

Gospel
DNA

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to community group! We believe that people experience and grow in their faith when they get to spend time reflecting on God's Word, and also hearing from other Christians. That's what we're hoping for tonight. As we get started, here are some things happening in the broader life of the church:

- **Congregational Meeting | Sunday, September 15th, 7p**

Members...join us as we hold officer elections, talk about the ministry year, and spend time in worship and prayer. Our childcare RSVP deadline has passed (it was September 6th).

- **Missional Motherhood | Saturday, September 21st , 9-11:30a**

Join moms with children of all ages (including expecting mothers) for breakfast and connections. During this event, we will be discussing the topic of hospitality, led by Jill Jackson. Come learn, engage with others and be encouraged! There is nothing to prepare or read prior.

If you need childcare, please RSVP by September 13th.

If you would like to sign up to serve or bring food to share, sign up during the next step of registration.

- **10 Year Celebration | October 4th, 6-8p**

This year, we celebrate 10 years of ministry at New City Presbyterian Church. Join us for an evening of dinner and stories at 20th Century Theater in Oakley to mark this milestone. Tickets are \$20/person and include dinner and two drink tickets. This is event is for 12 years old and up. Childcare is *not* provided.

- **Back2Back Haiti | February 29th-March 7th**

We are taking a group to Haiti with Back 2 Back this winter. If you'd like to join in talk with Pastor Ryan.

The Centrality of the Gospel

Galatians 2.11-21

>> *Open your group with a prayer* >>

We're trying to get to know each other a bit. So let's start with this question: What do you get excited about when you think about Fall? (add in name, where are you from, where do you live now, what do you spend time doing during the day)

STUDY/DISCUSSION

This fall we're doing a series together on the nature of the gospel.

>> READ >> Galatians 2.11-21

1. What stood out to you as significant, encouraging, confusing or challenging in this passage?
2. vv.11-13 — As best you can tell, piece together the background to this text? What was happening? How did it begin?
3. v.13 — Why does Peter alter his behavior? Have you ever had an experience where your beliefs did not change, but some other factor caused you to alter what you were doing? What was that like?
4. v.14 — Analyze Paul's confrontation of Peter. What do you think Paul was thinking as he interacted with Peter. Is there anything we can learn from this for our own lives?
5. v.13 — What does this teach us about the importance and responsibility of leadership? Are there areas in your life you need be conscious of how you're influencing others?
6. vv.15-16 — Here Paul summarizes the gospel. How would you explain the essence of the gospel to someone who may have never heard it? How is it different from every other conception of salvation?
7. Are there ways you are seeking to be justified through things that you do (i.e. works of the law)? What are you most likely to pursue other than Jesus to feel validated?
8. vv.17-20 — If you really believed that you were united to Christ and when God looked at you he saw the beauty of Jesus, would anything be different about the way you lived?

9. Why is this passage good news for our city? Is there anyone you know he needs to hear this?

PRAY

Take some time and pray together. This can be done together as a whole group, or in smaller groups.

As the year is just beginning you may want to think about how you'd like prayer to go in your groups and plan diligently to start in that way. That is, figure out how sharing and prayer will be a priority in your group. For example, you may set a timer on your phone during the sharing time so that you get to prayer rather than spend all of the time sharing.

Either take notes yourself or have someone else write down all the prayer requests so that you can share them with the group and so that you yourself can be praying for your group members.

Leaders' Notes

(from the ESV Study Bible)

Gal. 2:11–21 Paul's Opposition to Peter, to Preserve the Truth of the Gospel. Paul had said that he was not a people-pleaser (1:10), and his confrontation with Peter as reported here bears that out. It is unclear when Paul's speech to Peter stops and his direct address to the Galatians begins again, but 2:15–16 ("We ourselves are Jews by birth") was surely addressed to Peter.

Gal. 2:11–12 The setting of Paul's confrontation with Peter was **Antioch**, Paul's missionary base for a number of years. Peter had been participating in meals where Jewish and Gentile Christians ate together, but then he **drew back and separated himself**, eating only with Jewish Christians. Interpreters differ in their explanations of this situation in this passage. One view is that the men who came **from James** (probably sent from the Jerusalem church by the apostle James) encouraged Jewish Christians to eat separately and follow kosher dietary laws. Peter decided to go along with this, perhaps not realizing that his example would make the Gentile Christians feel like second-class citizens in the church unless they followed Jewish ceremonial laws (such as dietary laws [vv. 12–14], circumcision [v. 3; 5:2–12; 6:12–15], and holidays and festivals [4:10]). Paul saw that Peter's behavior threatened the gospel of justification by faith alone because it implied that all Christians had to "live like Jews" (2:14) in order to be justified before God.

Gal. 2:12 Eating with the Gentiles would mean not eating according to Jewish dietary restrictions. **The circumcision party** advocated following the ceremonies of the Mosaic covenant law at least regarding circumcision, food, and special days (see note on vv. 11–12).

Gal. 2:13 Not only was Peter guilty of **hypocrisy**; as an influential leader, he also led astray **the rest of the Jewish Christians, even Barnabas**.

