

**LIVING THE GOSPEL**  
**Galatians 2:11-14**

The portion of Scripture we're studying today is actually one big contrast to the preceding passage from last week. It begins with the words, "but when..." because just before this Paul described how he went to Jerusalem to meet some of the apostles and laid out his teachings on the gospel, they agreed on the gospel, they added nothing to Paul's teaching and shook hands, giving each other the right hand of fellowship – BUT WHEN – Peter came to Antioch not long after, his actions told a different story. As we've already studied so far in Galatians, we've seen how false Jewish brethren, who were of a sect of the Pharisees (according to Acts 15:5) and commonly referred to as Judaizers, snuck into the Galatian church, they began to fracture the church with their false doctrine that mixed works of the Law with grace. It was inside job, and according to our passage, it was successful! Even Peter, the pastor to the Jews, became jaded by their aggressive presence and quit associating with the Gentile believers (those who are not Jews and are not uncircumcised).

The primary reason Paul shares this story is to defend his apostleship because it proves everything that was already discussed so far in the book. Paul isn't a man-pleaser. He isn't afraid to step on some toes for the gospel's sake, not even the toes of the 12 apostles who walked with Christ and who have the greatest, most-respected reputation in the Church. It shows how much confidence he has in his God-given message of grace. It wasn't a message that he received from another man or another apostle. He wasn't even around the apostles for years after his conversion. It's not a message that found its origin in any man's mind. Man, in all of his worldly wisdom, never would have dreamed up a message like this. It's too simple! It's too free! It doesn't feed man's pride! It humiliates it. But it's Christ's message and he received it directly from Christ and he was given divine orders to preach the gospel of grace and he wasn't going to let it be undermined or distorted by any man, regardless of their position or title, because if the message gets lost, people remain lost forever.

To help us follow along with it, I'd like to see it in three segments:

- I. The Original Condemnation (vv. 11-12)**
- II. The Growing Contamination (v. 13)**
- III. The Public Confrontation (v. 14)**

Let's look at...

**IV. THE ORIGINAL CONDEMNATION**

**A. Peter's actions are inconsistent with the gospel.**

Paul has to oppose him for it. His actions are inconsistent in the fact that...

**1. He made distinctions between Jew and Gentile. (v. 12)**

Of all people, it should have been Peter reinforcing that God had accepted the Gentiles. In Matthew 16, because of his testimony that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus tells Peter He's giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven and I think we see Peter use that key in Acts 2 at Pentecost when the Church begins. The Holy Spirit begins His ministry and Peter preaches a message and 3,000 people get saved and the Church is born. Then again Acts 10, he receives a vision from God of a great sheet coming down from heaven, lowered to the ground by the four corners, full of all kinds of animals and insects and birds and a voice said to him, "Get up Peter, kill and eat!" And Peter refuses because he's a Jew and Jews don't eat unclean things according to the Law but God says, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy." Right after that vision the Spirit takes him to some Gentile men

and a Gentile's house named Cornelius and Peter shares with them his God-given vision and about Christ and they believe in Christ, the Spirit baptizes them, and then they got baptized with water and the word of this spread like wildfire that God has accepted the Gentiles. In light of these events in Peter's past, he has no excuse here.

Paul is right on to oppose Peter face to face. It's not that Peter was preaching a false doctrine or teaching heresy like the Judaizers, but that **he wasn't living it out**. It wasn't a matter of faith, but **of practice**. His practice was inconsistent with the truth of the gospel. According to Galatians 3:28, the gospel says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Race, social class, gender, circumcision, anything... they all lose their significance in the gospel. We're all a bunch of zeros in comparison to God's righteousness and we're all are saved by grace. It doesn't matter if you're a no-good dirty-rotten rebel, a fine-dressed good-moral person, or a sincere-religious rule-keeper, **we're all sinners and we all enter in to heaven the same way**. It doesn't matter if you're black, white, brown, red, yellow, blue, or green – we all bleed the same red. It doesn't matter if you're a king or a construction worker, a lawyer or a farmer, doctor or a janitor, mayor or a stay-at-home mom, a nuclear physicist or a fast food worker, they all get in by grace. **Do away with distinctions**. James said don't hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. If a guy comes into the church in fine clothes and gold rings on, you pay him special attention and give him a good seat. But if someone poor comes in wearing dirty clothes you have him sit on the floor or say, 'why don't you just stand over yonder'. That's making distinctions and James calls that evil (Jas. 2:1-4). Making distinctions in this age of grace is inconsistent with the gospel that says we're all in the same boat of sin together and we all get out the same way – only by God's GRACE.

