

Living as One Crucified with Christ

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[0 : 00] You can be turning to the book of Galatians, chapter 2.

We're going to cover, well I'm going to read verses 11 through 24 today. And yet we're not going to cover all that.

That is the thought. And I really hate not covering the whole thought. But as I was working through it, there's just more here than I could do in a time that allowed us to still have the Lord's Supper.

And so I'm going to cover verses 11 to 17 today. And so Galatians, chapter 2.

Now remember, this is probably Paul's first epistle. He had started working after his salvation in the town of Antioch in Syria, which is north of Israel.

[1 : 09] And the church in Antioch said, separate unto us, the Lord said to the church in Antioch, separate unto us, Paul and Barnabas, for the work of the ministry.

And so they are sent out to share the gospel. And they travel to Crete and then land up in Phrygia and then travel up into Antioch.

The name escapes me. Anyway. And they travel down into the area, the Galatian area, and share the gospel. And they start at least four churches there as they travel. Paul goes back through those churches, comes back to Antioch.

And once in Antioch, there is a problem that begins to take place. And that is that there are Jews who have come from Jerusalem to Antioch. And they're there endeavoring to get Christians to be circumcised in order to be truly saved.

And it began to be quite the problem there. And the problem spread from there into the churches that Paul had already spoken at, already established. And the gospel was in threat of being ruined.

[2 : 20] And so Paul pens this letter to the Galatians. Let me read Galatians chapter 2, verses 11 to 21. But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

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.

And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. And 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?

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet we know that a person is not justified by the 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 the works of the law. Because by the works of the law, no one will be justified.

[3 : 43] For if in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then the servant of sin? Certainly not.

For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law, I died to the law, so that I might live to God.

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.

I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. Let's pray together. Father, I thank you for the circumstances that you allowed to take place in order for this book to be written.

Of course, we never want the church moved away from the truth of the gospel, but in your wisdom, you allowed this circumstance to come up, and you led your people by your word to address the circumstance.

[4 : 58] And I thank you that it was written down, and because of that now, we have that which teaches us what to truly believe, and also that which helps us to guard against the problems that we face today that are very much very close to the same problems that Paul faced.

So I pray that you would give us understanding in your word, and that you would bless it, and that you would cause us in the end to rejoice in who you are and what you've done. And you would cause us to be mindful of our responsibilities and the care that we need to take.

And I pray that you would equip us and send us to do those jobs that you've called us to do. I pray that you would bless, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, in introducing that, I didn't go into some of the problems that resulted of that.

These people who now we know them to be called Judaizers had, as I mentioned, said that one needs to be circumcised to keep the law in order for people to truly be a Christian.

And one of the things that those people said as they went through these churches was that, we're from James. And the implication that they were trying to get across was they were carrying James' message.

[6 : 20] But they were not carrying James' message. Even though we see what we see today about Peter, they were not carrying the message of James. And so they went through, and amongst other things, them saying, we carry James, the message of James.

They were saying, Paul, you're not really an apostle. And we've spent a couple sermons looking at how Paul proves that he indeed was an apostle, is an apostle, called by Christ, ordained by Christ, and he had been given the gospel from Christ himself, just as the other apostles, and was commissioned to go forth with the gospel to these peoples.

So Paul recounts different things that proved that he indeed was an apostle. And at the end of the last message, we talked about how he went to Jerusalem and conferred with Peter, James, and John.

And after them hearing what Paul preached, they recognized that what Paul preached was exactly what Peter, James, and John, and all the other apostles were preaching.

And so Peter and James and John extended the right hand of fellowship, recognizing, partnering with them, and sending them out to share the gospel to the Gentiles.

[7 : 40] Now, we're not going to deal with this much through the message, so I'll mention it here. I think it's part of what God intended, and I think it's part of the flow, but it's not part of the argument that I'm going to bring out today.

And that is, I want you to see that what we look at today is also a proof of Paul's apostleship. Paul proved that he was an apostle because we find in these verses that we read, starting in verse 11, that as an apostle, he had the authority and the right to bring charges against anyone who needed to be corrected.

And unfortunately, one of those people that need to be corrected was the pillar, the chief pillar, to use their words, the chief pillar of the church of Jerusalem.

