

Galatians 2:1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.

Paul did not officially begin his ministry for seventeen years. Paul went to Jerusalem after fourteen years with Barnabas. Titus was a Greek and the reason Paul took Titus was as a trophy and expose his Christian liberty to show that justification with God was not dependent on the act of circumcision. The act of circumcision in Paul's day was taught heavily by the legalistic Jews to be accepted by God. Paul did not go to Jerusalem for them to confirm his message but to proclaim his message.

The physical act of circumcision does not make a person in right standing with God but faith in Jesus which is a spiritual circumcision does make us in right standing with God (Col 1:11).

Galatians 2:2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

Paul went by revelation and it was confirmed through Peter, James, and John that what Paul had received from the Lord was accurate.

The word in vain in Greek means empty. Paul did not run his race with uncertainty but was very intentional and clear on his walk with the Lord and what he was commissioned to do (1 Cor 9:26). Paul was commissioned specifically to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13) and Peter, James and John confirmed the gospel.

Paul had planted the churches in Galatia and he is stating that he did not want the work he had previously established with them of being justified by Jesus' finished works and not their own to go to waste.

Galatians 2:3 Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

Paul was using Titus as someone to show he was a Greek that had been accepted by God and that he was not circumcised. Circumcision is not wrong, Paul himself was circumscribed but anytime we tie God's acceptance to us based off what we do it is no longer grace. Grace is what God does for man; religion is what man does for God. Legalism focuses on your actions and behavior, while grace focuses on His actions and behavior.

Titus was a Gentile now born again which proves acceptance by God is not dependent on circumcision because he was not circumcised.

Galatians 2:4 And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),

The false brethren were those who opposed grace and came in to spy on Titus in the restrooms. They were secretly looking to see if Titus was circumcised or not. This is religion at its finest. It will always compare what others are doing and try to place their holiness above others. We should never compare our holiness to anyone other than Jesus. Comparing ourself to Jesus will bring humility and keep us from judging others.

The word spy out is *kataskopeo* and means to inspect. Anytime we inspect someone else, we are trying to find something wrong.

The liberty Paul is speaking of here is grace. Grace brings freedom from man's acts or holiness and relying solely on Jesus finished works. Religion is work and is bondage because it puts the burden of salvation on man's back. Grace is rest and will always bring peace because we know our relationship with God is based on Jesus obedience and not our own (Rom 5:19).

Galatians 2:5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Paul was not intimidated, nor did he shrink back from preaching the Gospel because of this. Once zealous in persecuting the church, he was now zealous to preach the Gospel.

This says why he did not give place and it is so the Gospel would be preached. The apostle Paul was stretched between two decisions when writing to the Philippians from prison in that he could have decided to go to be with the Lord which was a gain in his eyes and far better or stay and advance the gospel (Phil 1:23-24).

Galatians 2:6 But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.

Paul is speaking of the pillars of the church. He did not feel less than or alter his message because he was around those who walked with Jesus during his earthly ministry.

Paul's relationship with God was so vibrant and the trust he had in what he received from Jesus made Paul stable in what he preached and how he lived. This should be the same mindset we have as well. We can be around important people within the church, but it should not cause us to shrink back or feel less than them if we are stable with our own relationship with God.

Paul respected those who walked with Jesus, but he was not intimidated by them. Jesus' entire earthly ministry was built on relationship with the Father. The Holy Spirit first record of Jesus speaking was Him saying He was about His Father's business (Luke 2:49) and the last thing the Holy Spirit records Jesus saying is, "It is finished". Jesus was able to be obedient to the Father because of their relationship.

Galatians 2:7 But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter

Paul was commissioned to preach specifically to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13). It would make sense to natural men for God to call Paul to preach to the Jews since he was a Jew himself (Acts 22:3) but God sent him to the Gentiles. Peter was the one chosen by God to preach to the Jews. To man, the best person to relate to the Jews and their legalistic ways would not have been Peter but Paul because Paul once lived that life but God does not select the way we do.

The Bible referred to the Jews as the circumcision and the Gentiles as the uncircumcision. The Jews had the act of circumcision handed to them from God as a sign of the covenant.

Under the New Covenant the nation of Israel has been displaced by the spiritual seed of Abraham which is the church. Believers are the true circumcised people of God (Rom 2:28-29). Circumcision in the Old Testament was of the flesh and the circumcision of the New Testament is of the heart. The sin nature was cut away and discarded to never return.

Galatians 2:8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),

It is God who works in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Phil 2:13). We should never minister out of our own strength and ability but through the power and leading of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

The Greek word for effectively is *energeō* and means to be mighty in or to work for one. Again, it was God working in Paul and Peter.

