

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 02 Sept Galatians 1:1-24 True Gospel
- 2) 09 Sept Galatians 2:1-21 True Grace**
- 3) 16 Sept Galatians 3:1-22 True Life
- 4) 23 Sept Galatians 3:23-29 True Heirs
- 5) 30 Sept Galatians 4:1-31 True Freedom
- 6) 07 Oct Galatians 5:1-26 True Fruit
- 7) 14 Oct Galatians 6:1-18 True Compassion
- 8) 21 Oct James 1:1-18 With Perseverance
- 9) 28 Oct James 1:19-27 With Obedience
- 10) 04 Nov James 2:1-26 With Works
- 11) 11 Nov James 3:1-18 With Control
- 12) 18 Nov James 4:1-17 With Submission
- 13) 25 Nov James 5:1-20 With Anticipation

INTRODUCTION

- Paul crammed a lot into this short chapter of 21 verses:
 1. Paul recanted his Jerusalem & Antioch trips
 2. He reiterated we are justified by faith, not by works, else Christ died in vain if our good works could save us
 3. Paul also went on to explain that Christ lived through him by faith (and, by implication, in us), which is by obedience to God's Word (as James will later tell us in his letter)

Passage	Comments
2:1	<p>Legalism Needs to be Challenged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If only Paul had emails, Facebook, and YouTube to make his case instead of snail-mail – Right? • Paul retold his trip Jerusalem to resolve a very crucial and controversial issue with the other Apostles & church leaders – Circumcision..... Acts 15:2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Circumcision, a commandment of God, should be followed for Jews & Gentiles alike, some said. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After all, Ex 12:48 clearly says when a Gentile chooses to accept the God of the Jews, then they were to be circumcised and treated as a Jew 2. Also, Gen 17:14 teaches that anyone who is not circumcised is to be “cut off” / ostracized 3. And circumcision was to be a perpetual covenant between God and His people, Gen 17:13 4. Plus, Jesus never taught on the cessation of circumcision (argument from silence) 5. Even Paul taught that all that matters in life is keeping the commandments of God..... 1Cor 7:19 ♦ This seemed like a black & white, open & shut case in favor of circumcision ♦ BUT, there were teachings of Jesus that prompted a reconsideration of the “whole counsel” of God <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jesus fulfilled the Law & a new covenant began 2. Jesus said that all food is now proclaimed clean, eliminating the prohibition of uncleaned food 3. By implication, all other OT practices based on physical works, not on moral character, are now in jeopardy of having ceased ♦ The Challenge. How to artfully articulate the correct answer and resolve this dispute sooner than later ♦ Paul had to refresh the Galatians of this resolution
2:2	<p>Paul Takes a “Private” Approach with Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why the need to go behind closed doors? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Secrets make Apostles seem more important? <input type="checkbox"/> Prevent or minimize politicking by the masses? • Paul exercised political correctness when he presented his credentials and his activities to the Church leaders • Consider this. Paul presented his credentials and ministry to the Jerusalem church Elders & Apostles.

Passage	Comments
	<p>These men had to assess if Paul was a self-proclaimed apostle or a true-blue, Jesus-appointed Apostle. A wider audience with less than spiritually mature participants could invoke politicking, bickering, and worst case, dissension and splits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shouldn't such discussions be open to the church? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ If the early church was a congregational-ruled body, maybe. But the early church was Elder-ruled ♦ Recall that the church was allowed by the Apostles to select their Deacons (assuming the men in Acts 6 were indeed Deacons), and these men were then appointed to their position by the Apostles; and it was Apostles/Elders, not the Church, who selected other Elders (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5).
2:3-5	<p>Political Intrigue as “False Believers” Cause Havoc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This might be akin to you & me going to a Mormon place of worship to show them how wrong they are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ We might have a passion to share our version of the Gospel, but it would not convey meekness or love • Paul exercised political correctness when he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:1-3), but neither Paul nor Titus felt compelled to have Titus circumcised when challenged to do so by some “false brethren secretly brought in.” WHY? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Consider this. Paul did not capitulate on every issue. He had Timothy circumcised so Jews would not be offended but won to Christ, but Titus was not circumcised just to please some unruly Jews ♦ Principle to live by. Know when to stand your ground for the Gospel sake or capitulate for the sake of the Gospel and for others
2:6	<p>God Shows No Partiality (Paul & Peter were Equals)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Those of high reputation (i.e., the Apostles) added nothing to my message’ – This sounds awfully arrogant of Paul. If we were to give Paul the benefit of the doubt and not think evil of him, he might be portraying this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Peter, James, and the others gave no new insight or made any changes to Paul's message to the Gentiles ♦ In other words, Paul and the other Apostles and church Elders were in full unity