The second reason Paul opposed him is because...

**2. He withdrew from fellowship with the Gentiles. (v. 12)**

"He began to withdraw and hold himself aloof." But why did he withdraw from them? Maybe it's like someone mentioned in our Sunday school class, part of the reason is because old habits die hard. There's a magnetic<sup>1</sup> pull still drawing him to the Jewish heritage just like flesh is still trying to pull us back to some of our old ways. The Jews have been God's chosen people for so long. God revealed Himself to the world through the Jews. He's been working primarily with the Jews for the last several hundred years. They were all raised with the idea that the Jews were one step up on everybody else, if not multiple steps. They had the glory, the covenants, the Law, the temple service, the promises and even Christ came through their lineage (Rom. 9:4-5)(Always remember God's not completely done with them and He still has great future plans for the Jews), but there was still a lingering core belief that the Jews were still just always a little holier than the next. What was occurring was no small change in the program of God. God has temporarily switched from working mainly with Jews and Law, to working with Gentiles and grace, building a new body called the Church (Rom. 11:25). It had to be incredibly confusing and Peter's actions weren't making it any less confusing.

When it says 'men from James' they didn't truly represent James, but were likely from James' church or James' area. That makes sense because James was a pillar in the Jerusalem church, which is where these Judaizers hung their hat, or maybe royal garbs. It's actually no surprise to me that the first place the bishops started wearing special vestments like robes, using incense and carrying lamps and candles for different ceremonies was in

the church of Cyril in Jerusalem during the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> The Jewish-priestly look of some forms of Christianity take on today originated in Jerusalem. It was the same century that shrines and relics and adoration of saints began to form.<sup>3</sup> But these false brethren had worn off on him **he let outside pressure from men keep him from living out his faith**. Does that ever happen to us? How often do we compromise somewhere because of those around us? When we're around a certain group of people do we talk a little differently or act differently? You know what the problem is... Look at end of v. 12.

### 3. **He feared the party of the circumcision (v. 12)**

That's the problem. He feared man. He became a man-pleaser. Everything was fine before they showed up. Peter and the Gentiles used to dine together and have great fellowship. He was having a great time. Look at that – another “BUT WHEN” in verse 12. “BUT WHEN” they came... Who's they? The Judaizers. When *they* came, he begins to alienate himself from the Gentiles. Looking to Peter's past again, this isn't the first time Jews gave Peter a hard time for spending time with Gentiles. After that holy and blessed time at Gentile Cornelius' house, they shunned Peter for being around Gentiles. That time Peter basically said, “Hey, God's the one who gave me this vision. God told me I should not consider any man unholy or unclean (Acts 10:28). God's the one who baptized them when they believed. WHO WAS I TO STAND IN GOD'S WAY (ACTS 11:17)?! His conviction was to please God above ALL else. But as time passed and the freshness of that revelation wore off, between prison and persecution from the Jews and Herod's tirade against the church and Peter's desire for peace (maybe trying to prevent persecution)<sup>4</sup>...the inner man-pleaser comes to the surface. They have this **invisible, conscious grip** on him. That's what happens when we please man. There's an invisible grip on you and **you begin to forget the great revelations of God of who you are in Christ and called to be in Christ and you start trying to live according to their expectations**, be it someone specific in your life or some cultural trend. You go into self-preservation mode! Always concerned about what they think of you. “*What will they say? How will they react? Will I be accepted? Oh, I hope I don't say something dumb. I hope they like me. How do I look?*” When you enter into man-pleasing mode, you care – **beyond what you should** – about what people think of you. This incident in the church reminds me of lunch tables in Jr. high or high school setting. You've got jocks over here, geeks over there, skater kids there, country kids there. Everybody separates based upon their personal interests and everyone has become something to somebody in order to fit in with them. It's horrible! Kids that age can be so venomous and brutal towards one another. Whenever a kid crosses the man-pleasing barrier, like when a ‘cool kid’ sits with the ‘un-cool kid’, it's like bombshell goes off, isn't it? It blows things up. Paul was that bombshell. Before the cool kids showed up, Peter would have been just fine sitting at any table. He'd sit with the jocks and geeks, but now... man-pleasing. Even worse, distinctions that destroy the message of the gospel. Because of it, Paul says he stood condemned.