And that was none other than Peter himself. And so, in the flow of the argument, one of the undertones is a proof that Paul is indeed an apostle.

He had the right to carry out the work of an apostle as he himself had the authority to come to Peter and say, Peter, you're wrong.

[8 : 54] You're not walking according to the truth of the gospel. There's the front of our bulletin says, I gave to Jen to put in the, walking in the, I don't have it, but in step with the gospel.

Walking in step with the gospel. And so, that's what Peter was not doing and Paul's proving that he is also an apostle. Now, in this argument, Paul presents some truths that are important.

We read through them. He comes, he, as Peter comes up, Paul addresses him. Paul is preserving the truth of the gospel by confronting a fearful apostle.

Paul is preserving the truth of the gospel by confronting a fearful apostle. And there's some interesting things here that are going on. What happened?

Well, as the text says, Peter came to Antioch sometime before or after. There's great debate on that and I'm not in a position to answer it. But Peter came to Antioch sometime either before or after the Jerusalem council, which is talked about in Acts chapter 15.

[10 : 05] Peter came up there and of course, he had had this vision that what God calls clean, Peter didn't have the right to call unclean. And so as Paul, or Peter gets to Antioch and begins to fellowship with the Christians there, both Jewish and Gentile Christians, Peter begins to enjoy his time there, sitting down to eat with both Jews and Gentiles.

He enjoyed the fellowship. There was no uncomfortableness for him to enjoy the fellowship with the Gentile believers there. He accepted them as a believer, as a brother, had no problem at all.

But as he was there, there were men who came from James. Now, the men who came from James, we don't believe they were part of this Judaizer group.

But these were people who came from James and as they got there, Peter withdraws from the Gentiles. Now, these were not people that Peter had authorized.

These were not the people that James had authorized, rather. These were, I'm getting my words all mixed up. They came from James and they were not these Judaizers.

[11 : 18] But Peter did not withdraw. I'm sorry. I need to slow down this morning. They were not men authorized by James. And Peter did not withdraw from the Gentiles because he feared the men from James, but because he feared the circumcision party.

So these men come up. Peter looks around. He sees these men from James and he sees the circumcision party. And as he's been sitting with the Gentiles, he takes steps back.

And it's not that he's fearing the men from James, but he's wondering what the men from James think about the men from the circumcision party. And he's beginning to think he needs to withdraw.

Now, as I mentioned, Peter knows it's okay to eat with Gentiles because the Lord has revealed that to him. We talked about that in Acts 10, where the sheet was let down.

There were animals. God said, kill. Peter says, no, I've never eaten anything unclean. And God says, don't call unclean what I call clean. And so he knows that he is able to eat with the Gentiles, but he's beginning to be fearful, fearful of what people around him think.

[12 : 35] And so he begins to withdraw from the Gentiles. And that withdrawal from the Gentiles sends a message that the Gentiles could not be considered justified if they didn't keep the old covenant regulations.

So they begin to back up. He begins to back up. And even though he doesn't believe this, even though he doesn't say it, the Gentiles are now getting the message as the Jews have come and the Judaizers are here.

The Gentiles are beginning to get the message. Well, maybe there's something wrong with my gospel. Maybe I need to keep that Old Testament, Old Covenant.

Maybe I need to remember those Old Covenant regulations. And so Peter's withdrawal begins to spread that thinking to them.

And it begins to set the church in a bad direction. And Peter's withdrawal not only caused some of these Gentiles to think this, but Peter's withdrawal made some of the other Jews that lived in Antioch to start to think, wow, should we be drawing back from the Jews?

[13 : 56] Or from the Gentiles? Should we not eat with them? So the rest of the Jews in Antioch joined with Peter in withdrawing from the Gentiles.

And Paul says, it got so bad that Barnabas Barnabas withdrew from the Gentiles. He was caught up in this hypocrisy.

Paul sees this and says, this is leading to problems. I need to deal with this. And so Paul rebukes Peter as it speaks about in verses 11 and 12.

He rebukes Peter. Paul saw that Peter's conduct was not in step with the gospel. Paul says, if you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile, not like a Jew, and that's not a reprimand, he's saying, Peter, if you live in the freedom that God has given you, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?

Peter's thinking never changed. Peter never said, it's wrong for me to live, to eat with the Jews. But what he did gave that impression.

