

(Galatians) the Truth of the Gospel

by Brian Brodersen

Paul defends his apostolic calling against the accusations of the false teachers and emphasizes the importance of faith in the gospel of salvation.

Duration: 58:11

Topics: "Gospel Truth", "Legalism Vs Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Peter and the vision he had of a sheet with various animals on it. The Spirit spoke to Peter and told him to rise, kill, and eat. Peter initially resisted, stating that he had never eaten anything unclean. However, the Lord responded by saying that what He has cleansed should not be considered unclean. This revelation helped Peter understand that the Gentiles were not to be considered unclean anymore. The speaker also addresses the issue of legalism in the church, emphasizing that salvation is a free gift of God and that any teaching suggesting salvation through works undermines the truth of the gospel. The speaker mentions the presence of false brethren who tried to impose legalism on the believers, and he criticizes Roman Catholicism for its historical role in promoting a legalistic approach to salvation.

Transcript

So, as we pick up tonight in the second chapter of Galatians, we pick up, as you might recall, right in the middle of Paul's defense of his apostolic calling. The false teachers, as we pointed out previously, had come to Galatia and contradicted Paul's message of salvation by grace through faith, and they also denied that Paul was truly an apostle. The first portion of his letter is really dedicated to defending himself against these accusations.

And so, as we've already seen, he first of all tells them about his former life in Judaism, his former conduct in Judaism, how he excelled beyond many of his contemporaries. And then he speaks briefly about his conversion and how, after he was converted, he was then personally instructed by Christ himself and given the gospel. And that occurred when he went into Arabia.

And then, finally, he told us that he made his way to Jerusalem after about a three-year period and met with Peter. And he spent 15 days with Peter. He also met James, the Lord's brother.

But he didn't, up until that point, meet any of the other apostles. And so, as we pick up, he's continuing now on with his defense. And so, he says, then after 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem with

Barnabas and also took Titus with me.

So, a 14-year period transpired between the time that Paul originally went up and met with Peter for that brief period. And then he finally makes his way back to Jerusalem again. You see, again, in defending his apostolic calling, he's wanting them to understand that his understanding of the gospel was not something that was imparted to him by men.

It wasn't even imparted to him by those who were apostles before him. But it was a message that came to him directly from Jesus Christ. Now, remember, the false teachers were implying that Paul's gospel was different than the gospel that was being preached in Jerusalem by Peter and by John and by those that were with the Lord in his earthly ministry.

And so, Paul's defending himself against those accusations. So, it was 14 years later. So, for 14 years, Paul had no contact with the other apostles.

And it was during that 14-year period of time that he would have planted many of the churches that were established there in the region of Asia Minor. And it would have been during that time as well that he would have established the churches that he's now writing to, the churches there in Galatia. But he mentions two men that went up with him.

He mentions Barnabas and then he mentions Titus. Now, Barnabas was a Levite. He was of the tribe of Levi.

So, he would have had some priestly types of responsibilities. But he was from the island of Cyprus. And we read about him early on in the history of the church there in the Acts of the Apostles, how he was a man full of compassion and good works.

His name was actually Joseph, but he was named Barnabas as sort of a nickname because it means son of encouragement. And he was just one of those extremely encouraging people. As a matter of fact, he was the one who first met up with Paul shortly after his conversion.

And he was the one who recognized the hand of God upon Paul. And he was the one who then, you know, sort of testified to the fact that God really was using this guy and encouraged the apostles to embrace his ministry. So, it was Barnabas who went with him after that 14-year period.

And then Titus is mentioned also. The interesting thing about Titus is although he's referred to frequently in Paul's letters, Titus is never mentioned in the book of Acts. And it seems a bit strange really because you have almost everybody else mentioned at some point throughout the history of Acts there.

But strangely enough, Titus never does show up in the historical account that Luke gives us in Acts. He's mentioned in the epistles to the Corinthians, of course, here in Galatians, in 2nd Timothy, Paul makes reference to him. And then, of course, Paul wrote a letter to Titus as well.

