

A Surprising Gospel

[Galatians 2:11-21](#)

“Living in Light of the Gospel”– July 2, 2023



Introduction

Do you hate conflict? Is it awkward to be in a room where tensions rise? It is difficult to witness times of conflict between others. Conflict can make you extremely uncomfortable.

In chapter one of Galatians, there was peace, unity and love. Here in chapter two, we see Paul addressing a serious conflict that he had with Peter. Peter showed up in the city of Antioch, and when he does, Paul opposes him to his face. These two men were apostles, directly appointed by Jesus Himself. Something massive was at stake here. Peter's behavior contradicted what he believed. He had let fear control his actions.

A Christian is in great danger when his actions are in conflict with his faith.

Sermon Outline

1. A Fear that Condemns Vs. 11-14
2. A Faith that Justifies Vs. 15-21

Read & Discuss

1. Read vs. 11-14

Paul and Peter believed the same thing. The problem was not in what Peter believed, but it was in his actions. At first, Peter didn't have any problem fellowshiping with the Gentiles in Antioch. The Gentile converts did not follow Jewish law, neither were they circumcised.

The Jews were set apart by God. This was defined by three things: circumcision, obeying the Sabbath and eating only certain foods. When Jews became Christians, their world was turned upside down. They had a hard time letting go of the practices required by the law.

Peter had been given a vision by God Who declared all foods clean. Peter responded in faith. At that time, Peter's actions were consistent with his faith. Later, when other Jewish Christians showed up, they preached that Gentiles needed to be circumcised. They also preached that Jews shouldn't eat or fellowship with those uncircumcised Gentiles. This caused Peter to draw back because he was afraid. Peter feared persecution and the loss of his reputation. He wavered, not in his doctrine, but in his behavior. He had a track record of wavering, but Peter, "The Rock," was a work in progress. Jesus would be the One to undergird his faith until the end. But Peter was a rock because he repented and always persisted in faith.

This is a reminder that no human leader of the church is infallible. Church leaders will be assaulted by moments of fear. Pressures will seem insurmountable. Finances will be tight. It is easy to fall back into fear. Church leaders need friends, rest, grace, and prayer. Pray that their words and actions will be consistent with their faith. Fear is a ruthless ruler of the soul. What ways does fear affect your faith? What ways are you prone to waver in your faith? What sinful shortcuts are you tempted to take when you are afraid? Do you keep it all inside? Does your fear make you feel awkward being around God's people? Fear always separates you from God and His people, but it doesn't have to be this way. ([1 John 4:18](#)) We have been adopted by the living God. If we truly know how secure we are, we would never fall back into fear. Remember the truth of who you are!! Paul literally got into Peter's face and reminded Peter about the truth of who Peter truly was.

We need people in our lives that are willing to get in our faces and do the same thing. We need people to remind us who we are in Christ. We need people to bring us back in line with the truth. Do you allow people to step into your life and do just that? Who are the people with whom you have relationships who will speak truth into your life?

Additional Reading: Acts 10; Romans 8

2. Read vs. 15-21

These are some of the most beautiful and liberating truths of scripture. We have been justified. It is **this** doctrine that Peter was in most conflict with. His actions said that justification was not enough. This struck at the very heart of the gospel. Justification IS THE good news of the Gospel. Sinners who have been separated from God

can be made acceptable by justification. It isn't because of good works, good deeds, or good behavior. We are justified by faith in Jesus alone. If you lose this doctrine, you lose the whole gospel. Do your actions reflect this truth or are you trying to win God's approval with good works?

Justified is a legal term. It means "not condemned." We all stand as equals under the weight of condemnation. The charges are serious, and the verdict has been issued to Jew and Gentile alike - GUILTY. For our crimes, a death sentence awaits. BUT GOD sent Jesus, who lived a perfect, obedient life. ([Ephesians 2:4](#)) He died a horrible death on the cross. He rose from the dead. He paid the price. If we place our faith in Christ, His death covers the price for our sin. There is now no condemnation. ([Romans 8:1](#)) We are now in Christ and can never be condemned. The charge sheet is wiped clean. The guilt is gone.

There is NOTHING that a person can do to gain that salvation. No man can justify himself by obeying the law because no man can fully obey the law all of the time. The only One Who could was Jesus. There is only one way to be saved - faith in Jesus. The darkness of our condemnation has been replaced by the light of our salvation. The battle is over; the victory is won. What causes you to waver in your faith and tempt you to fear that Jesus isn't enough? You don't have to fear. There is a greater faith that justifies. Remind yourself of who you are in Christ. Jesus will never draw back from you. He will never separate himself from you. He will never be ashamed of you. He will never reject you. We have no reason to fall back into fear.

Additional Reading: Romans 8

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at fbcum.org

Next week's sermon text: we turn to [Genesis 33:1-20](#) "God Brings Reconciliation"