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)

2:2

Paul Takes a “Private” Approach with Leadership
- Why the need to go behind closed doors?
  - Secrets make Apostles seem more important?
  - 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.

2:3-5

Political Intrigue as “False Believers” Cause Havoc
- This might be akin to you & me going to a Mormon place of worship to show them how wrong they are
- 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?
- 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

God Shows No Partiality (Paul & Peter were Equals)
- ‘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:
  - 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: Consider how Paul grew more humbled, it seems, as the years passed by.

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| 2:7-9   | Paul came across as almost arrogant early in his ministry:  
- “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)  
About 5 years later Paul seemed to drop a notch:  
- “I am less than the least of all saints” ... Eph 3:8 (~AD 62)  
A few years after that, he dropped another notch:  
- “I am the worst of sinners” ... 1Tim 1:15 (~AD 65/66)  
**Separate focus for the Gentiles**  
- But why 11 Apostles for the Jews and only 1 dedicated to the Gentiles?  
- Who is harder to witness to? Strangers or Family?  
- 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) |

### Passage: Remembering the Poor

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| 2:10    | Does the poor mean every low-income wage earner, beggars, and the homeless?  
- Yes | No | Maybe  
- Do the poor need to be qualified, such as saved or unsaved, churched or unchurched?  
- Yes | No | Don't Know | Sometimes  
- The poor, in this context, were not all those who need to feed, clothe, or shelter everyone who was low on money, but of the poor within the church  
- 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  
- Remember, the prodigal son came to his senses and he humbly went home after he realized nobody gave him anything ... Luke 15:16-17 |

### Passage: Paul Opposes Peter Publicly

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| 2:11-14 | Principles when to Challenge Leadership (i.e., Elders)  
- 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 taint...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?  
- Consider 5 of the 7 churches in Revelation 2-3 who were immoral, taught false doctrines, or had no zeal |

### Passage: Justification by Faith

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| 2:15-21 | 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  
- v21. If works could save us or justify us before God, then 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”  
- 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.