

Gospel Doctrine and Gospel Culture

Galatians 2:11-21

January 30th, 2022

1. Gospel- _____ behavior (2:11-14a)
2. Gospel- _____ confrontation (2:14b)
3. Gospel- _____ explanation (2:15-21)
 - a. We are justified not by the _____ of the law but through _____ in Christ. (v. 16)
 - b. Does salvation through faith excuse _____? (vv. 17-20)
 - c. If we could be righteous by our own obedience, then Christ died for _____. (v. 21)
4. Applying the Word
 - a. Have I been justified _____ in Jesus alone?

Do I _____ as if I believe we are accepted by faith in Jesus alone?

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on Galatians 2:11-21

1. Read Acts 10 (or just 10:9-28). What did Peter learn about Jews, Gentiles, and unclean food?
 - a. According to Gal. 2:12-13, why was he pulling back from what he knew was right?
 - b. How can the fear of other people lead us to do what we know is wrong? What strong alternative motivation does Gal. 1:10 provide?
2. "Justification" is a key word in Galatians. How would you define justification? See Romans 4:2-6.
3. Compare Gal. 2:15 with Romans 3:9-10. Why would Paul say in Romans "Jews and Greeks are all under sin" but appear to contradict that in Galatians?
4. How do Romans 3:19-20, 28 and Ephesians 2:8-9 restate the same point as Galatians 2:16? If scripture is so clear on this, why do people/religious groups continue to believe that we are saved by works?
 - a. If you ask someone, "If you died and stood before God and He asked why He should let you into heaven, what would you say?" what answer would show they are trusting in some form of good works to get to heaven? What answer would show they are trusting in Jesus alone?
5. What are some common ways that a church or individual Christians might affirm the gospel with their words or doctrinal statement but contradict it by their conduct? What are some ways we can reflect the gospel in our conduct toward each other? See Ephesians 4:1-3 (which follows 3 chapters on the gospel) and Romans 12:9-16.

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Big idea: We are accepted by God through faith in Christ, so we must relate to other Christians as if we really believe that.

Intro –

Ray Ortlund, Jr. – “It is possible to sincerely preach true doctrine while, at the same time, utterly deny that doctrine by an ugly anti-gospel culture.”

Jared Wilson – “A message of grace may attract people, but a culture of grace will keep them. What our churches need, not in exchange for a gospel message but as a witness to it, is a gospels climate.”

What we teach matters. We must teach and believe what the word actually teaches. What the word teaches is a message of grace – rich, unearned favor and love from God.

You are saved by grace. (Eph. 2:8)

You are justified by grace. (Rom. 3:24)

You stand by grace. (Rom. 5:2)

God freely bestowed the riches of His grace on you. (Eph. 1:6)

We sing of *Amazing Grace* at church.

But does the culture of the church match the gospel of grace? What we will see in this passage is that we can deny with our behavior what we affirm with our words.

1. Gospel-**denying** behavior (2:11-14a)

- a. The scene moves from Jerusalem, that capital of Judaism for a 1,000 years going back to the time of David, to Antioch, a leading city of the Greeks in modern day Syria.
- b. Peter – the pillar apostle – ate with the Gentiles, either eating the same non-kosher food or sharing table-fellowship with them. But when Jewish Christians came he steadily withdrew and kept himself at a distance from the Gentile Christians.
- c. Peter should have known better – and he DID know better – he just wasn’t living by it.
 - i. In Acts 10 Peter himself had a vision from God with all kinds of animals that were considered unclean under OT law and should not be eaten. But Peter was told in the vision to eat them.
 1. **Acts 10:13-15** voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!" ¹⁴ But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean." ¹⁵ Again a voice *came* to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no *longer* consider unholy."
 2. The passage goes on to move beyond food to the gentile Cornelius who wanted to speak with Peter. It was a key moment in breaking down the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles.
 3. **Acts 10:28** And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean."
 - ii. Why was Peter now pulling back?
 1. He gave in to fear of people.