## V. **THE GROWING CONTAMINATION**

### A. **Hypocrisy was growing.**

Twice the word is used in verse 13. He stood condemned for his hypocrisy. Look how it was spreading and growing, like a black hole it was pulling others into it orbit.

#### 1. **The rest of the Jews joined in.**

All the other Jews in the congregation started separating from Gentiles too. On top of that...

## 2. **Barnabas was carried away.**

Paul's encouraging companion was even drawn into the hypocrisy. So what seemed like some small, individual, man-pleasing matter in Peter, was growing into a big ordeal. The church was divided, headed for a black hole. And you know the only way out for an object that's began to enter into the orbit of black hole? You increase the velocity of that object. It has to pick up speed going around the bend. You push it right past so it gets flung out of that irresistible pull. And that's exactly what Paul does when he confronts this black hole. He confronts it rapidly and immediately, before it has a chance to strengthen its grip on the church.

I want to camp out on that word **hypocrisy** for a bit because it's the reason for the condemnation. It carries the idea of duplicity. It means 'to act in a play' or 'to be in disguise'. To have two faces. To say one thing and do another. Nobody likes a hypocrite, not even God. **And biblically, I've noticed in my study it's mostly associated with two people: 1. False teachers 2. False converts.** It's not a word used softly in the pages of Scripture. Some of the harshest, strongest language coming from the mouth of God is aimed right at hypocrites. So I warn you to brace yourselves for the next few minutes as the air gets a little thicker in here. Concerning...

### a. **Hypocrisy and False Teachers.**

When Jesus delivered the eight woes unto the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23 he did it because they were hypocrites. He called them hypocrites in all but 1 of those woes. You never want to receive a woe from the Lord. It's like saying "Horror" or "Dread" to you. There are judgments in Revelation that are considered "Woes". "Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth... The first woe is past; behold two woes are still coming after these things." (Rev. 8:13; 9:12). Woe's are a sign of judgment.

1. Woe to you... hypocrites because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people and don't allow those who are entering to go in.
2. Woe to you... hypocrites because you devour widows' houses and make long prayers for show.
3. Woe to you... hypocrites because you travel over land and sea to make one convert and make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.
4. Woe to you... hypocrites because you tithe on your spices but neglect weightier matters of the law like justice, mercy and faithfulness.
5. Woe to you... hypocrites because you clean the outside of the cup and dish but inside are full of robbery and self-indulgence.
6. Woe to you... hypocrites because you're like white-washed tombs who look beautiful on the outside but on the inside a full of dead men's bones and uncleanness. Full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.
7. Woe to you... hypocrites because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn monuments of the righteous and claim you wouldn't have shed their blood like your fathers. Fill up the guilt of your fathers. You serpents and brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?

You wolves, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I say? (Luke 6:46)" False teachers were hypocritical in Galatians in the sense that they claimed to believe in Christ but then nullified His sacrifice by claiming it wasn't sufficient. They deny the gospel of Christ.

### **b. Hypocrisy and False Converts**

False converts are those who have often bought into the lies of false teachers. Instead of coming to God by faith and trusting Christ, they come to God **by sight**, trusting in works or religious ceremonies. They try to bring their own sacrifices of works and rituals and religious performance to the altar to get right with God. When God chastised His people Israel, a lot of it **wasn't because they weren't offering sacrifices or trying to keep the Law, but because weren't doing it with a truly repentant heart and dealing honestly with their sin.** Sacrifices were designed to promote humility and faith. If I'm offering a sacrifice, like a lamb, I should acknowledge that the sacrifice should be me! I deserve this death and shedding of blood for my sin against God. Sacrifices promoted faith in God's promised Messiah to come. But man turned the sacrificial system into works – a religious thing to do to get right without doing anything about the sin. They would get circumcised outwardly, without coming with a circumcised heart inwardly (Jer. 9:26). In Amos 5:21-24 he told Israel, "I reject your festivals, I don't delight in your assemblies, I won't accept your offerings – I won't even look at them, take away your songs, I won't even listen to your harps, BUT let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Paraphrase). In Isaiah 1:13-16, God says, "Bring your worthless offerings no longer. Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies – I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. So when you spread out your hands in prayer I will hide my eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered in blood. 'Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,' says the Lord, 'Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be white like wool.'" False converts do religious ceremonies but their hearts and lives never change. God wants real people who take Him seriously - who take his holiness seriously. Isaiah, again, describes ritualistic offerings without a change of heart is like an abomination<sup>5</sup>. He said "He who kills [sacrifices] an ox is like one who slays a man... He who offers a grain offering is like one who offers swine's blood. He who burns incense is like the one who blesses an idol (Isaiah 66:3)." You can bring an offering to God and to Him it be like murder or an unclean animal or idol worship. What's God saying? **He doesn't want to accept religious works from unchanged hearts** – To be one person on Sunday morning and a completely different person the rest of the week is play acting. Wearing a mask. Hypocrisy. Saying one thing, doing another. When a man really gets the gospel – he acknowledges that he's a sinner who needs a Savior and because of that, will turn to Christ and trust Christ alone and begin to live in that resurrection power as a way to demonstrate his love for God.

