

GALATIANS 2b

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

In our last study we read about an awkward confrontation between the Apostles Paul and Peter. Peter was sharing a meal with some Gentile believers... Probably putting aside his proper Jewish ceremony and rules... Perhaps digging into their open bowls and shared loaves of bread when suddenly a group of Jewish converts arrive.

Peter changes like a chameleon and leaves the Gentiles as if they were contaminated and probably begins the ceremonial cleansing of his hands... Everybody is a little perturbed. The Gentiles are offended that Peter would blow them off like a pest on his arm and the Jewish converts could tell he had been eating with the Gentiles...

Watching this happen, Paul cannot hold his tongue any longer. Paul has been trying to merge these two groups in fellowship – NOT keep them apart. He calls out Peter in v 14. Why? Because the implication was that the Gentiles were not Jewish enough to be real Christians...

Listen to Paul:

V14 - 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?"

- **NLT** - why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?

What was the problem with Peter's behavior? Wiersbe names 5 things:

1. It endangered the unity of the Church.
 - a. Warren Wiersbe says that Peter had a "Relapse." Remember in Acts 10 when the Lord gave Peter the vision of unclean animals being lowered in a tablecloth and the Lord says to Peter: "Rise and eat."
 - b. Peter responded by saying "No way God! I would NEVER eat unclean things."
 - c. God tells him, ""**What God has cleansed you must not call common.**" (*Unclean, unworthy, below you.*)
 - d. When Peter hurried away from the Gentiles potluck, he was communicating that they were beneath him, unworthy of his presence.
 - e. Listen, we are all on the same plane around here. IF you think you are above OR below the rest of us... You are mistaken.

2. It endangers the teaching of Justification by faith, NOT works.
 - a. The problem with religious rituals is the temptation for people to depend on THEM rather than a relationship with Jesus!
 - b. Be nice, be kind, be generous too... BUT for heaven's sake – BE BORN AGAIN and in love with Jesus!

3. It endangers freedom from the Law.
 - a. What is wrong with the 10 commandments? NOTHING! We should obey every one of them. BUT the Pharisees had developed hundreds of silly rules that they put on the same plane as God's word.
 - b. Trying to obey them all was frustrating AND impossible.
 - c. If you have ever worked for or lived with a "Perfectionist – someone who is never satisfied with anything" you know the frustration of the law.
 - d. Sidebar – If people tell you that you are a perfectionist... it is NOT a compliment. Read "Hope for the Perfectionist" by David Stoop.

4. It endangered the Gospel itself. The Gospel needs no help from us!

5. It endangered the grace of God.
 - a. Think of it – There will not be a single person in heaven because of their religion. NOT ONE! Religion cannot get you in. Goodness cannot get you there. Rituals will not do it.
 - b. Only the grace of God will be enough and from time and eternity God has had ONLY ONE plan of salvation: GRACE, paid for by Jesus Christ on the cross.

SO... Paul says, "Hey Pete! Where are you going? Sit back down with your Gentile Bro's and finish your lunch!" **Paraphrased**

NOW... Paul, who has been studying his theology for a dozen years or so, gives Peter and the Galatians a little study about salvation and justification...

15 We *who are* Jews by nature, **(birth)** and not sinners of the Gentiles,

- **(Trick Question)** Is Paul saying that the Gentiles were in worse shape than the Jews? Sort of...
- The Jews were raised knowing the scriptures, but not really grasping them

until the Holy Spirit entered them and tutored them about their Messiah.

- BUT... The Gentiles did not have that advantage for the most part. In Greece for instance, there were more gods than people. When you visit Athens Greece today there are acres and acres of decaying and broken idols and statues to see. There are huge buildings there held up by carved pillars of gods and goddesses. It is both amazing... and heart breaking that even while Jesus walked the earth, these Greeks were dedicating themselves to worship dead-stone.
- To tell the Greek converts to worship a God that they would never gaze upon took an explanation of faith! Listen...

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.

- **“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law”** ... **Chuck Smith** says there is SOMETHING inherent in us to try to make up with each other... You do or say something mean or rude to someone and then you do or say something nice to them to make up for it... RIGHT?
- Beloved... THAT DOESN'T WORK WITH GOD! Stop trying to earn His love... You already have it! Enjoy it! Our Jewish friends are STILL doing this – Trying to do more good deeds than evil deeds. It MUST be exhausting! Listen...
- **“that we might be justified by faith in Christ”** THIS is biblical justification – FAITH in Jesus!
 - HIS good deed is the only deed that God accepts. His sacrifice satisfies our debt of sin.
 - Sacrifice is the only way to deal with sin. When did it start? In the Garden of Eden...
 - What did God clothe Adam & Eve with? Animal skins.
 - How did God get the animal skins? SACRIFICE!
- Remember what JTB said when he saw Jesus? **JOHN1:29** The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

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!

NLT - But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin? Absolutely not!

- For the Jewish converts to condemn the Gentile converts for NOT being something they could NEVER be (Jews) was evil!
- SO... We had BETTER NOT condemn anyone else just because they cannot be as good as us, or whatever "model Christian" we know of.
- Are you wondering, "**What do you want from us Pastor?**"
- **THIS** – Be filled with joy that Jesus Christ has paid the debt for us! Don't let the enemy weigh you down with guilt and regret for sins that you cannot un-do... Un-say... Un-think... Re-do... Let the Lord take that trash to the curb and get rid of it... DO NOT fall into the trap of comparing yourself to Billy Graham and then feeling unworthy. **JESUS has made you worthy!**

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU REBUILD

18 For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

- When Peter got up and moved from the Gentile table to the Jewish table he in essence returned to trying to be justified by rules and regulations. THE PROBLEM with that – it does NOT bring salvation.
- Paul says "**NLT** - For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God."
- HOW DID HE DO THIS? Listen...

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

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.

21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes

through the law, then Christ died in vain."

Conclusion – Can you imagine a citizenship in a country that was dependent on your obeying every law on its books? **EXAMPLE:** You leave for Church this morning; realize you are going faster than the speed limit and guilt overtakes you, you worry that your citizenship is lost, and you turn around and drive to the Police station on Tapo Canyon Road... Walk in... Go to the counter and hear, "You're back again?" Yea, I drove too fast on Cochran again. "OK, that'll be 400 dollars.... Again." Thank you, See you tomorrow. "OK, Drive safe!"

That would be awful, right? WELL, Heaven is NOT like that either! Our citizenship in heaven is NOT dependent on OUR goodness. It is ONLY valid because of JESUS CHRIST and His righteousness. SO... Come to Church because you want to worship Jesus, NOT to convince Him to love you. Give an offering as worship, NOT as a bribe... Witness to others because you are filled with gratitude, NOT guilt. And say your prayers because your biggest fan is in heaven waiting to hear from you.

THAT is justification! Get you some!