pleasing to the LORD.

The life of Jesus is all about the Truth. He is the Truth (Jn. 14.6).

“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8.31, 32).

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to bring forward this Truth into believer’s lives: “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...” (Jn. 16.13). “...the Spirit is truth” (1 Jn. 5.6).

Paul, “for such a time as this” (Esther 4.14), took a stand for righteousness and Truth, for Peter’s benefit, for those in their sphere of ministries’ benefit, and for our benefit.

Paul, later in his ministry, while imprisoned for his faith, may have been thinking about this very situation, when he wrote to Timothy: “But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will” (2 Tim. 2.23-26).

Paul stepped into Peter’s life and helped him come to his senses, “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4.15).

Is there any time that we are tempted to equivocate on the Truth of the Gospel?

Are there people in, or outside, the church that we fear more than we fear God?

What issues do we find easier to tolerate than to speak God’s Truth into?

Is there someone that we need to speak with about living in the Truth of the Gospel?

Galatians 2

We can trust that the Holy Spirit will give us the courage to speak the Truth in love when we should. And we can trust that same Holy Spirit to keep our mouths shut when the time isn't right to speak.

In all the churches that Paul started, and served, there must have been myriad times when Hard Medicine could have been given—but wasn't. Many times when, no doubt, he wanted to really lay some folks out but didn't. He was God's man, living God's way, on the Jesus Path: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5.25).

We can feel confident that to imitate Paul, and his Truth-telling, will always be a good thing (1 Cor. 11.1).

Reflection

1. Why do Christians sometimes compromise on what they believe?
2. What can you do to make sure you never compromise the truth of God?
3. Do you have a prayer partner? Should you find one, for prayer, accountability, and mutual encouragement?

This example instructs us, that those who have sinned publicly must be publicly chastised, so far as concerns the Church. The intention is, that their sin may not, by remaining unpunished, form a dangerous example; and Paul elsewhere (1 Timothy 5:20) lays down this rule expressly... John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Galatians 2.14

Pray Psalm 22.29-31.

Pray for an opportunity to talk with someone about Jesus today. Pray for worldwide revival and renewal in the churches and awakening to Jesus among the lost.

Sing Psalm 22.29-31.

(Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth)

All the prosp'rous of the earth shall before His mercy fall;
bending low before His worth, hear them humbly on Him call.
Even those low in the grave He will by His mercy save.

Let the generations all witness to His saving grace;
let them to all nations call, "Bow before His holy face!"
Let the children of the earth hear of Jesus' saving worth!

6 Christ Alive in You!

Opening Prayer: Psalm 110.1-3

The LORD said to my Lord,
“Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”
The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.
Rule in the midst of Your enemies!
Your people *shall be* volunteers
In the day of Your power;
In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,
You have the dew of Your youth.

Sing Psalm 110.1-3

(Aurelia: [The Church's One Foundation](#))

“Sit by Me at My right hand,” the LORD says to my Lord,
“until I make Your foot stand on all who hate Your Word.”
The LORD sends strength from Zion: “Rule all Your enemies.”
While those who Him rely on go forth their LORD to please.

Read Galatians 2.1-21; meditate on verses 17-21.

Preparation

1. What is our status as believers?
2. How does a believer live?

Meditation

Today I am in the grip of something alive in me. Susie took one look at me this morning and said, “Oooh.” My body has been taken over (temporarily, I hope) by a living substance. My head is throbbing. My nose is running. I have a sore throat. I slept in this morning.

When something alive—like a virus, say—is gamboling about in you, you know it, and you want it to end sooner than later.

Except, of course, when that living entity is Jesus. “Christ lives in me” is, in my book, the most astonishing and most precious sentence in all of Scripture. Me! In me! Jesus Christ! He is alive in me and in all who believe in Him, striving by His Spirit and Word to grow and stretch out in us, to rule all our thinking, feeling, choosing, and doing and to rule these always. He is living in us to transform us so that we might be more like Him (2 Cor. 3.12-18), that His righteousness might capture every aspect of our soul and spread out from there to characterize all our words and deeds.

When we sin—and we all do and will—it’s not Jesus performing that “ministry” in us. It’s us, like Peter, resisting Jesus’ grace, thinking we know better, and stepping out on our own to do “our thing.” We’re trying to be a law unto ourselves, rather than to submit to God’s Law for the freedom, love, power, and joy keeping it provides. We’re not “under the Law” *for* salvation but *because* of it,

because He Who perfectly kept the Law is alive in us, striving and stretching and straining with joy to bring us into conformity with His righteous image.