But who was Titus? Well, kind of like Timothy but a bit different. He was just a young man who had been saved and brought alongside of Paul and was being just sort of groomed and trained for the ministry by the apostle. Now, he was probably a similar age to Timothy.

The only difference between the two, Titus was purely Greek while Timothy was Greek and yet he also was Jewish. His mother was a Jewish and his father was a Greek. But Titus was a thoroughgoing Greek.

He was a Gentile totally and completely. And he was, you know, sort of an example that Paul would take with him up to Jerusalem of the kind of work that God was doing among the Gentiles. And I think Paul intentionally took Titus for that very reason, to sort of show them the fruit of what God was doing out there among the Gentile nations.

Here's a young man from the Greek world who now is loving and serving the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, Paul takes Timothy or Titus, excuse me, along with him up to Jerusalem. And he says, and I went up by revelation and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.

When he says, I went up by revelation, what he means is that the Lord spoke to him and told him to go up. He didn't go up by invitation from the apostles. They didn't, you know, sort of call him in to stand trial before them about the gospel he was preaching.

He didn't even really sort of seek an audience with them himself, but the Lord specifically spoke to Paul and said, go up to Jerusalem. And no doubt these issues needed to be cleared up and so it was by revelation that Paul went up first of all to Jerusalem and he communicated to them the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run or had run in vain. So Paul goes up and he has a private meeting with the apostles.

And the reason he has a private meeting is because he didn't want his journey to be in vain. If they would have opened it up to anybody and everybody who had an opinion on the subject, it could have just turned into a big disaster. And so rather than doing that sort of a thing, Paul goes up and he meets with them privately.

And he actually tells us that that was the reason that they had the private meeting in the fourth verse. He says, and this occurred because false brethren secretly brought in who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. So it was because of the presence of these false brethren, as he calls them, who would have crept in and tried to impose this legalism on them.

Paul knew that that was a very real possibility. So he arranged to have this private meeting, but back in verse three and verse three, in a sense, I think should sort of be in parentheses because verses two and verses four seem to me to be connected, while verse three is just sort of, you know, a bit of a side note. And here Paul again mentions Titus.

He says, yet not even Titus, who was with me being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. You see, the Galatians, you remember, they're buying this whole thing lock, stock and barrel that in order to really be Christians, we have to become Jews. We've got to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses.

Paul says, no, it's wrong. I went to Jerusalem myself. I took Titus with me.

He's a Greek. And there he stood in the council there. He stood in the presence of the apostles, and no one compelled him to be circumcised.

You see, what was happening is these false teachers were lying. They were saying that the apostolic position was contrary to Paul's, when in reality, the apostolic position was identical to Paul's. But these were men who were dead set against Gentiles being saved apart from becoming Jews.

They wanted to hold on to sort of a monopoly on God. They believed that they were the people and that God was for them and God wasn't really for anybody else. And they were willing to concede that the Gentiles could participate and to some extent become partakers of the promises.

But they had to do it by means of becoming Jews themselves. And interestingly, among the Jews, when a Gentile did convert to Judaism, although that was something that the Jews were very excited about, they still held sort of a lower position. They were, in a sense, sort of second class citizens in the kingdom simply because of that Gentile heritage.

And so there was all of this pride that was working through these guys to try to continue to perpetuate this system, this Judaic system, that really, by the time that Paul's ministry occurred, had itself become so corrupted from what it originally was. The Judaism of the New Testament period was not the Judaism of Moses. And we see that clearly with the ongoing conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

And they were doing things constantly in opposition to Jesus. And they were, as you remember, they were quite often accusing him of violating the law. He was not violating the law of Moses.

He was violating the additional things that they had sort of tacked on to it. And so by the time that Jesus came and by the time the apostles began their ministry, Judaism was largely corrupted from the simplicity that was originally in it. And so it's this corrupted form of Judaism that these men are trying to perpetuate.

But Paul says, don't believe it. Titus was with me. No one compelled him to be circumcised.

And then he said, back in verse five again, regarding those false teachers who were creeping in, he says, to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. So Paul says, we did not give them an inch. We did not give them any ground whatsoever.

