

PALOMINO VALLEY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Sunday, March 19, 2023

Galatians 2:11-14

The Dangers Of Legalism, Part Two

The Lord's Supper

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Fellowship

Today

This morning we will continue with our study of the apostle Paul's letter to the churches throughout Galatia.

Last week we covered the first 10 verses in chapter 2, having to do with Paul's second visit to Jerusalem along with Barnabas and Titus to settle the argument over the need to circumcise the Gentiles to secure their salvation.

The apostles in the Jerusalem church agreed with Paul that the gospel he preached was correct, and circumcision was not necessary for salvation.

Therefore the apostles, James, Peter, and John, gave Paul and Barnabas their “right hand of fellowship.”

We also explored works based salvation (merit), as opposed to God’s grace since this was the primary reason for Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

We concluded that engaging in legalism in order to achieve one’s own righteousness, or adding our works to God’s grace reflects a gross misunderstanding of the fullness of God’s love, mercy, and grace—a wrong understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And, as Martin Luther pointed out, we misunderstand because we are turned inward, self-absorbed, self-centered, therefore we have a hard time, as fallen humans, accepting God’s grace rather than believing we must earn our salvation by our own merit.

This morning we will learn how even the apostle Peter and Paul’s helper, Barnabas got caught up in a legalistic cultural issue, and how Paul dealt with it.

Let’s read together our text for today:

Galatians 2:11-16

Vs. 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

Vs. 12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

Vs. 13 The rest of the Jews joined in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

Vs. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, “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?”

Vs. 15 “We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles;

Vs. 16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

Verses 11 and 12:

Sometime after Paul's second visit to Jerusalem, Peter came to the church at Antioch, which was about 135 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

We don't know why he decided to go to Antioch, but perhaps to see for himself how the Gentiles were maturing in the Christian faith as a result of Paul's teaching.

While Peter was there he ate and had fellowship with the Gentiles, but when some other Jewish converts arrived who were sent by James, Peter suddenly changed. He made a serious mistake.

By reading *Acts 11:1-18* we find that Peter had already been taught through a vision from God that dietary restrictions under the Law had been removed, and that it was approved by God to eat with the Gentiles.

In Peter's vision he saw all kinds of animals, birds, and crawling creatures, and the voice from heaven said to Peter, "*Get up, Peter, kill and eat.*"

Peter objected. So, for a second time, the voice said, "*What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.*" So Peter went to the house of a Gentile, ate with him, and presented the gospel.

Now, at Antioch, when the converted Jews from Jerusalem show up, Peter suddenly reverts to his Jewish culture of legalism, joins with the Jewish visitors, and shuns the Gentiles.

At the same time, Peter had seen and approved of the faith of the Gentiles, and had joined with them for meals and fellowship.

So Paul confronts Peter about his hypocrisy, saying, "*I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned.*"

What happened to Peter? Fear! He became afraid of what the Jewish men, these false teachers, would think of him and attempted to prove to them that he still lived under the Law.

Vs. 13-14 Vs.13 The rest of the Jews joined in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

Vs. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "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?

Paul presents us with a vital principle here that we would do well to learn from.

“I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel,

“even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.”

We see the ugliness of hypocrisy in the news every day; in political statements and information coming from government officials, in our education system, and even in our churches.

Let us not be over-confident in ourselves, because if Peter and Barnabas can slip away from the truth of the gospel when under cultural or family pressure, so can we.

The truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ must affect every area of our lives; how we think, our emotions, how we behave, and how we relate to others.

It is possible, perhaps even easy, to conduct our lives in a way that seems Christian, yet, as Paul said, *“not straightforward about the truth of the gospel.”*

What are we to do? First, the gospel is not something that should be read or heard once, then put away. We must be continually confronted with it because it is God’s truth about Himself and us.

It is God’s standards that must direct our lives, not our own, and we cannot live according to God’s standards if we neglect the gospel.

As we have learned, the apostle Paul received the gospel directly by revelation from the risen Christ.

He instructs us about our lives in *Ephesians 4:22-32* and I will read a part of his instructions from *verses 22-24, and 30.*

Vs. 22 in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

Vs. 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

Vs. 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Vs. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Paul reminds us about the new self in:

Romans 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

So, then, the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ is not just for those who do not yet know Christ.

It must be the standard for the lives of every Christian; not our culture, not our hearts, not any human standard, because, as Paul explains in *Romans 1:16* “--it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

We find then, with *verses 11-14 of chapter 2*, one of the dangers of legalism is the danger of being captured unaware by hypocrisy; of not being honest about our lives as they relate to the truth of the gospel.

