

GALATIANS 2:11-3:29

Lesson 2

**ignore
EMBRACE
erase
CHOOSE RIGHT**

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Galatians 2:11-13, God Unites - Customs Divide

When Peter visited Paul and Barnabas in Antioch Paul had to speak with Peter (v. 11). Unfortunately Peter stopped eating with the non-Jews the moment some Jewish believers, known to James, arrived in the Church (v. 12). These believers were strictly following the Jewish laws, and would therefore not eat with non-Jews who didn't follow all these rules. Peter didn't only stop eating with the non-Jews, but also encouraged other Jews to separate themselves (v. 13a). *Soon there were two groups of believers!* Even Barnabas was influenced by Peter (v. 13b)!

- ❖ *Believers should be able to correct each other.* Do you have someone in mind that you might need to speak to as you read the interaction between Paul and Peter?
- ❖ Are there some *customs* you need to let go off that is not doing much more than simply causing division between you and other believers?

Galatians 2:14-16, Jesus does what the Law never can

Paul got very upset about this division amongst the believers, and challenged Peter publicly that he needed to make things right (v. 14a). He reminded Peter that he, Peter himself, as a Jew, didn't even follow all the Jewish customs anymore so why would he now require from non-Jews to start following meaningless Jewish laws (v. 14b)?!

Paul reminded the Jews that they are not more special than any other believers. They were not a little bit closer to heaven than other people. *Everybody were equally deep in sin, and none can be saved through obedience to the law.* Only those who believe in Jesus Christ can be freed from sin (vv. 15-16a). The law of Moses could never accomplish this (v. 16b). People tried to get into the right relationship with God through following the law, but they could still not get out of the grip of sin (v. 16c).

- ❖ Am I expecting certain things from others that I myself do not even follow? Ask the Lord to reveal to you what you should chase after, and what you should encourage others to do.
- ❖ Ponder this Truth: *Nothing can get you out of the grip of sin, except Jesus.* What should you therefore do with your sin? Why wait...?

Galatians 2:17-21, Ignore - Embrace - Erase...what Christ has done for us!

God did the most amazing thing: He made Christ a sinner by putting all of our sin upon Him, Who then died in our place so that we can be freed from the punishment of sin (v. 17a)! Now Christ lives with God, and we can be with God too, living a life totally pleasing to God (v. 17b). Heartbreaking if we *ignore* this. Forever amazing if we *embrace* this Truth!

Therefore, when we continue to try and get to God on our own, through following our own laws and traditions, even after Christ died on our behalf and was risen from the grave, we obviously still don't understand the Good News (v. 18)! Not even the very best thing that we could accomplish can ever make things right with God... Is part of the Good News not that we don't even have to try anymore to impress God with all kinds of great things?

Indeed, we are now dead to the law (v. 19a). We have been *crucified with Christ*. However, we also *rose with Christ* (v. 19b)! We are now *new*. The old, the sinful "us", died and had been buried...forever. Christ now lives in us (v. 20a). He loved us so much that He gave His life for us (v. 20b). Nothing else therefore makes sense but to hold on to Him, and to *refuse erasing* all that God had accomplished through His grace by *trying to following the law* to show that we *deserve* a place in heaven (v. 21a)! *Then Christ died for nothing...* (v. 21b).

Peter fell for a moment into the trap of trying to please people, rather than living everyday only to bring glory to God. Do you sometimes struggle to do what is right (even when you might stand alone in that), rather than trying to please someone...or a group of people? Try to be specific, and then pray about what God is calling you to do to get stronger in your convictions and continue to seek ways to only glorify Him, even when you are under pressure by others.

You are saved by grace, and grace alone! This is so extremely special. What Christ had done for you and me is indescribable. Delight in this grace and be sure to take the time to thank God once again for His saving grace that had set you free and made a new life possible for you! Remember, don't allow laws and traditions to creep into your life to erase the grace that you have in our Lord.

If you haven't made a decision yet to let your life be renewed through His grace, then this moment would be just as good as any to let go and let God take over! Allow Him to set you free, to take the punishment for your sin, and create a beautiful new life through you! *Why don't you get on your knees and let Him become your Savior today?* You do not have to try to make this life work on your own...you do not have to try and open a way to heaven by yourself...and even if you try, you will fail...this is the only Way, this is the only Truth: Grace in Christ, and it is available to you, right now!

- ❖ If you made a decision today to give your life to the Lord and find salvation in His Grace as Your Lord and Savior, take a moment to ask Your Lord to connect you with a strong believer who can start to *disciple* you. In other words, *to journey with someone who can show you what this walk with Jesus should look like*.
- ❖ If you have already found this grace in the Lord as Your Savior and you have walked with Him for a while or perhaps even a long time - ask Him to reveal to you someone who might benefit from you starting a journey with them, *discipling them to grow in their faith*.

Galatians 3:1-5, Start with the Spirit - End with the Spirit

Paul continues in this chapter to express his concern for the confusion amongst the believers of Galatia (v. 1a). The Message was so clearly communicated to them that it was as if they could have seen Jesus hanging on the cross (v. 1b)! What brought about all the confusion? They should have known that they could not have received the Holy Spirit through fulfilling the law... (v. 2a). Of course this only happened in faith (v. 2b). What happened that they had *shifted from living from the power of the Spirit to wanting to live from their own strength* (v. 3)? Since they had received the Spirit they had been able to endure so much, and had witnessed great miracles (v. 5a). None of this was because they were obedient to the law. It was because of their faith (v. 5b)!