Galatians 2:9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

James, Peter and John confirmed that what Paul preached was accurate and they confirmed it.

A pillar is someone of great importance and achievement.

We are all called to reach different people. No one person is all things to all people. It is interesting that Paul was sent to the Gentiles in that he was able to convey to the Gentiles that if they even had an inch of a thought that fulfilling the law was doable, they needed to think again because he was the main person that already attempted to do so.

Paul states in this verse that grace is something that is given. The major theme of this book is that grace is something that is given, not earned. Paul emphasizes this heavily in the book of Ephesians as well, expounding on this three times in one chapter (Eph 3:2, v.7, v.8).

Galatians 2:10 They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

Paul's heart was always to help the poor. The first church that supported Paul at the beginning of his ministry were the Philippians and you can see Paul's heart in this letter to the poor.

Galatians 2:11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;

Paul is now moving into when Peter himself received revelation from the Lord that God accepts the Gentiles just as much as he accepts the Jews. The Lord revealed to Peter in a vision a sheet of animals and the Lord told Peter to rise and eat but Peter said he had never eaten anything unclean and the Lord spoke to him and told him not to call anything that He made unclean. This was speaking of God opening of the door of salvation both to the Jew and the Gentile (Acts 10:9-16).

The vision Peter had was not about clean or unclean animals but was about Gentiles being fellow heirs (Eph 3:6). Dietary laws from the Old Testament were only shadows and symbolic of what Jesus would accomplish (Col 2:16-17).

Peter was the initial vessel that the Lord used to welcome Gentiles into relationship with God independent of being a Jew. Paul was saying that Peter was being a hypocrite. He knew God accepted the Gentiles, but he acted contrary when opposition came.

Galatians 2:12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

Paul acted on this revelation and went and ate at Cornelius household but when people from James's camp showed up, he shrank back. Peter revealed that he understood God accepted both Jew and Gentile (Acts 10:28) but when pressure came to oppose Peter, he backed off what God told him (Acts 11:2-3).

The word withdrew is Greek is *hupostellō* and means a timid person. We can see a contrast in this chapter alone of Paul, who was not timid or submissive to those coming to oppose the gospel, whereas Peter shrank back when those from James came to oppose him. This verse gives us a clear picture why Peter shrank back. It was out of fear. I believe the reason Paul was not timid or waivered in his message or walk with the Lord was because he was not uncertain in his purpose and it was Christ living through him which does not have a spirit of fear or timidity (1 Cor 9:26, 2 Tim 1:7).

Before the infilling of the Holy Spirit, Peter was timid and denied the Lord three times under pressure (Luke 22:57). After the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we see Peter being bold and confronting the very people he once shrank back from (Acts 5:29). Here, we see Peter shrinking back again. The infilling of the Holy Spirit does not make us automatically absent from ever falling under social pressure again. It is our responsibility to remain connected to the vine so that we do not fall into compromising under pressure.

When Jesus was faced with pressure He was not intimidated and the scriptures say that those coming to arrest Him were actually the ones who drew back (Jn 18:5). Jesus' relationship with

His Father is the reason he was not intimidated with pressure. He knew who He was and what the Father had revealed to Him (Jn 13:3).

Galatians 2:13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Barnabas was also involved in this hypocrisy. The account in the book of Acts written by Luke does not include Barnabas was there but this scripture shows he was present.

Peters' decision to withdraw from the Gentiles because of some of the brothers from Jerusalem in James group led to a division among the church. Barnabas was present during this and was also influenced by Peters hypocrisy. In a sense Paul is saying to Peter, you are a Jew walking in freedom like a Gentile, but now your encouraging Gentiles to move to bondage like a Jew.

Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

Paul was waiting to oppose and confront Peter on his own territory and have an open rebuke towards him. He was saying if you do not have to follow all the rules and regulations that religion offers, then why are you proclaiming that others are required too?

Galatians 2:15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

Paul was a Jew (Acts 22:3) but he too could not fulfill all of the righteous requirements of the law, only Jesus could (Mt 3:15). His natural ancestry did not credit him or give him any extra acceptance with God. Justification comes through Jesus, not us.

Gentiles were considered those outside the covenant. Anyone who has not put faith in Jesus is a sinner and outside the covenant. Those who have put faith in Jesus are no longer sinners but righteous (2 Cor 5:21).

Galatians 2:16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

This verse is also mentioned in Galatians 3:11 and is the core message to the Galatians. Works of the law is anything man offers to God in an attempt to be justified by Him. Works of faith are actions that are based on a response to something we believe.

