

Galatians
“Living Free”
Main Teaching: 1:10-6:10
2:11-16
“Defended declaration”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 11-13 Not good enough for Peter

III. Vs. 14 No second class citizens

IV. Vs. 15-16 Life-giver not Law-giver

I. Intro.

The agape meal was part of early church life and at the supper the whole congregation came together to enjoy a common meal by pooling everybody's resources. For those who were slaves it may be the one decent meal that had for the week and marked the togetherness that the Church had when compared with the world. But the Jews believed that God was only gracious and merciful to Jews and they were forbidden to do business with gentiles let alone eat with them. That set up the collision in the church in Antioch where prior to the Judaizers from James arrival Peter shared the common meal together but when they arrived he stopped for fear. And this led to all the other Jewish believers separating themselves from the gentile believers even influencing Barnabas. **A church ceases to be Christian if it contains class distinctions.** In the presence of God there is neither noble nor base, rich or poor, Jew or gentile all are sinners for whom Christ died and we share a common relationship to our Heavenly Father which makes us all brothers and sisters. A famous name (Peter) can never be used to justify a infamous action.

II. Vs. 11-13 Not good enough for Peter

Vs. 11-13 At the council in Jerusalem Peter, James and John approved of Paul's gospel and Peter gave a passionate speech on being the instrument by which God granted gentile conversion. But apparently he fell under the spell of ungodly peer pressure because although he was in favor of welcoming Gentiles into the kingdom of God without first becoming Jews; when the Judaizers came to Antioch, (*Paul's home church*) he refused to eat with them. Verse 11 clearly states that "**Peter... was to be blamed**" but how can this be? Peter according to Roman Catholicism was the first Pope and as Pope he was infallible in matters of doctrine and Church practice. Clearly neither Peter nor any Pope is infallible as there is only one that is, Jesus Christ.

The phrase "*he would eat with the gentiles*" is in the imperfect tense in the Greek showing that Peter's eating with the gentiles was a regular practice. So his withdrawal was from a habit of having always done so. When a Jew refused to eat with a Gentile, he did this in obedience to Jewish rituals. Peter no longer kept a strict observance of the Law of Moses for himself, but by his actions, he implies that Gentile believers must keep the law – when he himself does not! **They were good enough to enter the church but not good enough for Peter!** Peter knew that these men would be offended by his fellowshipping with the gentiles so he treated them as the Judaizers did as second class Christians. And he did this with full knowledge of:

- Of what he had learned in 3 ½ years of observing Jesus who ate and drank with sinners
- Of what he had been told by the Lord not to call unclean that which God has made clean

- Of having witnessed firsthand the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius before he had even finished the message

“The sins of teachers become the teachers of sin!” and Paul wouldn’t stand for this so he publically confronted him in his hypocrisy. Peter’s actions were based upon *“fear”* but what did he have to fear from those Judaizers from Jerusalem? The only thing they could do was jeopardize his position in the Church in Jerusalem. It seems that Peter’s fear led him to compromise so as to not lose his position of power! But that being the case: *“Who was in power and leading the Church in Jerusalem, Peter or the Judaizers?”* Clearly Paul had to address this hypocrisy or the outcome would have led to two classes of Christians. It seems to me that some of the Jewish believers viewed the outcome of the Jerusalem council as the creation of two groups:

- a. **Jews:** Who could go on living like Jews keeping the law and maintaining their traditions.
- b. **Gentiles:** Who were free circumcision and the law but were no the less 2nd class citizens.

