

Confronting Hypocrisy

December 19, 2010 ~ Galatians 2.11-14

Hypocrisy

- Paul uses the word hypocrite in **v13** ~ He accuses Peter (and others) of this
- “What is a hypocrite?” ~ “What is hypocrisy?”
 - “*professing beliefs, feelings, or virtues that one doesn’t possess or practice*”
 - Beliefs - Virtues (actions) - Feelings
- “Are Christians hypocrites because we don’t measure up to our own standards?”
 - Maybe . . . The difference is in the feelings resulting from our sins . . .
 - If we grow callous to sin (and maybe deny it) we become hypocrites
 - We must also judge our own failures fairly (not excuse ourselves)

Example from the life of David

- David committed adultery with Bathsheba and impregnated her
 - He had Joab kill her husband Uriah in battle and took her to be his wife
- Then he apparently went on with life as normal
 - But Nathan tells him a story ~ **Read 2 Samuel 12.1-7a**
 - This is hypocrisy in all of its ugliness, its self-righteousness...
 - Note that Bathsheba mourned Uriah – but Abigail hadn’t for Nabal

Connecting Apostolic Position with Gospel Truth

- Galatians is about 2 things
 - Paul’s Apostleship and the Gospel
- In **Gal 2.1-10** he’d shown he was the equal of the “pillars”
- He also implied that they should not be placed on pedestals
- **Verse 11** is a rebuke of the Galatians for their handling of the Judaizers

Paul does the right thing . . .

- Paul was likely preparing for his upcoming missionary journey
- This would explain why he wasn’t there to see this very early on
- But when he returns to Antioch he immediately
 - recognizes the hypocrisy
 - rebukes everyone who’s complicit in it
 - and rectifies (or remedies) the situation

Xition: Paul immediately recognizes the hypocrisy of Peter

1. RECOGNIZING HYPOCRISY

In Ourselves

- Peter did not see his behavior as hypocritical
 - We are slow to recognize error in ourselves
 - We are loathe to admit error in ourselves
 - We are the standard of **right/wrong, good/bad, wise/foolish**
 - We judge everyone by our own tastes and preferences
 - III: Driving habits ~ “Why don’t they... Can’t they...”
- III: Crooked Rulers
 - “Can you draw a straight line with a crooked ruler?” ~ **No**
 - But we’re crooked rulers ~ we’re faulty moral compasses
 - The Bible is the only straight ruler on earth
 - But using it well takes effort and skill...
- Perhaps Peter’s hypocrisy began innocently
 - He didn’t want to offend visitors from Jerusalem
 - But in **v12** Paul said he “**feared those of the circumcision**”
- III: Bad breath ~ Hypocrisy is like...
 - Others recognize it long before we do and suffer more because of it
- This explains Peter’s behavior . . . but . . .

“What About Barnabas and the Others?”

- In all situations there are leaders and followers
 - III: Parents c/misbehaving children
 - “He started running with the wrong crowd”
 - Few of us consider our children to be “the wrong crowd”
- Paul rebukes Peter (and possibly an implied rebuke of James)
 - Peter has been a leader of the church for nearly 20 years
 - Many held this “*chief pillar*” in awe ~ Last week’s message...
- Perhaps out of respect for Peter’s position they ignored it
- Perhaps some realized it was wrong but were afraid...
- But many just followed ~ They didn’t think critically or lacked courage
 - They lived simply, “All that Peter does is right he’s above reproach
 - III: Jim Bakker (PTL) 1987 ~ Jessica Hahn affair
 - III: Jimmy Swaggart 1989 ~ (criticized Bakker) caught with hooker
 - III: Jesse Jackson 1993 ~ visited Clinton during Lewinsky affair
 - III: Ted Haggard 2006 ~ opposed homosexuality (visited male hooker)

Xition: Peter didn’t see it... Others didn’t see it... Why did Paul?

“How could Paul see it so quickly and clearly?”

- Paul had *“been there”* and *“done that”*
- The Pharisees were the hypocrites Jesus addressed in Matthew 23
 - *“Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites!”*
- Hypocrisy and pride were *“coins of the realm”* in Paul’s Pharisaical world
 - Paul knew it well and had renounced it all, calling it rubbish
 - III: Ex-smokers ~ the most intolerant of smoking

2. REBUKING HYPOCRISY

“What’s Needed to Rebuke Hypocrisy?”