- iii. We get the idea that this is an ongoing issue for Peter. This is the same Peter that denied knowing Jesus when asked by a servant on the night of Jesus' death.
 - iv. Peter, the apostle. Peter, the pillar. Peter, one of the inner 3 of the 12 disciples. Peter, the rock. Gave in to fear and did the wrong thing.
 - 1. Isn't there something a little comforting about that?
 - 2. Martin Luther actually used this as a key passage in the reformation to show that the Pope and the official church could be wrong. If Peter can be in error, can't anyone?
 - d. His conduct was not "in step with the gospel."
 - i. NASB – straightforward – lit. "orthopedeo" – straight walking
 - ii. The food itself was a non-issue. They were free to eat or free to not eat. The issue had to do with the people and how one was made clean and acceptable before God. *That* is why it was a gospel issue. That is why Paul confronted Peter.
2. Gospel-***motivated*** confrontation (2:14b)
- a. It was a public action by a prominent leader that was pulling others – even Barnabas! – into the same action.
 - i. That is why the confrontation was public.
 - ii. Ordinarily there is wisdom in approaching someone personally and privately if you have concerns.
 - iii. But this was different. It follows more in line with what Paul says in 1 Timothy 5:19-20
 - 1. **1 Timothy 5:19-20** Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. ²⁰ Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.
 - b. It's likely that v. 14 is the quote and then vv. 15-21 are a summary of the argument Paul made.
 - i. Peter, you're Jewish and have been living like the Gentiles – you've been eating with them, perhaps even eating the same food – why are you not expecting them to follow all the food restrictions to become clean when those are unnecessary?
 - ii. How does one become clean and acceptable before God?
3. Gospel-***clarifying*** explanation (2:15-21)
- a. We are justified not by the ***works*** of the law but through ***faith*** in Christ. (v. 16)
 - i. First use of justification in Galatians but comes 3 times in this verse and once in the next.
 - ii. These are the two and only two alternatives – works of the law or faith in Christ. But only one is actually possible. Only one is God's way.
 - 1. 3 times in v 16 alone it tells us God's way is the second way not the first.
 - a. General – "a man"
 - b. Personal – "we ourselves"
 - c. Universal – "no one"
 - 2. Luther said God had to beat it into our heads over and over again
 - iii. Justification is a legal term. It is the exact opposite of condemnation. To condemn is to declare someone guilty. To justify is to declare someone not guilty.

- iv. J.I. Packer: To justify in the Bible means ...to declare...of a man on trial, that he is not liable to any penalty, but is entitled to all the privileges due to those who have kept the law. Justifying is the act of a judge pronouncing the opposite sentence to condemnation – that of acquittal and legal immunity.
 - 1. "The only way to be justified is sheer hard work. You have to toil at it. The "work" you have to do is the "works of the law". That is, you must do everything the law commands and refrain from everything the law forbids.' "Supremely', the Jews and the Judaizers would go on, 'this means that you must keep the Ten Commandments. You must love and serve the living God, and have no other gods or god-substitutes. You must reverence His name and His day, and honour your parents. You must avoid adultery, murder and theft. You must never bear false witness against your neighbour or covet anything that is his.' But still they have not finished. 'In addition to the moral law, there is the ceremonial law which you must observe. You must be circumcised and join the Jewish church. You must take your religion seriously, searching the Scriptures in private and attending services in public. You must fast and pray and give alms. And if you do all these things, and do not fail in any particular, you will make the grade. God will accept you, you will be justified by the works of the law."
- v. Even we who are not "gentile sinners" have been saved not by the law but through faith in Jesus, why are you acting like obedience to the law is required for fellowship?
 - 1. "we – you and I – Paul and Peter – Jews – despite our great privilege in God's covenant – know (not think, lean toward, consider) that anyone is accepted by God through faith in Christ Jesus not works."
- vi. Notice the kindness in redirecting Peter back to his identity in Jesus – His faith in Jesus – Peter, you don't need approval from these men. You've already got Christ's.
 - 1. Rather than –
 - a. You would do this if you were really committed Christians
 - 2. We can ask –
 - a. Remember the grace God has showered on you – what does living out and enjoying that grace look like in this situation?
- vii. Then Paul anticipates an objection.
- b. Does salvation through faith excuse sin? (vv. 17-20)
 - i. Does it make Christ a "minister of sin" by disincentivizing obedience?
 - 1. You've probably heard that objection before. You've maybe wonder it yourself. If we are saved by grace through faith apart from our own good works, won't people just have an excuse to sin?
 - ii. "May it never be!"
 - 1. Same strong repudiation as in Romans 6:1 – may it never be! Mei Ginoito!
 - 2. **Romans 6:1-2** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?
 - a. Same issue – is this gospel of grace allowing us to justify real sin so that we actually sin more? No! Absolutely not!
 - b. Sharing a meal with gentiles is not an act of sin. Rather, it is a recognition that we stand at the same place, the ground is level at the foot of the cross, and we

are justified by grace just like the gentiles so we can gladly and happily have union with them.