Gal. 2:14 force the Gentiles to live like Jews. Peter was guilty of hypocrisy (v. 13) because, though he had been happily living like a Gentile (i.e., not observing food laws), he was now requiring Gentile Christians to observe Jewish table regulations if they wanted to eat with him. Such a requirement, however, would undermine the gospel itself by making justification depend on "works of the law" rather than "faith in Jesus Christ" (see v. 16). **before them all.** Because Peter's sin was a public sin that was setting a bad example for the church, Paul confronted him publicly (compare the different procedure that Jesus commands regarding a private sin against an individual person, which hopefully can be corrected privately; cf. [Matt. 18:15–20](#); [James 5:19–20](#)).

Gal. 2:15 Gentile sinners, that is, Gentiles who do not even attempt to follow the OT laws and therefore clearly do not live up to them.

Gal. 2:16 "Justified" means "counted righteous" or "declared righteous" by God (see esv footnote). If people were sinless and perfectly obeyed all of God's perfect moral standards, they could be justified or "declared righteous" on the basis of their own merits. But Paul says that this is impossible for any Gentile or even for any Jew to do (cf. [Romans 1–2](#)). **we know that a person is not justified by works of the law.** Paul saw that Christ had taught justification by faith, and so he called God the one "who justifies the ungodly" ([Rom. 4:5](#)). Paul will soon show that this view was taught even in the OT (see [Gal. 3:6–18](#)), though it was not the view of most of first-century Judaism. (For example, a 1st-century-b.c. Jewish writing states, "The one who does righteousness stores up life for himself with the Lord, and the one who does wickedness is the cause of the destruction of his own soul" [*Psalms of Solomon* 9.5]). In [Gal. 2:16](#), "works of the law" means not only circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath, but any human effort to be justified by God by obeying a moral law. **faith in Jesus Christ.** Some contend that the Greek means the "faithfulness of Jesus Christ." But "faith in Jesus Christ" seems much more likely since "faith in Jesus Christ" is synonymous with the next phrase, "we also have believed in Christ Jesus." "But through faith in Jesus Christ" is the opposite of depending on one's

own good deeds for justification, since justification comes through faith in Christ alone. **We also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ** implies that justification is the result of saving faith. The contrast **and not by works of the law** shows clearly that no human effort or merit can be added to faith as a basis for justification. (This verse was frequently appealed to in the Reformation by Protestants who insisted on “justification by faith alone” as opposed to the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification by faith plus merit gained through the “means of grace” administered by means of the Roman Catholic sacraments such as penance and the Mass.) Paul concludes decisively: **by works of the law no one will be justified** (cf. [3:10–14](#); [Acts 13:39](#); [Heb. 10:1–14](#)). On justification, see also notes on [Rom. 4:25](#); [Phil. 3:9](#); [James 2:21](#).

Gal. 2:17 found to be sinners. Paul has just discussed how Gentiles are known among Jews as “sinners” ([v. 15](#)). When Jewish Christians associate with them, they are liable to the charge from traditionalist Jews of becoming “sinners” themselves. Paul firmly dismisses any such charge.

Gal. 2:18 I would prove myself to be a transgressor. Ironically, the one who is most clearly seen to be a sinner is not the one outside of the law (i.e., the Gentile), but the one who is under it. So, if Paul were to reintroduce the edifice of the law, he would merely prove that he stands condemned.

Gal. 2:19 through the law. Paul is not talking about a conscious experience of being dissatisfied with the law, but about how he was unknowingly caught up in God’s plan in which the law actually pronounced the sentence of death on Paul’s old way of life. Paul has **died to the law**, probably meaning that he no longer lives in the realm of trying to gain justification by obeying the law and that therefore the law can place no demands on him. Paul died to the law, he says, **so that I might live to God**. That is, since he no longer is under the impossible burden of trying to earn acceptance with God through his own efforts, he has gained God’s approval through the justification that is in Christ, and in this new relationship with God he has found an amazing new freedom to live a life devoted to God. Thus Paul is always seeking to live in a way that pleases God, yet not at all depending on his own actions for justification.

Gal. 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. Paul’s former “self,” the person Paul was before he trusted Christ, with all of his sinful goals and proud, self-exalting desires, came to a decisive end—he “died.” **It is no longer I who live** does not mean that Paul has no personality of his own (all his writings show that he does) but that his own personal interests and goals no longer direct his life; rather, **Christ who lives in me** now directs and empowers all that he does. How then does he, as a “crucified man,” gain any strength to go on living? **the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**. Paul seems to be saying that, as he trusts Christ moment by moment, Christ then works in and through Paul to give spiritual effectiveness to all that he does. **who loved me and gave himself for me**. The fact that on the cross Jesus bore believers’ sins as their personal, individual substitute (“he ... for me”) shows that the crucifixion was not an impersonal, mechanical transaction, but a personal expression of Christ’s love for people as individuals.

Gal. 2:21 Paul returns to the hypothetical situation raised in [v. 18](#) of imagining that the law was back in force again as a means by which he was trying to earn justification. In that case, **if righteousness were through the law**, then Christ’s death would have been pointless, for people could earn their own justification by their obedience. But in fact, this is something they can never do. This highlights the depth of the human problem: it cannot be remedied by the God-given law. Sin is so serious that only the substitutionary, atoning death of God’s Son can deal with the problem. God’s **grace** in the gospel must therefore be humbly and thankfully accepted as the only way of salvation.