There is a uniform teaching in the entire Bible that men are judged individually by their deeds because their deeds reveal whether or not they have genuine faith (Jer. 17:10, 32:19; Ezek. 33:20; Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Gal. 6:7-8; Eph. 5:6; Rev. 2:23, 20:12, 22:12). For example, Romans 2:5-8 says, "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteousness judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to

those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey righteousness, wrath and indignation.” Is Paul contradicting himself by saying we’re saved by faith alone in the next chapter? No. But, just like James is trying to get across, that genuine saving faith results in a life of good deeds. The deeds are not the basis of their salvation but evidence of it.<sup>6</sup> Evidence of a changed heart and mind towards God that God brings about that results in a changed life (We shouldn’t assume someone’s salvation. Only God knows the heart). Hebrews 10:26 says, “If we go on sinning willfully after receiving a knowledge of the truth there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins but a terrifying expectation of judgment.” 1 John 1:3-6, “The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.” So the one who has really put their faith in Christ should become more like Christ. I think the reason a lot of people think Christianity is a sham or crutch, is because they haven’t understood authentic Christianity. They tried to come to God through a religious system of works by sight, rather than being honest with their sin and placing their faith in Christ, developing a relationship with God through Him.

### **c. Hypocrisy and Believers**

We can be hypocritical too. Jesus told the church of Sardis in Revelation 3:1, “I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent.” Jesus here seems to point out that it’s possible for us to put on a show. To pretend to be something that we’re just not. We can have a name that we’re alive, but in reality, we’re dead and we know it. We can go to church and look great, but not really be living the Christian life and walking with God. Peter, writing from a humbled heart, says in his first letter, “Rid yourselves of...hypocrisy.” Lay it aside. Put it away, somewhere where you can’t reach it again. Throw it in the trash and take the trash to the dumpster. God’s disciplines His children for hypocrisy. Paul actually handed an immoral man in the Corinthian church over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh so that at he would repent and he would be restored. They weren’t to have any fellowship with him because it was such gross immorality. “Don’t associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler – not even to eat with such a one.” The Church is called to purity. Those outside, God judges (1 Cor. 5). How can we judge someone outside of Christ? They don’t have the Holy Spirit and haven’t been born again. They’re dead spiritually and need to trust Christ. But as a church, we take holiness seriously, growing in grace. With all of our talk about grace in Galatians it’s vital to note that grace is not a license to sin (Jude 1:4). Grace actually does the opposite.

### **d. The Antidote for Hypocrisy – GRACE!**

When grace is properly understood, it teaches us to live righteously (Titus 2:12). God’s love and grace in Christ becomes our motivation for obeying God. Our obedience doesn’t spring up from just fear or obligation to the Law – but from a genuine love for God and His matchless grace. Love compels us. Whenever Paul emphasizes obedience it’s in light of God’s incredible spiritual blessings we have in Christ. Like Ephesians 4:1, it’s only after he has expounded all the incredible blessings in Christ discussed in chapters 1-3 about who we are in Christ, he says because of that, “I...implore you to walk in a manner worthy of

the calling with which you've been called." Now live it out. Since you've been chosen; since you've been saved; since you've been forgiven; since you've been given the Holy Spirit and born again to new life in Christ; Walk like it! Like Romans 12:1-2 – Because of all the incredible grace of God in Christ described in chapters 1-11, "in light of the mercies of God, offer yourselves as living sacrifices." Be transformed now by the renewing of your mind. Don't do the things you used to do. You have power over the flesh now. Before, you were just slaves to the sin nature. That was your only option. Now, by being born again through faith in Christ, you have been given a divine nature and can choose not to sin. The motivation is because of who we are in Christ and what Christ has done for us.