Jesus is alive in me. In you. Do we know it? Is He making Himself known in and through us? “Christ lives” in us. Go for the glory!

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

I *through* the law
Died *to* the law
That I might
Live *to* God—
I have been crucified *with* Christ.
It is no longer I who live
But Christ lives *in* me—
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.
I do not set aside the grace of God,
For if righteousness comes through the law,
Then Christ died in vain.
(Gal. 2.17-21)

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15.19, 20).

When we get the Gospel wrong, or we deviate from the pure Truth of it, either we are found to be the most pathetic and pitiable of people, or worse yet, Christ is perceived as having suffered and died in vain.

Nothing good ever comes from telling the Good News slant! It may be a unique way to write poetry, but when it comes to life and death, Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, is the only way to tell it and live it.

We needed the law to know that we could not keep the law to be saved.
And we need the law to guide us on the Jesus Path now that we are saved.

For Christ to fully live in us, we need to die to ourselves, and give Him room to work. And this “Christ life” that we now desire to live, can only be lived by faith in and through the saving work of Jesus--Who loved us and gave Himself for us— for this reason and for this purpose.

We cling to the knowledge and Truth of His grace, because it is only by grace that we are saved (Eph. 2.8, 9).

But then we give our hearts and minds, for the rest of our lives, to be pleasing vessels for His honor and glory. And those attributes will not happen outside of keeping the Law through His power— because He lives in us. “I will run the course of Your commandments, for You shall enlarge my

heart” (Ps. 119.32).

“Because He Who perfectly kept the Law is alive in us, striving and stretching and straining with joy to bring us into conformity with His righteous image.”

Reflection

1. What evidence do you see that Christ lives in you?
2. In what ways would you like to see more evidence of His living in you?
3. Whom will you encourage today with the reminder that Christ lives in them?

It is a remarkable sentiment, that believers live out of themselves, that is, they live in Christ; which can only be accomplished by holding real and actual communication with him. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Galatians 2.20

Closing Prayer: Psalm 110.3-7

Pray that more of Christ’s Presence and power would be at work in and through you today. Pray for each situation or opportunity before you today to live for the glory of the Lord. Pray for grace and strength to do so.

Sing Psalm 110.3-7

(Aurelia: [*The Church’s One Foundation*](#))

Your people in Your power, arrayed in holiness,
like dew of morning’s hour shall serve like youth refreshed.
The LORD has sworn and never will He His promise check:
“You are a priest forever after Melchizedek.”

The Lord is at Your right hand to execute His wrath,
and judge all kings and all lands—doomed sinners in His path.
Then, all His foes defeated, He takes His hard-won rest,
in glorious triumph seated with us, redeemed and blessed.

7 Do Not Yield

Opening Prayer: Psalm 116.7-9

Return to your rest, O my soul,
For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.
For You have delivered my soul from death,
My eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.
I will walk before the LORD
In the land of the living.

Sing Psalm 116.7-9

(Mit Freuden Zart: [*All Praise To God Who Reigns Above*](#))

Full well the LORD has dealt with me; my soul from death He delivered.
My weeping eyes, my stumbling feet, He has redeemed forever.
Forever I before His face shall walk with those who know His grace,
and dwell with them forever

Read Galatians 2.1-21; meditate on verses 4, 5, 11-13, 21.

Preparation

1. To what must we never yield?
2. To what must we ever yield?

Meditation

The Galatians, we learned from chapter 1, were beginning to drift from Paul's teaching to "another gospel" (1.6-9). Galatians 2 provides more information about that "different gospel" (1.6), where we learn that it had to do with the Judaizing insistence that merely believing in Jesus was not enough to be saved. One had to believe *and* submit to circumcision. Thus, theirs was a gospel of Jesus + circumcision. But any "gospel" that is Jesus + anything else is not the Gospel but a perversion of it (1.7).

So, in chapter 2 Paul insisted on the need to stand firm in the true Gospel and not to yield to any other demands or temptations. In Jerusalem, the Judaizers called for Titus to be circumcised. Paul refused. He "did not yield submission even for an hour" for he knew to do so would be to endorse a Jesus + gospel and deny the true Gospel (vv. 2-5).