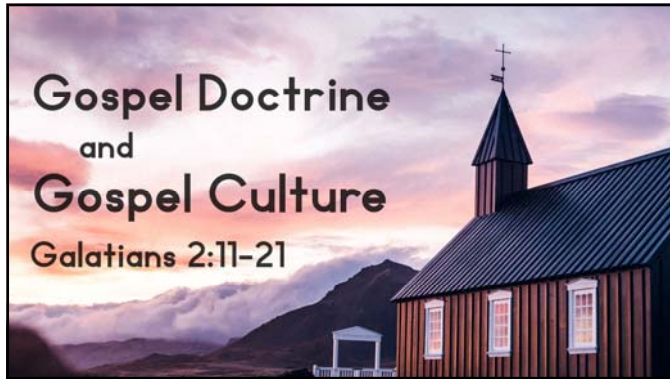
- iii. The dietary laws were part of the wall of separation between Jews and non-Jews to keep the people of God pure and distinct.
 1. Now that wall is broken down and unnecessary because Jesus fulfilled it.
 2. Rebuilding it would be a sin by creating division.
- iv. I died through the law that I might live to God.
 1. This statement is tied to the beginning of v 20 – how did he die to the law? He died with Christ. He was united with Christ so that when Christ died, he died. The demands were fulfilled.
 2. It is not a mere legal fiction in which it is only a legal verdict. There is real, true, life, heart change in which we now want to live to God.
 - a. **Galatians 6:15** For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.
 - b. I have a new heart to live for God!
 3. Imagine two different scenarios that play out on a little league baseball team. Each team is coached by one of the dads.
 - a. On Team A – the coaches son knows his acceptance by his father is based on how well he plays. If he plays well – gets a good hit, throws strikes – then his father embraces him and praises him. If he doesn't play well – he drops the ball, strikes out, throws balls – his dad is distant, cold, or screams, even tells his son he is an embarrassment. How will the son experience that? His emotions will be up and down, he won't feel settled in his relationship with his dad, his performance will likely go down even because of the pressure.
 - b. On Team B – the coaches son knows he is loved and accepted by his father regardless of how well or poorly he plays. The dad makes it known to his son – verbally and by the way he interacts – that his son is his son after good games and after bad games. He embraces him after both. The son still wants to do well, but not to earn his dad's acceptance and love but because he loves his dad and wants to please him. He steps up to the plate without the same pressure.
 4. Galatians 5 will go on to describe patterns of living that are inconsistent with our new life and patterns of living that are consistent.
 - a. Deeds of the flesh (5:19-21)
 - b. Fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23)
- v. I've been crucified with Christ (v. 20)
 1. He loved me and died for me and through faith I'm united with Him so that His death was credited to me.
 2. Now Christ continues to live in me.
 - a. Doesn't mean my individuality is taken out and replaced by Jesus. It just means that not only did He die the death I deserved, He also gives me new life to live for Him now.
- c. If we could be righteous by our own obedience, then Christ died for ***nothing***. (v. 21)
 - i. To nullify is to declare invalid, to set aside, to thwart.

- ii. We can either say we are justified by our own obedience or that we are justified by grace, but it cannot be both.
 - 1. **Romans 11:6** But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

4. Applying the Word

- a. Have I been justified ***through faith*** in Jesus alone?
 - i. This is gospel doctrine.
- b. Do I ***treat others*** as if I believe we are accepted by faith in Jesus alone?
 - i. This is gospel culture. This is actually the target of this passage.
 - ii. Ray Ortlund, Jr.: “Why must our churches preach gospel doctrine and embody gospel culture simultaneously, by God’s grace? Because faithfulness to the gospel requires more than doctrinal purity in our churches. It also requires relational beauty in our churches. But it is possible sincerely to preach true doctrine while, at the same time, utterly deny that doctrine by an ugly anti-gospel culture.
- iii. What conduct is out of step with the gospel?
 - 1. Hyper-criticism of others – why?
 - a. The gospel says you are a sinner as well.
 - 2. Unforgiveness – why?
 - a. The gospel says you are forgiven freely when you repented.
 - b. Parable of the unforgiving servant
 - 3. Constantly bubbling anger and wrath – why?
 - a. God’s wrath was satisfied against you
 - 4. Gossip – why?
 - a. It says your sin is fodder for my entertainment
 - 5. Making non-biblical issues a condition for fellowship
 - a. Parenting strategies
 - b. Schooling options
 - c. Confusing preferences and principles
- iv. How should we conduct ourselves instead?
 - 1. **Romans 15:7** Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.
 - 2. ^{ESV} **Romans 12:10** Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.
- v. We need to take this personally.
 - 1. Jared Wilson - Most importantly, I must be what I want to see. So often as I am checking my church’s pulse—which Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Life Together* wisely counsels against doing—I am thinking of all the people who need to get their act together, who need a big dose of humility. We may be right about them. But applying to others first is not the humble impulse of grace taken seriously. *I* need to keep a close watch on my life and doctrine. *I* need to outdo others in showing honor. *I* need to practice confession and

repentance. I need to humble myself. As I am growing intellectually, I need to hold the fruit of the Spirit up to my heart and be fearless and honest about asking, "How am I doing in these areas?"



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1. Gospel-denying behavior (2:11-14a)

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Acts 10:28 And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and *yet* God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.

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2. Gospel-motivated confrontation (2:14b)

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1 Timothy 5:19-20 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. ²⁰ Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

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3. Gospel-clarifying explanation (2:15-21)

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b. Does salvation
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Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

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Galatians 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

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c. If we could be righteous by our own obedience, then Christ died for *nothing*. (v. 21)

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