We stood firmly against them that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. You see, Paul understood this as a full blown assault against the gospel. He clearly understood that to add anything beyond faith to the prescription for salvation was to corrupt the message.

And so Paul fought this all of his life. You know, interestingly, Paul contended more ferociously against legalism than he did against the other extreme of antinomianism. Antinomianism is lawlessness.

And of course, Paul did contend against that as well. And he addresses that over and over in the scriptures. But Paul's primary battle was with the legalist, and he was just the man for the job because he had come himself from that world.

And he understood all of the arrogance, all of the self-righteousness. He understood how a man believing that he could be justified by his own works would become so puffed up over that. And that's why Paul could refer to himself even as the chief of sinners.

You see, we often think of the chief of sinners as, you know, the guy living in the gutter, needle tracks all up and down his arm and all over his body. And, you know, it's just his mind is wasted through drugs and alcohol and everything else. And we look, man, there's the chief of sinners right there.

Look at that guy, just the picture of sin and corruption and depravity and everything else. Paul said that he was the chief of sinners and he saw the height of sin as being not that man in the gutter necessarily, but self-righteousness, arrogance, the thought that through my own effort that I could somehow attain to the

standard of the holy God. Paul saw that as the height of sin.

And that's what he fought against. And that's what he's fighting against here, because he said this was a direct assault against the truth of the gospel. I mentioned last week this statement that Paul made there about there being the possibility of another gospel, but it really isn't another gospel, because as we pointed out, when you when you add works, the good news is gone.

That's why he said it's not really another gospel. The good news is that God saves us by grace through faith. And last week we talked briefly about probably the greatest culprit in all of church history in regard to this whole imposition of the legalistic approach to salvation being Roman Catholicism.

And it really is true. And I know that's offensive to people and that really hurts people's feelings and bothers them that anyone could say such a thing, but it really is true. You know, it wasn't long after the apostolic period that this mentality crept back in.

Fall pot. Fall pot. Paul fought.

I was telling Cheryl. Oh, Cheryl was telling me that, you know, she taught here Friday morning, and she said in the middle of her study, she said a word, and I don't remember what word it was, but she said she said it so strangely it just sounded like some foreign accent, you know. So she kind of went off that and said she was speaking with an Indonesian accent.

But I was telling her last Sunday I spoke somewhere, and I was doing just what I just did. I was putting the wrong letter of the word. So pray for my brain.

It's not functioning too well. Let's try it again. Paul fought against.

He fought against this, and yet it wasn't long after the apostolic period that this kind of thing crept right back in. And honestly, if you were to look at, let's say, fourth or fifth century Christianity, by that time you were hard pressed to find New Testament Christianity anywhere. It had that quickly been corrupted, and the corruption was primarily this thing that we're talking about here.

There was the addition of the necessity of some sort of work on the part of the person to make a contribution to their salvation. And then that, of course, was perpetuated throughout the centuries by what became known as Roman Catholicism. And that misunderstanding, that distortion, that corruption of the gospel was not altered in any major sort of a way until the Reformation period in the 16th century.

It really was through Martin Luther and others at the time that the apostolic gospel of salvation was finally brought back into general view. There were other groups and people that understood this, but they were just a small minority who had no real ability to affect change on a larger level. But Luther being a doctor within the church, holding a high position as a theologian, having influence, it was him that God used to break this false teaching that had come back in, this corruption of the gospel.

And so Paul saw it clearly that if they were to allow this imposition of works, the gospel would be corrupted and the truth of the gospel would be lost. And so that's why he fought against it so tenaciously. And then he says, but from those who seem to be something, whatever they were, it makes no difference to me.

God shows personal favoritism to no man. For those who seem to be something added nothing to me. Now, Paul is speaking here of the other apostles.

And he says, those who seem to be something now, I don't think Paul is speaking in a derogatory manner toward them actually, because he, of course, respected them and acknowledged them as fellow workers. What he's doing, though, is he's contending against that perspective that had been imparted by the false teachers. The false teachers had had in the minds of the Galatians had really distorted the picture of the apostles in Jerusalem.

And they were something. Oh, man, they were real apostles. They were great men of God.