[15 : 21] And because it gave that impression, it was getting, it was pointing to the fact that people thought that the Gentiles had to live like Jews. The gospel does not require people to live like Jews.

Nowhere in scripture in the New Testament does it say that anyone who's not a Jew has to keep anything of the Old Covenant regulations.

John Stott explains the situation well. He says, he, Peter, knew perfectly well that faith in Jesus was the only condition on which God will have fellowship with sinners.

But he added circumcision as an extra condition on which he was prepared to have fellowship with them, thus contradicting the gospel. That's what people began to think when Peter began to back away.

and Peter was beginning to act out of fear for the circumcision party. He began to be afraid of what the circumcision party was thinking and his actions led people to think that Gentiles had to live like Jews to be saved.

[16 : 39] Peter's fears were leading others to believe a false gospel. Joseph Piper says, what did this action proclaim?

The action of Peter backing away from the Gentiles. He says, in that one act, the Judaizers got everything they wanted without having to win one theological argument.

By his action, Peter was saying that profession of union with Christ was not a sufficient basis for Gentile Christians to have fellowship with him.

They had to be circumcised. They had to become Jews. This is what Paul means at the end of verse 14. If you being a Jew live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like the Jews?

Peter's actions were messing up the Gentile thinking. And Paul says we can't have that. This false thinking cannot be allowed. And Peter's reaction of fear had to be rebuked.

[17 : 53] His reaction of fear in relation to those of the circumcision party had to be rebuked so that the church wouldn't end up believing a false gospel.

And so Paul rebukes Peter to his face. publicly someone might say well why didn't he take the path of Matthew 18 go to him privately and then if he didn't listen go to him with one or two others and if he didn't listen then take it to the church.

Well this situation was dangerous. This situation was public. This situation affected many people and it wasn't that it would affect many people it had affected many people.

Peter's sin affected many in the church in Antioch and so what Peter did needed to be rebuked publicly.

and so Paul what we've read to this point or what we've talked about to this point were kind of the words that Paul spoke to Peter directly.

[19 : 09] They were words that it was like the conversation began but from now on these are words that are summarization of what Peter would share with Peter but it's a summarized statement in a way that helps the church to see what the truths were and so he mentions in verse 16 we ourselves are Jews let me read that for us today starting in verse 15 we ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners 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 Jesus Christ in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law and so Paul is addressing Peter at this point and possibly Barnabas but he's mostly defining definitely including himself in the truth it's interesting that he turns from you to we he addresses

Peter he addresses Barnabas but he's saying we need to remember this all of us know this truth all of us know that the person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Christ Paul is showing he will show in Galatians 3 that the truths we will look at these truths that he's mentioning are even taught in the Old Testament and so what he's sharing here is not just a New Testament truth it's a Bible truth it's a gospel truth it's a truth that's been true all through scripture that we're not saved by keeping the law now the Judaizers and many of the Jewish people of the time of Christ they didn't think this way they thought saying no we're Jews and we know that the law is not what saved us all of the people who have trusted

Christ for all of time are all the people who are Christians for all of time are those who have trusted Christ though they may not have understood all of it he says we know that a person is not justified by works of the law no one can be justified by the works of the law and that's an Old Testament truth Psalm 143 2 says enter not into judgment with your servant for no one living it's righteous before you and it's a New Testament truth Romans 3 20 says for by the works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight since through the law comes the knowledge of sin that's been true since the beginning of time that no one's going to be justified by keeping the law because we know that no one can be justified by the law we are not now trying to be justified by the law and that's what Peter is saying that they are doing Peter I know this is what you're thinking

Barnabas I know this is what you're thinking I think this too I am not justified by keeping Paul's recognizing Peter hasn't changed his doctrine he's allowed his outward practice to be changed by what the people around him were doing he's becoming self conscious and scared Paul goes on to say we know that justification is by faith in Christ a person is justified only by faith in Christ because we know that we must be justified through faith in Christ we Jews those who people would think they would try to be saved by keeping the law we Jews have been trusting in Christ we who are Christians Jewish Christians are justified by trusting in Christ and we're not justified by the works of the law and he said these things in the past tense it's something we have done we are people who already have trusted