1. **Confidence** ~ that this is a clear example of it
 2. **Concern** ~ that this is serious enough to warrant rebuke
 3. **Courage** ~ enough to overcome your fear of doing it
- Paul does not hesitate ~ He acts as he has all of these
 - **Q:** *“Do we need to be perfect to rebuke hypocrisy?”*
 - When you rebuke anybody for anything you risk retaliation
 - You will be accused of sin (hypocrisy) ~ common response

1. Confidence

- Paul is an apostle – big “A” ~ Galatians is a defense of his apostleship
 - *“What more clear demonstration of it do we have than this rebuke?”*
- Everyone is in awe of Peter ~ everyone that is except Paul
- Peter is perhaps somewhat in awe of Paul
 - After this Peter declines in frequency in Acts ~ Paul supplants him

2. Concern

- Paul’s concern could hardly be greater...
- Antioch has been his home base for a few years now
 - **Acts 11.26** reads, *“And when [Barnabas] had found [Paul], he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called **Christians** in Antioch.”*
- Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles, and they have been slighted...
 - Paul will defend them like a mother ~ they are his children in the faith
- The main issue in the church is the co-mingling of Jews and Gentiles
 - And Paul and Barnabas have done it well in Antioch

Xition: And last but not least ~ courage

3. Courage

- Paul is alone in his opinion ~ everyone is with Peter
 - Luther said: *“God preserved the church by a single person. Paul alone stood up for the truth, for Barnabas, his companion was lost to him, and Peter was against him. Sometimes one lone person can do more in a conference than the whole assembly.”*
 - Ill: Athanasius was banished 5+ times (20 of 46 years) in fighting Arianism
 - Arians taught that Jesus was not equal to the Father
 - They taught that there was a time when Jesus didn’t exist
 - Those who *“went along to get along”* told him . . .
 - *“The whole world is against you Athanasius . . .”*
 - He replied, *“Then Athanasius is against the world . . .”*

III: Wizard of Oz

- Paul exhibited **confidence** – **concern** – **courage**
- As I reflected on this it reminded me of a movie . . .
- *“Who here has seen the Wizard of Oz?”*
 - Who were the main characters Dorothy met and what did they lack?
 - **Scarecrow** brain **confidence** / knowledge
 - **Tin Man** heart **concern** / compassion
 - **Lion** will **courage** to act
 - **know** what’s right
 - **love** what’s right
 - **do** what’s right

3. REMEDYING HYPOCRISY

“Was it Proper for Paul to Rebuke Peter Publically?”

- *“Praise publically – Reprove privately”* is the rule
 - But the rule doesn’t apply in every situation
 - If the sin is a public one, it may need to be reprovved publically
- Paul writes this to Timothy about 15 years later
 - *“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.”* ~ **1 Timothy 5.19-20**
- This public rebuke was a first step in healing the severed relationships

Xition: What event started Peter and the Gentiles down this path?

Nerds or Jocks

- This all began with Peter choosing to not eat with the Gentiles
- !!!: Peter in line at the cafeteria
 - He walks happily away with his tray, but then . . .
 - Would he eat with the **Gentiles?** (let's call them **nerds**)
 - Or with the **Jews** from Jerusalem? (let's call them the **jocks**)
- Reread Luther quote on previous page . . .

Love Feasts

- The early church ate together (many after every worship service)
 - The Lord's Supper was a component of this feast
- But prior to this Jew and Gentile could not eat together ~ too many rules...
 - Paul rebuked the Corinthians for sinning at such meals ~ **1 Cor 11.20-22**
 - The meals themselves weren't the problem ~ but conduct was
- Peter's conduct drove a wedge between Jew and Gentile
- The wall of separation (**read Eph 2.11-18**) was being rebuilt by prejudice
- One man, Paul, ended the rebuilding of that wall of separation
- The remedy to hypocrisy is to:
 - **recognize** it in ourselves and others
 - crucify it in ourselves and **rebuke** it in others (*publically if necessary*)
 - **repair** the damage that it has done . . .

Let's Pray