And so Paul is kind of sort of sarcastically really challenging their presentation, not disrespectful to the apostles themselves. And so he uses this terminology. They seem to be something, he says, but they added nothing to me.

But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter, for he who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles. And when James Cephas, who is Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me in Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I was also eager to do.

So what Paul is doing simply is he's setting the record straight. He's saying, listen, you've believed a lie. These guys aren't telling you the truth.

I've been to Jerusalem. I know the other apostles. I've met with them.

And there was a recognition and an acknowledgement by them of my apostleship to the Gentiles, just as it was evident that Peter, his apostleship was primarily to the Jews. Now, one thing to just point out really quickly in verse 70 says the gospel for the uncircumcised. Then he talks about the gospel for the circumcised.

These are not two separate gospels. And it's clear that we understand that, you know, if you read Time magazine, Newsweek, you know, whatever, you know, occasionally they'll come up with these articles that have to do with various aspects of Christianity and the way they present it. They present it in such a way as to imply that there's, you know, there's so much confusion in and uncertainty in Christianity as it is, you know, you really can't be sure what the gospel message is.

And sometimes they will make these kinds of divisions. They'll talk about the Pauline gospel. They'll talk about the Petrine gospel, or they'll talk about the Johannine gospel.

Those are their technical terms for Peter, Paul, and John. And they'll present it in a way as to give the impression that each one of them had a different gospel, that each one of them had a different take or a different perspective, and a take or a perspective that was in conflict with the other. And that is bogus.

There is absolutely no truth to it. All you have to do is simply read the pages of the New Testament, and you'll find that there's complete harmony. There are times where it seems like, well, wait a second, Paul's saying this here, but James is saying that over there.

Why does there seem to be maybe a little conflict? You have to understand the background. You have to know who Paul was writing to, who James was writing to. Some people have stated that Paul and James are in conflict because they say Paul teaches salvation by grace through faith, and James teaches

salvation by works.

Not so. But you have to understand, Paul is writing to legalists, so he's emphasizing one thing, and James is writing to antinomians, lawless people, and so he's writing from a different perspective. But when you really look at it, when you take the time to consider it and piece it together, you find that these guys were all saying the same thing.

And so there's not a separate gospel for the Gentiles, and then another gospel for the Jews. Even to this very day, though, there is sometimes the impression given by some that there is. I was reading a few years ago a book written by a man who is a leader in what you would call the Messianic Jewish community.

And the Messianic Jewish community is a segment of the church where Jewish people who become believers in Jesus, they set up fellowships that are more like the synagogues of old than the church, and they follow along with a very Jewish sort of an approach to worship. And there's a strong emphasis on the Jewish aspect of the gospels and so forth, which is OK. But as I was reading through this, I was shocked to find that this particular author was talking about the Jewish believers as having a greater responsibility than Gentile believers and talking about a different calling and these kinds of things.

And all of a sudden, I thought, wait a second. Do we have a division here? Are there Jewish believers who have a different kind of a calling and a greater responsibility? And then the Gentiles over here, they have their calling and a lesser responsibility that goes against the grain of everything the New Testament teaches that there is neither Jew nor Gentile. So even today, these kinds of things can still sort of be floating around and we have to be on our guard.

We have to watch out for them. Paul is simply saying that there were not two different gospels. He's just saying that Peter was God's instrument to minister predominantly among the Jews, while Paul was God's instrument to minister predominantly among the Gentiles.

Now, the Roman church's claim that Peter was the first pope really finds a lot of problems right here in this second chapter of Galatians. If you take what Paul said here at face value, Paul should have been the first pope rather than Peter, because Paul clearly says Peter's ministry was predominantly a Jewish ministry, while his ministry was predominantly a Gentile ministry. What was Rome but the center of the Gentile world.

So if there had been such a thing as a pope, Paul would have been a better candidate for it than Peter. But we'll see that this is really just a fabrication. Now in verse 11, Paul continuing, he says, now when Peter had come to Antioch, he's continuing his story, he was talking about being in Jerusalem with them, and then the final word in Jerusalem was they gave us the right hand of fellowship, they simply encouraged us to take care of the poor.