There is another danger that goes hand-in hand with hypocrisy exposed in this encounter with Peter by Paul that we will explore next week.

It has to do with the effect of cultures on individuals and their relationships with those of other cultures, and involves both Christians and non-Christians.

Let us pray, and then we will prepare to join together for the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper

On the third Sunday of every month, we set aside a time to remember our Lord's death and the new covenant He instituted at the last supper with His disciples in Jerusalem.

It's a time of self-examination and confession--a time of solemn reflection on His sacrificial death on the cross, and what Jesus accomplished by His death on our behalf.

First, Dave Biggs will read for us from *Luke 22:1-13* which sets the scene for His betrayal, and Jesus' preparation for Passover. Now we will continue reading *Luke 22:14-23*.

In Luke's account of the last week of Jesus' life on earth, we learn that God's promise to the serpent in the presence of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden is about to be fulfilled:

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him in the heel."

Enmity is defined as hostility, antagonism, or hatred.

The appointed time is now fast-approaching for Satan to bruise the heel of Jesus, the Son of God, and we see him working in the minds of the Pharisees—the chief priests and scribes, as they plan to kill Jesus.

They are hesitant because of their fear of the people, and Satan enters into Judas, the one disciple of Jesus who will betray Him.

So Judas and the Pharisees enter into an agreement; Judas is to be paid a healthy amount of money to betray Jesus. All he needed is the right time for the opportunity.

During this last week, Jesus has been teaching in the Temple (*Luke 21:37*), and now the first day of unleavened bread arrives. It is time for the Passover lamb to be slaughtered and eaten; the Passover meal commemorating the release of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt.

Jesus desired to have this final Passover meal with His disciples, and preparations are made by Peter and John.

Jesus and His apostles are now in that upper room in Jerusalem, ready to partake of the Passover meal.

As we prepare to participate in this meal of remembrance, let us take a moment for silent prayer; prayers of confession, prayers of thanksgiving and gratitude for God's love, mercy, and grace as He called us out of the world for forgiveness of our sins, salvation, and eternal life.

Prayer--

Now, let's read *Luke 22:14-23 When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him.*

Vs. 15 And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;

Vs. 16 for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

Vs. 17 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, “Take this and share it among yourselves;

Vs. 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.”

Vs. 19 And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

Vs. 20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”

Vs. 21 “But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table.

Vs. 22 For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to the man by whom He is betrayed.”

Vs. 23 And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing.

As we receive the bread and the cup, Jesus said we, as followers of Jesus Christ, are to remember Him.

What is it that we are to remember?

First of all, we must remember who Jesus is.

The prophet Isaiah informed Israel about 700 years prior to Jesus’ birth: *Matthew 1:23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and she shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.”*

And the reason for God coming into the world was, as the angel of the LORD informed Joseph, Mary’s betrothed husband- to-be: *Matthew 1:21 “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”*

Jesus, the Christ of God, fully man and fully God, gave His body to suffer scourging, then nailed in agony to a cross; His voluntary sacrifice in our place, to atone for our sins.

Serve the bread: Pray for the bread. Receive the bread.

Beginning with His scourging with a leather whip embedded with bits of glass and metal, then nailed to the cross, Jesus' divine blood drained from His body.

Finally, after about six hours on the cross, Jesus said, *"I am thirsty."* *John 19:28-30*

Vs. 29 A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth.

Vs. 30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

The Greek word for finished is *Tetelestai*.

It means "to bring to an end, to complete, to accomplish, paid in full."

This Greek word is written in the perfect tense, meaning that what was completed then continues into the present.

Jesus completed the work His Father sent Him to do, and His work continues through today, and onward. Finished forever.

John 17:4 "I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave Me to do."

There is no need of further sacrifice, our debt of sin was fully satisfied by our Savior.

This is important for us to understand, especially for the legalist, and for anyone who believes they must, somehow, add to the cross-work of Christ.

What can anyone add that would be more valuable than the shed blood of Jesus for payment in full for our sins?

Jesus instituted the age of grace when He said, *"This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood."*

Grace---as believers in Jesus Christ, we have received God's gift of faith, His gift of forgiveness of sins, and His gift of eternal life through Jesus' resurrection.

Christ's new covenant simply requires faith; faith in Jesus as God incarnate, faith in His atoning work on the cross, and faith in His resurrection from the grave.

Faith alone, in Christ alone. *Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Serve the cup: Pray for the cup. Receive the cup.

Prayer of Thanksgiving--

Worship

*Benediction: **Romans 12:1-2** Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.