Christ these are truths that Peter you believe Barnabas you believe and I Paul believe to speak in his voice we've believed these and we've rested on these Paul believes that Peter still believed the truth of the gospel he's not rebuking Peter's understanding of the gospel he's not denying Peter's belief in the gospel he's rebuking Peter for the way he lived in relation to the pressures around him and saying you're not keeping in step with the gospel his fear of the circumcision party his fear of the circumcision party caused him to live as if he thought oh I must keep the gospel or keep the law Peter's hypocrisy caused other believers to live as though keeping the law did matter to this to their salvation and that couldn't stand it's an interesting situation

[24 : 41] Paul stands before the most prominent apostle in Jerusalem saw that he was wrong not wrong in what he believed but wrong in how he was living that out based on the pressures around him and so the most prominent apostle in Jerusalem at that point could not be allowed to continue to live so as to make others think that law keeping was part of the gospel Paul out of love for the gospel yes but Paul out of love for Peter said you can't keep living this way you have to be protected from what you're thinking the gospel has to be protected from this kind of error Paul looked at Peter and saw a brother that needed to be restored and he deals with this kind of action later in the book he says brothers if anyone is caught in any transgressions transgression you who are spiritual restore such one in a spirit of meekness keeping watch on yourselves lest you also be tempted and so

Paul steps in and says Peter you cannot live this way you cannot act this way Peter do you see what people are doing do you see that they're now breaking into groups there's the them and the us there's the law keepers and the non law keepers there are these two factions being created the church will be forever split Peter if you don't deal with this properly if you don't live like the truth of the gospel says and so he rebukes Peter Peter is told he cannot live like this and he gives further arguments that we're going to have to wait until next time to look at but Paul goes on to instruct further in Christians relationship with the law and Christ union with Christ in verses 19 to 21 like I said we'll deal with that more later but as we think about this here's this situation yes

Paul is acknowledged as a true apostle by having to deal with another apostle who's erred because of his fear but more than that we have a situation that's come up that shows that the gospel must be protected from ever adding anything to that and you the church today is full of ways in which people add something to the gospel that comes about because we are people who are naturally law keepers that comes because you and I were created in the image of Adam and what was Adam to do he was put in the garden to keep the garden and to obey this one rule don't eat of the tree and Adam was built to be a person to keep the commandment and that's the way Adam was made and because that's the way Adam was made that's the way we are made and so it is our huge temptation through all of life to keep commandments we we're built that way the law is built into us the gospel isn't and we're people who want to do this so here's this this apostle who when times got tough and he got scared he was fearful of these circumcision group he caved because it was easier for him to keep a law in that circumstance because that's the way he was built and today that's what so many false religions are about that's what so many false groups are about people who add the requirement to keep the law to what really constitutes salvation and that's not true oh you could be a

Christian if you're a person who stands against abortion no all people ought to stand against abortion Christians or un-Christians but that's not a requirement of salvation oh you need to be a person who stands for this thing in government or that thing in government or you need to be a person who stands for this candidate or that candidate that's what true Christians do no it isn't it's not a matter of what political stance what moral stance in the sense of something you chase after in the society those are not the standards by which people are considered Christians it's only by our faith and trust in Christ and it's not by keeping a set of laws that will eventually get us to heaven there are people and we're going to talk more about these as we go through this there are people who say yes you trust

Christ but you must keep his commands and wait till you get to heaven until someone tells you God tells you oh you've been faithful therefore yeah I know Christ died for you but since you've been faithful I will let you into heaven that's law that's trusting in what we do that's a heresy to say that there's some requirement that you must keep in order to get into heaven these are the same kind of things that that can be argued from what Paul is speaking to Peter we can't add anything to the gospel we can't even add the requirement of faithfulness we can't add the requirement of is Christ Lord of your life so that you can get to heaven Christ did all the work Christ provided the complete sacrifice and we stand in him and so anyone who comes along and says whether it be fear of people or whether it be for any other reason comes along and says in order for you to truly make it to heaven or for you to truly be a