But then Peter came to Antioch. Now, of course, Jerusalem was the center of Jewish Christianity. Antioch had become, in a sense, the center of Gentile Christianity.

Antioch was up north in Syria. And this was the place where Paul and Barnabas and many others had been based from and had gone out on their mission, being sent from that area there. And so Peter, he had come up to Antioch and listen to what Paul said, when Peter was in Antioch, I withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed.

For before certain men came from James, he would eat with Gentiles. But when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

So Paul is really laying it all out for the Galatians. Peter had to be rebuked. Now, that again is a strike against Peter being the Pope, because the Pope's infallible.

So how are you going to be rebuking him? But again, of course, that is just a fabrication. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, here it is again, he mentions it again, the truth of the gospel. I said to Peter before them all, but Paul was, he was gutsy.

You know, he was a man of just deep conviction and total integrity. And Peter, of course, was a revered and a highly respected man at this stage. And of course, in many ways, rightfully so.

He was indeed an apostle. He had been used by the Lord so powerfully. Remember, it was Peter who stood up on the day of Pentecost and preached that message.

And 3000 souls were added to the church. It was Peter who had led that early apostolic ministry. It was Peter who had stood before the Sanhedrin, the high priest and all of them and contended boldly for the faith.

It was Peter who had healed that lame man. It was Peter who, as he would pass through the streets of Jerusalem, they would bring people out so that perhaps his shadow would just fall upon them. And people were being healed by that.

Peter's a pretty important person in the church, but Paul understood what we all need to always understand about everybody in Christian leadership. Peter was a man and as a man, he could be wrong. And when he was wrong, he needed to be challenged on it.

You know, sometimes we, we take people and we elevate them. It's just, it's so easy to do. You know, you put people up on a pedestal and you begin to think that that particular person, whoever it is, your favorite pastor, Bible teacher, whatever, you just tend to think that, man, their word is God's word.

They're, they're holy. They're, they're right. They, you know, everything they say and do is just right straight down the line with what God would say and do.

If you are thinking like that about anyone, stop quickly because you're going to be in for a huge disappointment because it just isn't true. You see, we're all people. We're all men.

We're all vulnerable. And if we look too closely at men and if we depend too much on them, we're going to easily be stumbled because the best of men have feet of clay, as someone has said. The best of men.

It's just something that, that just tends to happen with us though. I just think there's a propensity in it for us as people to, to see a person that God is using and just to respect them and honor them. That's right and good, but not blindly, not to the point where we think that, you know, because they said it or did it, it must be okay regardless.

You see, Paul was a man who understood that God is no respecter of persons. And so for the sake of the gospel, as I'm sure it was difficult for Paul, but he knew that this could not be allowed to go on. He knew that he had to step forward and he had to say something and he had to do it publicly.

And so that's what he did. He called Peter out and he said to him before them all, if you being a Jew live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Jews or Gentiles to live as Jews? Peter, why, why the change? But notice what it says back in verse 12. It says, but when certain men came from James, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those.

You know, Peter was, he was an interesting personality because from everything that we get in the gospels, on the one hand, he was very courageous and he was the sort of guy who, you know, in one sense, he didn't fear anything. Remember when they were arresting Jesus in the garden? Who was it that drew a sword and cut the ear of the high priest's servant off? It was Peter. Who was it that was always there saying, Lord, I'm with you to the end.

I'm going to defend you. I'm going to, you know, it was Peter. And in so many ways, he was a very, very courageous man.

But yet he was also the one, remember, who was afraid of that young servant girl when she said, are you a Galilean? Also, I think you are. I think I saw you with Jesus of Nazareth. No, he said, I don't even know him.

Why did he do that? He was afraid. And here again, funny enough, this bold, courageous, rugged, rough fisherman, suddenly he's intimidated. He's intimidated to the point that now, because certain have come down from James, he withdraws.

He's there having great fellowship with the Gentiles. They were eating together, which of course, a Jew would not eat with the Gentile. Gentiles ate things that were forbidden to the Jews.

And the general mentality among the Jews was that the Gentiles were unclean. You just don't sit down and eat with Gentiles. But Peter was over all of that.

