

Series: The Gospel-Centered

Title: The Good News that Makes Us Right

Text: Galatians 2:1-3:14

Breaking the Ice:

OPTION # 1 – Do you watch the Super Bowl? [why or why not?]

OPTION # 2 – Assuming you have ever watched the Super Bowl, what one of your favorite Super Bowl ads of all time?

Discussion/Study:

1. Read Galatians 2:1-3:14 (esp. 3:13-14) – The Bible tells us that we need to be made right with God because of our sin (rebellion against Him), which is expressed in our failure to obey the law of God. As Paul says in Galatians 3:10 (quoting Deut. 27:26), if we fail to obey “all things written in the book of the law and do them” is “cursed.” Obviously, none of us meet that perfect standard, and therefore cannot depend on our own “works” (good deeds, performance, etc.) to be made right with God. Why is it so critical to personally understand that we cannot make ourselves right with God based on our performance? How does believing this change the way that you relate to God and others?
2. Read Genesis 16:1-11 and 21:1 (see esp. Galatians 2:15-16) — Paul tells that the Galatian Christians that we are “justified” (i.e., made right with God”) not by our works of the law (“performance”) but by faith in the work of Jesus Christ who “became a curse for us” and therefore redeemed us from the curse of the law. Reflect on the practical implication of that for your day/week. If God truly looks at you and declares you innocent because of Jesus Christ, what does that mean for you today? How does that shape the way you think about yourself? Your successes? Your failures? Your response to the criticism by others? Take a few minutes this week to reflect and journal your thoughts.
3. Read Galatians 2:1-3:14 (esp. 3:13-14) – Paul presents a sharp contrast between two ways of being justified (i.e., “made right”) before God: (1) justified by our performance (i.e., works of the law) vs. (2) justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Take a moment to contrast the two in your own life. What does it look like practically in your own life when you are operating out of a “performance mentality”? What does it look like when you are operating by faith in Christ?
4. Perhaps you don’t think about things like circumcision or keeping Jewish dietary laws as an modern indications that you are “right with God”, however, what are some modern equivalents of how we try to perform (or tell others they should perform) to be made right with God?

5. Read Galatians 2:1-3:14 (esp. 3:13-14) – Paul corrects Peter publicly for failing to “live out the truth of the gospel” by not applying the gospel to his treatment of the Gentile Christians in the first century. Paul’s overarching point is that the gospel is not only the means by which we are made right with God, but it is also the means by which we are made right with one another. Peter failed to live out the gospel by making the Jewish dietary practices an additional boundary to being in right fellowship with the Gentile Christians. In our modern context, most of us don’t make whether a person is circumcised an issue for whether we welcome them into our fellowship. However, what do you think are some modern practical examples of ways we distort the gospel by adding other expectations that a person must do to be in “right” (i.e., relationship) with us (or with one another)? In what ways have you been excluded due to someone else’s non-gospel standards? In what way have you perhaps excluded others?
6. Read Galatians 2:1-3:14 (esp. 3:13-14) – In stark contrast to Peter’s hypocrisy in failing to live out the gospel in his relationships, is Paul’s loving boldness to confront Peter publicly in the full view (and for the sake of) the church. As John Stott notes, what Peter lacked was not convictions, but the courage to live them out when confronted with peer pressure by the false brother who claimed to be “*from James.*” In your own life, in what way can you identify with Peter’s hypocrisy and failure? What do you think drove Paul to boldly speak up?
7. Read Galatians 2:1-3:14 (esp. 3:13-14) – Building upon the previous question, Paul’s public confrontation with Peter was loving, but it was also bold. Paul tells us that his motivation in both confronting Peter and in refusing to circumcise Titus was the same, he did so because it was a matter of preserving the gospel. Think about what would have / could have happened in the churches in Galatia if Paul had not spoken up. What was at stake?
8. Apply this to your own life and relationships. When is something a “gospel” issue, and when is it not? How do you know when to speak up and when to stay silent?