These observations reveal to us that the old Peter was still present in Peter and even the baptism of the Holy Spirit hadn’t washed away its stench. Oh dear ones we cannot tame the flesh, bath it even in Holy Water, no it must die daily, moment by moment! That is why Paul said in Romans 6:11 that we must *“also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Martin Luther said, *“No man’s standing is so secure that he may not fall. If Peter fell, I may fall.”* Why even Barnabas fell under their influences and the *“man of encouragement”* became the man of *“discouragement”* and his name at the moment was *“Bummer”* instead of *“Barnabas”*! Here again was a

man who according Acts 11:24 was characterized as a “good man **FULL** of the Holy Spirit.” Dear ones that is why “one death” won’t suffice and neither will “one filling”. **I need to die daily and be continually under the spout where the Holy Spirit comes out!** Let these two (Peter and Barnabas) serve as a reminder that we must repeat the above process moment by moment! Their fall led to all of the believing Jews following suit. What responsibility and accountability those who are leaders have, be that in the home, on the job or in the church.

III. Vs. 14 No second class citizens

Vs. 14a It was not that Peter denied the gospel Paul proclaimed, Peter’s offence was against the gospel in conduct, “*his behavior was a contradiction of the truth of the gospel*”. It was predicated not upon conviction (*in fact he contradicted his convictions*) it was peer pressure from a small group of the circumcision party that caused him to compromise the gospel he believed and to practice what he didn’t. The same Peter who had denied the Lord for a maidservant’s inquiry had repeated the act. By use of the phrase “*But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel...*”, it is clear that Paul didn’t view this as a simple matter of seating arrangements at a church potluck. It was instead a matter of how they perceived the gospel to the gentiles as not eating with them said publically that they were not saved. There they are, at the Antioch Church potluck and he Gentile Christians have just been asked to leave, or are told to sit in their own section away from the “***real***” Christians. And Peter (*the honored guest*) and Barnabas (*the man who led many of them to Jesus*) goes along with all this and so does every other Jewish believer. All except for Paul who publically confronts Peter for doing so. Peter was the face of the early Church the most famous

believer on the planet at the moment. Not only this next to the most famous Christian in the world was the man (Barnabas) who had encouraged Paul and was his sponsor and he was siding with Peter. It was Jesus and Paul against the world.

Vs. 14b Here we have what Paul said before Peter and the crowd.

- a. First Paul reminded Peter publically that was no longer practicing strict obedience to the Law of Moses, *“Hey Pete, I saw you eating bacon wrap shrimp; you’re not keeping a kosher diet!”* Can you imagine how Paul’s words spoiled the party as those Judaizers choke on their bagel, *“What, Peter eats shrimp and bacon with gentiles?”* *“Say it aint so, Pete!”* I can imagine that even though Peter was eating kosher food at the time he probably felt a little sick.
- b. Second, Paul was very emphatic saying, *“If you, born and bred a Jew, discard Jewish customs, how unreasonable of you to impose them on Gentiles.”* The kind of Christianity that still thinks and behaves as though by its self efforts it can please God and by its achievements it can show its self superior to other men is not Christianity at all!

IV. Vs. 15-16 Life-giver not Law-giver

Vs. 15-16 Paul reminds them that we are all declared right before God by the work of Jesus alone and not by the keeping of any or all of the law. If the law was capable of declaring a person right before God than why the animal sacrifices, why the sacrifice of the only Son of God? The word “justified” in verse 16 is a legal term that means to receive a favorable verdict and in this case that verdict is before God. Next Paul tells his listeners how a person *“receives a favorable verdict”* by saying *“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 shall be justified.” There will not be one person in heaven declared innocent by any effort on their part. Every person from Adam to the last person to breath air on this earth will be declared not guilty by Jesus sacrifice alone. The phrase “*we have believed in Christ Jesus*” is literally “*we have believed **INTO** Christ Jesus*” and speaks of “**committal**” not just “**conviction**”! The difference is if you are a diabetic and know intellectually that you need to take insulin yet do not take it verse a diabetic that makes sure that you do take your insulin. Jesus is no “**Law-giver**” He is a “**Life-giver**”! Paul said, “*by the works of the law **no flesh shall be justified***” not Gentile nor Jew, not anyone will ever be considered right by their works! That’s what hypocrisy always does it tries to make others do what we ourselves cannot do!