You remember he was there in the house of Simon, the Tanner. He was on the roof. He, he was hungry.

He went into a trance. He saw that, that sheet come down with the various animals on it. The spirit spoke to him and said, rise, Peter, kill and eat.

And Peter said, Lord, I've never eaten anything unclean. And the Lord said, what I've cleansed, do not call unclean. And Peter understood from that point on that the Gentiles were not to be considered unclean anymore.

But all of that's in the past. All of that's history now. And Peter's afraid.

These, these guys have come down who are claiming to be sent down by James. Now, one more quick point here, going back to the Roman Catholic thing. And I'm not, I'm seriously not trying to be derogatory toward that, but it's important that we clarify things because there's a long history of misinformation.

And again, this whole idea about the, you know, the papacy and Peter is the first Pope and all that. This chapter destroys that, as I pointed out, Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul rebukes Peter, but notice Peter is intimidated by James.

You know, it's clear from the new Testament that James was the head of the church in Jerusalem. He was the leader of the Jerusalem church and Peter was in leadership as well. But if we go according to the tradition, Peter, of course, was at the helm as the Pope, but it just doesn't square with what the scriptures

say.

And that's what we always have to do. We always have to go back to the scriptures and we have to look and see what they say. I had somebody call in yesterday on pastor's perspective and they said to me, um, my, I think it was their mother, my Catholic mother said, in, in regard to, you know, the idea that Jesus had brothers, of course, the Catholic church denies that the church says there was, there was no word to describe other relatives.

So anybody, your cousin, your nephew, your aunt, your uncle, they were all just referred to as brothers and sisters. And she said to me, is that true? I said, you know what? I heard that growing up. That was the defense that was constantly brought forth to me when I would question why it says here that Jesus had brothers.

And yet the church insists that he didn't. Oh, because you see, they didn't have a word for other relatives. And, and so they just use brothers, but it really means cousins.

No, there is a word. You can find it in Luke's gospel chapter one. It's translated cousin.

Elizabeth was the cousin of Mary. The word is also translated relative in the older version. It's translated kinsmen, kinfolk.

There was another word, but these, you know, these little things just come out. Oh no, there, there's no word for that. And oh, of course Peter was the Pope and all of that.

But when we go back to the scriptures, we see, no, this is fabricated. This is all, um, this is all an invention of man. James was, there was anybody who was in charge.

It was James. And that's why Peter was intimidated. These men claimed that they had been sent down by James and Peter's fearful of that.

So Paul just begins to challenge him. Now you're eating with Gentiles, but now suddenly you're withdrawing from them. Man, could you imagine how the, the Gentile believers must've felt? What an awkward and ugly situation that must've been.

Their friend, Peter, the, the apostle Peter, the one that was with Jesus, the one who had been so instrumental in the foundational period of the church there in Jerusalem. And the one who walked on water, Peter, here he is. And he's with us.

He's our brother. We're eating together. Man, the Gentiles must've been so excited about that.

But then suddenly Peter gets up from the table. He goes across the room with the Jews and he no longer wants to associate with them. And Paul says the hypocrisy became so intense that even Barnabas was swept up into it.

Boy, the pressure, you know, there's such pressure sometimes that comes upon us, peer pressure, cultural pressure, pressure to conform. And Paul's the one who stands firm and we love him for it. And so he goes on after saying, if you being a Jew live in the manner of Gentiles and not as a Jew, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? We who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles.

Now, Paul doesn't in his own mind, of course, think that there's that huge distinction. He's speaking as a Jew though. This was the mentality of the Jew.

We're Jews. We're not centers of the Gentiles. But he says, even we, we know that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

Even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law for by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified. So Paul just preached justification by faith alone, right there to Peter. He reminded him of that.

He said, Peter, what are you doing? We know this ourselves. We as Jews, we've realized that the law can't save us. We've come to Christ to be justified.

So he's saying to Peter, Peter, what are you doing? You're contradicting everything that we believe. And of course, again, it was all born out of Peter's fear. Now, Peter was a great man in as much as he knew how to repent.