## **VI. THE PUBLIC CONFRONTATION (V. 14)**

In the presence of ALL, Paul confronts the hypocrisy with one pinpointed question, "If you being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?" It was so obvious. He had not been living like a Jew and then he asks them to live like Jews? The hypocrisy misrepresented the gospel.

### **A. The gospel was being misrepresented.**

They were not straightforward with the gospel and Paul says he SAW it. It was a visible fracture occurring in the church because of hypocrisy. It's hypocritical to say that we're all sons of God through faith in Christ and then show favoritism to certain people because of their race or social status. It's hypocritical to live like a Gentile and then claim to live according to the Law and tell others to live by it. Paul was amazed by this and called out the hypocrisy.

### **B. Paul called Peter out publicly.**

The issue had become public and the whole church involved, so it required a public, congregational, confrontation of the issue. It wouldn't have done any good to correct Peter in secret. Sometimes confrontation is necessary. Here Paul does it to preserve the distinction between Law and Grace. Remember from last week? It's the difference between life and death. Living under law is like poison. If you missed last week, get online and get the chart that shows the difference between law and grace.

As in this instance, we need to see that sometimes it's more loving to share the truth with someone rather than ignore the self-destructive error in which they're living, even if they get mad at you for the time being or if it may wreck the relationship, at least temporarily. They may not talk to you for months, but someday they may just thank you. It also speaks to how we are to receive correction. Proverbs 9:8 says, "Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; Reprove a wise man and he will love you." Peter repented and responded wisely to Paul's criticism. Peter was a wise man. It's clear from his letter later on that he loves Paul (2 Peter 3:15-16). We need accountability from each other. Iron sharpening iron. Encouraging one another. Someone to help us examine ourselves. Someone who can see something in us that we have a hard time seeing in ourselves. It's also a great illustration that no leaders are perfect. Even the apostles had their moments. That's the realness of the Bible.

## **VII. MAJOR APPLICATIONS TO REMEMBER:**

### **A. Paul's apostleship is legitimate.**

That's Paul's primary intent in writing this and it proves it. He isn't a man-pleaser and wasn't afraid to stand up to even the most iconic apostles.

### **B. We can distort the gospel by our actions.**

If we preach it, we need to live it. Don't say we believe it, and then not apply it. We need to have the courage to carry out our convictions<sup>7</sup>, especially in an age of political correctness<sup>8</sup> when we're

tempted to compromise our faith around certain people. Don't get pulled into that orbit of hypocrisy, especially when we're around certain groups of people. We need a holy consistency no matter who we're around.

**C. We are called to perfection – but aren't perfect.**

Accept the tension between those two statements. Jesus said be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. That doesn't mean we won't sin. It's a call to maturity. I think Peter here in Galatians is a wonderful example of the fact that sanctification and Christlikeness is a process. Does there need to be a genuine repentance and forsaking of sin? Yes. Should believer grow in holiness? Yes. But we're not perfect and sanctification isn't a microwave process or an overnight process. And we're all at different stages. Nevertheless there is a tension that has to remain between the call to obedience and holiness and yet realizing we're not going to always measure up. Like I said, even the apostles had their moments. Praise God for His grace to catch us and give us a fresh start again. "A righteous man falls seven times and rises again. (Prov. 24:16)" Peter accepted the rebuke and repented and told others to put away hypocrisy as well. He stood firm for the faith all the way to martyrdom like Jesus said he would and didn't let persecution or fear of man stop him from living out his faith to the last breath.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, "Insights on Galatians," *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, Volume 8* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 48.

<sup>2</sup> Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ's Power, Volume 1* (Oxford eBooks Ltd, 2016), Loc 2853.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Loc 2887.

<sup>4</sup> Swindoll, 48.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012), 884.

<sup>6</sup> Steven J. Cole, *Lesson 10: Judged by Your Deeds*, accessed 24 February 2019, bible.org

<sup>7</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1968), 52.

<sup>8</sup> David Thompson, *Galatians 2:11-14*, accessed 21 February 2019, texascornersbiblechurch.org