Passage	Comments
Consider how Paul grew more humbled, it seems, as the years passed by	<p>Paul came across as almost arrogant early in his ministry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The (Apostles) contributed nothing to me" ... Gal 2:6 (~AD 55) • "I might be the least of the apostles...but I labored more than all of them" 1Cor 15:9-10 (AD 57) • "I am not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles" 2Cor 11:5 (AD 57/58) <p>About 5 years later Paul seemed to drop a notch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I am less than the least of all saints" Eph 3:8 (AD 62) <p>A few years after that, he dropped another notch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I am the worst of sinners" 1Tim 1:15 (AD 65/66)
2:7-9	<p>Separate focus for the Gentiles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But why 11 Apostles for the Jews and only 1 dedicated to the Gentiles? • Who is harder to witness to? Strangers or Family? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ It would take more concerted effort by the majority of the Apostles to convince and convert the hard-hearted Jews than for Paul to convert the more sensible and reasonable Gentiles (sometimes)
2:10	<p>Remembering the Poor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the poor mean every low-income wage earner, beggars, and the homeless? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe • Do the poor need to be qualified, such as saved or unsaved, churched or unchurchd? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes • The poor, in this context, were not all those who we need to feed, clothe, and shelter or everyone who was low on money, but of the poor within the church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ For example, a church member loses their job, or their house burns down. Then the church can step in to offer temporary support ◆ ...and the poor do need to be qualified before helping ◆ Recall that Paul taught that if someone didn't work, they didn't eat 2Thes 3:10 ◆ Even Peter told the lame man at the temple gate that he didn't have any money for him (but remember, plenty of money was put at the feet of the Apostles for the care & feeding of the saints) Acts 3:6; 4:35 ◆ And the church was only to support widows on a full-time basis who met very restrictive guidelines. 1Tim 5 ◆ Yet, Scripture teaches that families need to take care of their own and not burden the church 1Tim 5:8 ◆ And individual believers, not the church, are to be generous with their friends, families, and neighbors after they discern there is no prodigal behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remember, the prodigal son came to his senses and he humbly went home after he realized nobody gave him anything Luke 15:16-17
2:11-14	<p>Paul Opposes Peter Publicly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles when to Challenge Leadership (i.e., Elders) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ When severe moral sin is witnessed by at least 2, such as immorality or theft 1Tim 5:19 ◆ When the Gospel or core doctrine is tainted.. Gal 2:14 • Paul recognized the destructive influence of Peter's hypocrisy (eating pork with the Gentiles until his Jewish friends came to visit), & not to challenge him on it would lead to distortion of the Gospel – justification, not by faith, but by works, such as adhering to dietary restrictions, avoiding unclean people groups, etc. • What happens when no one has the guts to challenge sinful behavior within the body of believers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consider 5 of the 7 churches in Revelation 2-3 who were immoral, taught false doctrines, or had no zeal

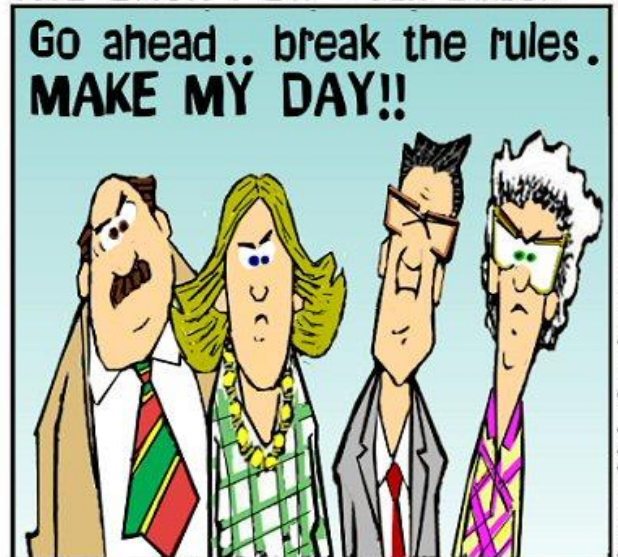
Passage	Comments
2:15-21	<p>Justification by Faith</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul sums up his thoughts for this chapter by nailing down what is really at stake when we bring works into our justification or salvation process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ v21. If works could save us or justify us before God, than Jesus Christ died in vain • v18. What does it mean to be a "Transgressor of the Law"? If we have a legalistic work-based slant, and we break just one of the minor laws, recall what is said in James 2:10, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." • v20. It is no longer (we) who live but Christ lives in (us), and (we) live out our faith in Him (through obedience) • 1Tim 1:9 says it this way: "...the law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are rebellious" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ IOW, God's holy (obedient) & righteous saints don't need any laws since they look after the welfare of others and seek to honor & please God in all things

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS

- Whether we like it or not, Christians are rule-keepers, not rule-breakers
- The question becomes, "Which rules are we obligated to keep?"
- The answer is relatively easy. We are to obey the following:
 - ◆ All moral laws and principles (e.g., avoid adultery, lying, stealing)
 - ◆ All good laws established by our Govt (e.g., speed limit, pay taxes)
 - ◆ All good commands from parents (e.g., be home by 10, clean room)
 - ◆ Others?
- The commands we can ignore or challenge include the following:
 - ◆ OT sacrificial and dietary laws since Christ fulfilled those laws (e.g., no longer need circumcision and we can now eat shrimp)
 - ◆ Govt laws that go against God's Laws (e.g., abortion) – but there may be a price to pay, such as jail time
 - ◆ Tithing? (we'll leave Tithing for another lesson, or you can visit <https://rodoneil.com/wp-content/uploads/04-Tithing.pdf>).
 - ◆ Others?

NEXT WEEK: Galatians 3. Paul goes ballistic on the Galatians to grab their attention ("You fools"). Then he goes technical on them substantiating his claim that Faith does not need the Law.

THE BACK PEW - JEFF LARSON



LEGALISM – It's not just a job, it's a way of life.