Peter knew how to repent. He didn't at this point. Say, get lost, Paul, who are you? I'm Peter, and I'm right no matter what I do.

Peter knew he was wrong, and I'm sure that was a humbling moment for Peter. I'm sure that was an embarrassing moment for him in so many ways. I'm sure it was a moment where the devil probably for a long time afterward would come back around and say, oh, that Paul, boy, he thinks he's something, doesn't he? Rebuking you, Peter, the great apostle.

And I'm sure there was a temptation at times to allow some sort of rub between them, but Peter never did. And when he wrote his second epistle, he spoke of our beloved brother, Paul. That's the sign of a great man.

Great men stumble, great men fall, great men do stupid things sometimes, but truly great men repent. The man who can't admit he's wrong is a weak man. And that goes across the board, whether it be at home with your wife, with your kids, on the job, with your friends, in the church, whatever the case might be.

The Christian life is made up of repentance, acknowledgement of being wrong, apologies, saying I'm sorry. You know, I've had many occasions where people have called me on the carpet and, you know, there's something in you that you just want to, even though you know you're wrong, you just don't want to admit it, especially when you're fighting with your wife. I never want my wife to know that I was actually wrong.

And sometimes it's so hard to just stop and say, you know, I'm wrong in this. But the minute you do it, everything's over, isn't it? That's the way it is. The minute we truly repent, it's just the problem's solved.

So Peter did that. But Paul, now he continues on, and the question among commentators is, you know, where does what Paul said to Peter sort of leave off and where does Paul pick up just in his argument for justification by faith? And it's hard to say exactly, but it seems to me that he does actually leave off his statement to Peter right here at the end of verse 16. And then he goes on to address the other arguments that would be brought to bear against his position.

Now, you see, what these men accused Paul of is this idea of antinomianism. And I know that's kind of a big word, but it's a word that simply means lawless. And what they would accuse the apostle Paul of doing was teaching, basically, that you could be saved and still live in your sins.

And Paul never taught anything even close to that. But that would be the accusation that they would make against him. And so he says, but if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners.

Is Christ therefore a minister of sin? You see, that's what the opposition would say. They would say, oh, this Paul listened to his message. His message is that Jesus makes us sin more.

Jesus is a minister of sin. Because Paul was teaching in order to be justified, you had to admit that you actually were a sinner. And so they're twisting that and they're perverting that to say that Paul is actually teaching that you can receive Christ and go on sinning, that that's what his message was really all about.

Paul says, certainly not. That is not remotely what I'm saying. For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

Now, this is a very difficult verse to understand. Verse 18. There's a big split among commentators as to what it actually is referring to.

But I think what Paul is saying here is if I was preaching that following Christ means sinning all you want, I would truly be a transgressor. He says, that's not what I'm preaching. If I build again the things that I destroyed, what did he destroy? He's destroying this whole idea of living in sin.

He says, I'm not I'm not saying that I can live in sin. I truly would be a transgressor if I was saying that. He said, for I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

And then he says, I have been crucified with Christ. You see, this is his answer to their accusation that Paul's saying that we just go on living in sin. He says, no, I have been crucified with Christ.

It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh, I don't live it in sin. The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God.

So he's answering their accusation, saying, no, I died to that. I was crucified with Christ. God forbid that anyone should think that my message is that we receive Christ and go on sinning.

Of course not. I've been crucified with Christ. That life, that old life is past.

And now I'm living a new life. The term justified means to be declared righteous. It's a legal term.

It's the opposite of condemned. It means to be declared righteous, to be declared guiltless, to be declared innocent. Now, Paul says we are justified by Christ.

We are declared righteous. But the argument against justification by faith historically, not just from these guys back in Paul's day, but to this very day, the conflict between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism centers around this particular issue right here. The conflict centers around whether a man is declared righteous by Christ or whether a man must do things to obtain righteousness.

Now, Paul says that we're justified by Christ, which means we're declared righteous by him. So the opposition says, OK, well, that that means that you can just live any old way you want, because you're just saying God declares you righteous. It doesn't mean that you actually are righteous.