To show us this from another angle, Paul related a lapse that Peter had fallen into in Antioch. He yielded to the temptation to look good before the Jewish theologians from Jerusalem by turning his back on the Gentile believers with whom he was having fellowship. Peter's lapse into sin also caused others to do the same (vv. 11-13). Paul rebuked him publicly, insisting that faith in Christ is the true ground for justification, and we must not yield to temptations that would move us away from this conviction (vv. 15, 16). We must yield only to Jesus, Who lives in us, and live by faith in Him, drawing on the grace of God and the righteousness of Jesus in everything (vv. 19-21).

Guard your heart—your desires, loves, and longings. Make sure that Jesus is the object of all your best and purest affections. Guard your mind. Do not even contemplate yielding to anything or anyone but Jesus. And guard your conscience, so that your values and priorities are the same Kingdom values and priorities Jesus has (Matt. 6.33). If we will thus guard our soul, we will be more likely to yield to what we should and to yield not to what we should not.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (Jn. 1.1-3).

“Therefore God has also highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2.9-11).

However, because of all this love and glory and joy and perfection and righteousness, false brethren were secretly brought in by stealth to spy out the Galatians’ liberty which they had in Christ Jesus (Gal. 2.4). So bizarre and sad.

The liberty that they had was not a free-for-all from having to keep the Law; but it was the liberty to rejoice in the fact that they no longer had to keep the Law to receive the gift of salvation and new life in Christ.

And they were free from laws like circumcision to prove their righteousness. This law could be compared to the fashion law of: Don’t wear white shoes after Labor Day. Circumcision, a surgical procedure still in place today, is just like the joys of agreeable seasonal dressing—but the issue of salvation is apropos to neither.

And on a more obvious note: the Old Testament had been speaking (warning?) of the grafting in of the Gentiles for a very long time. The psalmist even wrote a short piece about it:

“Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!
For His merciful kindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD endures forever.
Praise the LORD!” (Ps. 117)

And God, through the prophet Isaiah, spoke of the same phenomenon while writing about Jesus: “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him: He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles” (Is. 42.1; Matt. 12.18).

Those verses do not include the words “circumcised Gentiles”; or have multiple footnotes explaining the need for the procedure. So, this fussing about liberty, salvation, and circumcision, and the need to send in spies to catch them in this heresy, was totally bogus.

Circumcision is not the bogus topic *du jour*; but beware, there are plenty of other things that either trip us up, or false brethren try to use against us. For example, things we are supposed to accept because “God is love” and “full of grace” but are truly anathema to God; although we are supposed to smile and just tolerate it all—sometimes even praise it. But the truth is: “You who love the

LORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked” (Ps. 97.10).

And anything that smacks of Jesus plus some other behavior for salvation is wrong. And evil. Because if we believe that, or support it in any way, we are saying that “Christ died in vain” (Gal. 2.21). And frankly, I do not want to say that, or do anything to support that horrible notion. Jesus paid a dear price for us.

*Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.*
(E.M. Hall, 1865)

Reflection

1. How can you know when you are beginning to yield to something other than Jesus?
2. Do you think that you would have the courage, like Paul, to confront a fellow believer who was beginning to yield to something other than Jesus? Explain.
3. What are the keys to not yielding to something other than Jesus?

Let us remember that it is not enough to retain the name of the gospel, and some kind of summary of its doctrines, if its solid purity[does] not remain untouched. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Galatians 2.5

Pray Psalm 116.1-3, 10-19.

Rejoice in the Good News of Jesus, that He alone is the way, the truth, and the life. Commit yourself afresh to following only Jesus.

Sing Psalm 116.1-3, 10-19

(Mit Freuden Zart: *All Praise to God Who Reigns Above*)

I love the LORD because He hears my cries and pleas for mercy.
Because He bends to me His ear, my prayers shall ever thus be.
The snares of death encompassed me; hell's grip could not unloosened be;
distress and anguish pressed me.

Afflicted, I believe His Word, though lying men would undo me.
What shall I render to the LORD for all His blessings to me?
Salvation's cup I lift above and call upon the God of love
and pay my vows most truly.

How sweet to Him when saints depart—make me Your servant, Savior!
From sin You loosed my wand'ring heart; I praise Your Name forever!
On You I call, my vows to pay; here in Your Presence I would stay
Your praise to offer ever.

Galatians 2

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What do we mean by a “gospel” of Jesus +? What are some ways this shows up in our day?
2. What did Peter do to lend credence to a “gospel” of Jesus +?
3. Can the Law save us? Is the Law thus of no value to us as believers?
4. What does it mean to “live by faith in the Son of God”?
5. What’s the most important lesson you have learned from Galatians 2?

For Prayer:

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Thank you.