- ❖ Take a moment to reflect on your life. Would you say that you are *leaning into the power of the Holy Spirit* most of the time, or have you slowly *drifted to doing more and more by human effort*? If needed, how would you correct this? How could you prevent this from happening again?

Galatians 3:6-9, A Conduit of Blessing to the Nations

Paul reminds them that *Abraham* could be declared as being righteous *because of his faith*, and *through faith we are now also children of Abraham* (vv. 6-7). Abraham knew that the day would come when nations, other than Israel, would be freed from their sin through faith (vv. 8-9). God told him that they would be blessed through him. Because of his faith many believers can *now share in these blessings*.

- ❖ God promised. Abraham believed. Now the people group, the nation you belong to, is also blessed through this blessing. Pray about how God wants to use *you and your nation* to extend His Grace by being a “conduit” of blessing to...*other nations*!

Galatians 3:10-25, The Law - a Spotlight on Jesus NOT the Way to Jesus

It is foolish to try to reach God through trying to follow the law. This path can only take one's feet to death, because Scripture promises that God will curse all who do not follow even the smallest detail as prescribed by the law (v. 10). Setting the record straight with God through following the law is impossible for all (v. 11). The law does not have anything to do with faith (v. 12a). It only has something to do with what we do, and we do not have to do this anymore, because Christ had set us free from it (v. 12b). We belong to Him. He bought us on the cross when God had to turn His back on His own Son (v. 13). And now, we who have received the Holy Spirit, can also as non-Jews, receive through grace-filled faith the blessings that were poured out upon Abraham (v. 14)!

Paul continues to explain all of this using the analogy of a contract, binding on all parties involved who had signed it (v. 15). In the same way God entered into a legal arrangement with Abraham and his seed (singular), thus including not many people, but only One, Christ (v. 16)! This arrangement cannot be undone by anyone or anything, not even the law of Moses that only came 430 years later (v. 17). Of course, if we would now receive the blessings promised to Abraham on grounds of fulfilling the law, it would mean that the initial arrangement with Abraham had seized to exist (v. 18). Obviously this cannot be, because God's promise, based upon faith, is still good and legally binding (just like with any contract).

Why then was the law necessary? Paul explains that this was necessary so that people could understand what sin was, what was right and wrong in the eyes of our God. It actually showed us clearly that we cannot find true life on our own (vv. 19-21). It is as if we were stuck in a jail, with the law being the guard (vv. 23). Being stuck in sin it showed us that we were like enemies of God and therefore needed to be freed (v. 24)! *The law painstakingly pointed out our sin, thereby throwing a spotlight on...Jesus* (v. 22a)! He is indeed the One and Only Who can save us and to Whom all the promises of God point (v. 22b)!

It is therefore impossible to think that the *function of the law* is to show us that we can get to God by doing everything that the law requires...it is clearly actually showing the exact opposite, that *we are wretched in our sin and need to be saved by grace!* Just as Moses once came to show us through the law what God wanted from us, *Jesus came to show us how to accomplish that – to have pure hearts, cleaned through faith in His sacrifice, and now living from grace loving Him with heart and soul and mind* (vv. 19b, 24-25).

- ❖ Describe in your own words how the *law* is supposed to serve you.
- ❖ Describe in your own words how *Jesus* has served you.
- ❖ What does it do to your heart when you reflect on the depth of passages like Mark 10:45 where Jesus says that He did not come to be served, but to serve you by giving His life as a ransom to you...

Galatians 3:26-29, Dressed for LASTING Success

Now we are not enemies of God anymore, but *children of God* (v. 26)!

Baptism is like a *new set of clothes*. It *dresses us with Christ*, like one would put on some new clothes, showing that we now belong to Christ, from top to bottom (v. 27)! We can now be a *part of God's family*, where it doesn't matter to which nation or race you belong, what your status or qualifications are, gender or age... *None of these human distinctions matter anymore*: Jew, Greek, slave, boss, man, woman...*in God's family all are equal* (v. 28). *All only have one goal: To glorify the Name of Christ*. All of us are, because of our faith in Christ, now also offspring of Abraham, with the promises made to Abraham by implication also applicable to our lives (v. 29)!

To have Christ is to have God's blessings be a part of your life. To have Christ is to be free from sin, and live a life that makes sense and has purpose and meaning. To have Christ is to never be alone again, but to be a part of God's family. Faith in Christ is all that makes sense. Outside of

faith in Christ nothing makes sense. In fact, outside of such faith you are stuck in jail, awaiting an eternal punishment of being removed from the presence of God, forever... Faith in Christ. Grace alone.

Once more: Do you have this grace in your life...? Do you believe? What does it mean to you to have this faith in your life? Do you experience the precious consequences of having a relationship with Christ? Can you identify these blessings?

Do you know some people who are still stuck in sin, and have not come to faith in Christ yet? What does the Holy Spirit want you to do about that?

- ❖ What are some of the main points that challenged, encouraged, or transformed you in this lesson?