He just declares you righteous. And so you're then insinuating that it doesn't matter how you live because you've declared righteous. You're right with God.

You're going to heaven and you don't have to do anything beyond that. But you see, the problem is they're failing to look at the whole picture because the moment a person is justified, other things happen as well. The moment you believe in Jesus Christ with your heart, the moment you believe truly that he died for you to save you from your sin, he rose again to justify you.

The moment you truly believe that and ask that that work that he did be applied to you, the moment you receive Christ, you are declared righteous. You're not righteous in a literal sense, but you're declared righteous. But something else happens the moment you're justified.

Simultaneous with your justification, you are regenerated. You're born again. The moment you're justified, you are also regenerated.

You see, the second God declares you righteous, he places his spirit in your life and he regenerates you. He gives you a new life. So you see, a person who's declared righteous is not going to go on living in sin because that person now has a new life.

It's the life of Christ that's been imparted to us. So if we fail to understand that justification and regeneration go hand in hand with one another, then we can get confused in our thinking and draw the wrong conclusion, like many have done. But if we understand that justification occurs simultaneous with regeneration and the process of sanctification begins instantaneously as well, sanctification is making us holy, then we will forever be liberated from the idea that somehow justification by grace alone through faith alone means that you can be saved and never have any evidence of it in your life.

That's an impossibility. If you're truly justified, you'll be regenerated. And if the life of God is in you, the life of God will manifest itself out from you as well.

And so Paul says, I'm crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who am living, but Christ is living in me now. And the life that I now live, I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

And then Paul said this, I do not frustrate the grace of God. For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing. See, Paul says these men are frustrating the grace of God.

They're actually setting it aside because if righteousness can come through some work that I can do, then Jesus did not need to die. Christ's death was in vain. If there's some means by which I can attain heaven through my own attempt, then Christ's death was a total waste.

It should have never occurred. And so the converse of that is this. The fact that Christ died is proof positive that there is no other way for a man to be right before God.

You remember Jesus in the garden, what he prayed? He said, Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. If what is possible? If man's salvation is possible through any other means, if there's any other way that a person can be saved from their sin, if there's any other way a person can be delivered from

hell, if there's any other way a person can go to heaven, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

And what happened? The cup did not pass from him, did it? He drank the cup of the wrath of God. And the death of Jesus is the proof to all humanity that there's no other way that a person can be saved. Because if there was any other way possible under heaven, Jesus would have never died.

God would have said, oh no, this is how you get saved. Just do this. So Paul says, I do not frustrate the grace of God.

I'm not setting aside the grace of God. But he said, that's exactly what these other men are doing. They're discounting God's grace because they're implying that somehow there has to be a human contribution.

And that undermines the truth of the gospel. Whether it was happening in the first century or the 16th century or the 21st century, it doesn't matter. Anybody who's teaching that you're saved through your works of any sort is frustrating the grace of God and denying the obvious.

The obvious being stated clearly through the cross of Christ. So Paul goes on and I'll just give us a little glimpse of where he heads from here. He says, oh foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? These guys are under a demonic influence.

And so he'll go on to address that as we carry on. Lord, we thank you for the gospel. We thank you, Lord, that salvation is the free gift of God.

And Lord, this is something that the more we think about it, the more we marvel. It's something that truly no mind of fallen man could ever dream up. That you would take it upon yourself to do all that's needed to save mankind and that we would simply enter it by faith.

Lord, I pray tonight for any with us that perhaps themselves have been trying to work their way into your favor. May they just stop tonight and receive your love and your grace. May they just open their hearts and receive what you did.

And Lord, I pray too for any that might be living under the delusion that somehow you can be saved but never have a changed life. Lord, that they would know that justification means regeneration and the life of God instilled in the human soul. And I pray that they might know tonight just by a survey of their own heart and mind behavior, whether or not that really is the case.

And if not, Lord, help them to surrender all, to truly be declared righteous before you tonight, and to be born again, filled with the spirit and set on a new course, a course that glorifies you. So work that in hearts tonight, we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11486.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/brian-brodersen/galatians-the-truth-of-the-gospel/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net