[31 : 26] Christian you've got to add this or that or the other thing that's heresy and and and and we need to be people like Paul who say no we don't get to heaven by keeping laws we get to heaven by faith in Christ the one who's paid for our sins and so let's be people who are careful like Paul to watch watch for these kind of errors works oriented salvation is always appealing to us as I mentioned because that's the way we're built we need to be careful to stand on and protect the gospel which sees the work of Christ as complete in providing salvation now another thing I'd like for you to see from what we've looked at is how we're susceptible to peer pressure somebody pointed out this in one of the commentaries and I thought it was just an amazing thing and that is

Peter's prevalence to be influenced by pressure from people outside four times that we know of in scripture this being one of them four times in scripture Peter was influenced by peer pressure to either turn from Christ or allow his actions to mar the true sense of the gospel peer pressure and we find that in our society all around us we find all times all kinds of times it's it's such a pressure to compromise because of peer pressure such a pressure to pervert the gospel oh yeah well you know that's alright you know sure if you want to say that about the gospel I just don't want to be argumentative this passage should remind us of the importance of watching for the perversion of the truth this passage should give us a better understanding of our union of

Christ most of that we'll get into next time it gives us a better understanding that salvation is by grace through faith alone that requiring any other requirements adding them to the work of Christ and salvation negates salvation and a couple things to praise the Lord for as we look at this passage praise the Lord that God has provided his word to the church so that there are objective truths to evaluate our thinking and our actions Paul came to Peter with objective truths this is the gospel this is where we stand we can't go any aside from that and he's provided that for us he's provided truths and not only provided truths to evaluate our our thinkings and our actions he's provided gifted men to the church to watch over her members and over one another to reprove rebuke exhort protect and comfort the body of Christ in this passage we can see that we saw a God provided a man for

Peter and it had to be a man like Paul I think a man who was so convinced of what God said that he was willing to come to what most would consider the pillar of the church of Jerusalem and say Peter you've got it wrong I know you know the truth I know you think like I do I know you believe the same things I do but what you're doing is wrong and God has given that same kind of thing to the church today people men gifted by the church to come alongside each of us and say brother I know you don't think this way but your actions are wrong or maybe brother you aren't thinking right maybe you don't believe right in this kind of situation so praise God he's provided those kind of peoples to the church and so praise

God also that God gives us clarity in the gospel this passage gives us an example of how important it is that we not try to add law keeping we've gone into that Christian law keeping will not help you to be more acceptable before God and we've dealt with that I just remind you to be careful nothing Christ plus nothing it's only Christ for our salvation a friend if you're here you don't know Christ you cannot get to heaven by keeping God's law I know we're born like that we're born with the idea that we can work our way to heaven that we can do something at least get good enough over 51% so that God will accept us but you can't get to heaven by law keeping we were born sinners we were born vile in God's sight and before we took our first breath there was no hope of us trying to please God there was nothing we could do at that point to be able to say oh yeah you've tripped the switch now

[36 : 52] I'll take you we were vile that hope was gone before we were born but there is hope there is hope for sinners born into this world and of course that hope is the son of God who took on flesh lived a perfect life died to pay for our sins resurrected given us a sure hope of heaven and through this hope a sure hope of being pleasing to God if you don't know how you're going to get to heaven you need to be a person who believes in Christ Jesus in order to be just before God all of us can go astray all of us do go astray even apostles can go astray and as I mentioned it's the fourth time that Peter has gone astray each time God rebuked him in loving ways one time it was a look by the

Lord Jesus another time it was the Lord coming back to him each time he repented and he was better for it so let me ask how often do we go astray we go astray a lot praise God the sin we commit when we go astray has been paid for by Christ praise God he sent his word and his servants to rebuke praise God his promises of forgiveness and cleansing are there to stand on praise God for his provision and grace so brothers and sisters let it be let us be a church that's careful to stand on the truth the truth of the gospel let us make sure our actions reflect the truth of the gospel Peter was standing on the truth of the gospel and so to each one of us let us be careful of our stance on the gospel let us be people who watch for one another like Paul did for Peter lest a false understanding of the gospel or peer pressure cause there to look like a false understanding of the gospel and it spread in our church let's watch for one another let's pray together thank you father and

I pray that your word would be that which works in our hearts and that you would encourage us and that you would bless father I pray that you would be with us as we partake now of the Lord's supper may it remind us of what Christ has done I pray that it would be that which encourages us and feeds us and grows us we thank you for being able to observe this picture together in Jesus name amen