Actions are the fruit of salvation and not the root. If we go to church to be in right standing with God or for Him to bless us those are works of the law. Those works are man's performance independent of God. If we go to church because we already know God accepts us and we want to fellowship with Him those are works of faith. Both are the same action but the heart of why we do something makes the difference.

Living holy does not produce fellowship with God, however fellowship with God will produce holiness. God is in constant communication with us regardless of our actions. Our relationship with Him is not contingent on our behavior.

Justification comes through faith in Jesus. No one will be in right standing with God based off their self-effort or holiness.

Galatians 2:17 "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!"

Is Paul saying since we are justified by God, now we can just go live in sin? Paul deals with this in Romans 6:1 and Romans 6:15. This answer to this question is God forbid! We are not ministers of sin we are ministers of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18) and it is only through the gospel that we can be reconciled.

Grace does not set you free to sin it sets you free from sin. Grace is what empowers us to get to work on time, not show up late. The moment we quit trusting in ourselves and trust in Jesus we become born again and that sin we used to partake in no longer feels the same. The person that used to walk into the bar before they got born again is now different. A new heart that desires the things of God now exist and the person walking into the bar is now going in with God on the inside of them and the sinful life that used to live will no longer satisfy them. It is when we finally get a revelation it isn't about cutting off sin, it's about loving God so much that desire to sin no longer exist.

Galatians 2:18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

Paul once destroyed the church and persecuted it. He has now been commissioned to preach the gospel and had totally forsaken his own righteousness and received God's (Rom 10:3). The greatest sin of all is self-righteousness.

Galatians 2:19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

When Jesus died, we died (Rom 6:3,6) and the moment we received Jesus as Lord, He fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law so we have fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law in Him. We are released, loose from, free and dead to the law (Rom 7:1-14). A born-again believer is not under the law but under grace (Rom 6:14, 1 Tim 1:8).

Paul illustrates this in Romans chapter seven where he describes the marriage union between a man and a woman. Once the man has died, she is now free to marry another. Once we become born again, we are dead or delivered from the law and now we are married to Christ.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

When we put faith in Jesus our old sin nature dies, and we received a brand-new nature identical to Jesus (1 Cor 6:17). The life we now live is no longer us, but it is Christ in us. Christianity is not a changed life it is an exchanged life. Paul was dead to himself and alive unto Christ. To the degree that we yield ourselves to our new identity in Him, we will experience the life that is already within us.

This verse says we live by the faith **of** the Son of God. Some translations say faith **in** the Son God and it is true, we do put faith in Jesus' finish work but the faith that we now have is not our own it is God's faith. God's faith operates outside the five senses and can believe for things that our senses cannot detect. Faith is a gift (Eph 2:8) and is imputed to every believer the moment they are born again (Gal 5:22).

Victorious Christian living does not come from the flesh for it is weak and profits nothing (Mt 26:41, Jn 6:63) but through the spirit. When we walk in who we are in Christ, the life of God will flow through us and the Christian walk becomes effortless, not strenuous (Gal 5:16).

The more we focus on not sinning and to not curse or drink, the more we strengthen it because we are focused on self and are relying on our own strength and ability (1 Cor 15:56). Believers should not focus on not sinning, rather focus on who they are in Christ and those habits will naturally fall off as our soul agrees with our spirit. This may seem wrong but while you are still smoking weed you should be confessing, "I am righteous". While you are still watching pornography, we should be declaring who we are in Him. This puts the focus on God in us and His ability through us that will break the power of the sin.

This is totally opposite of religion and what is taught at most churches. Religion focuses on the outer man while grace focuses on the inner man. Our power is in the inner man. We are not trying to imitate Jesus; it is literally us allowing Him to live through us.

Galatians 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

The word frustrate in Greek is *atheteo* and means to set aside. When we set aside what Jesus did and who He made us to be it will become frustrating trying to become something you already are and trying to please someone who is already pleased with you.

The way we frustrate the grace of God is by getting into self-effort and trusting in our own works and ability. If we could earn right standing with God through our own actions or behavior, then Jesus did not need to come and provide justification for us. If we could produce relationship with God on our own; Jesus died for nothing. Jesus did not need to come in the flesh if our flesh was sufficient to earn God's favor (Rom 8:3). The enemy wants us to focus on our obedience and not Christ obedience.

The law says do and is work. Grace says done and is rest. A believer's life starts with it is finished. Rest is not inactivity; it is plugging in to God's ability and it is the gospel that sets people free. Paul struck Elymas with blindness not when he was sinning or practicing his sorcery

but when he tried to oppose Paul from speaking the Gospel (Acts 13:6-12). He did this because the power of God is found in the Gospel of grace and that is what sets people free (Rom 1:16).

The moment you make the law do able and try to do what it takes to be righteous it is as if Jesus died for vain.