

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

Galatians 2:11-21

Intro: There is no question but that the Apostle Paul was a very special instrument in the hands of the Lord. He seemed to very sensitive to any departure from the truth. And no doubt this was due the way the Lord worked with him immediately following his salvation. Note the testimony that he gave at the end of chapter 1, and which continued into chapter 2. (Begin reading with verse 15 of chapter 1.)

I. THE TRAINING OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

Paul could have been taught by the other apostles, but it is clear that he was set apart in a special way, and that the Lord ministered to him. We were reminded of that in our communion service this morning where in 1 Cor. 11, speaking of the Lord's Supper, Paul wrote in verse 23, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you ..."

In Gal. 1:11-12 we read similar words:

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The other apostles could have taught Paul, or he could have learned even from the believers in Damascus, the fundamentals of the faith as they have to do with salvation. But none of that happened. Instead, the Apostle Paul, in ways that are not revealed to us, was personally tutored in faith by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And so Paul had the best teaching and training that is possible for anyone to have, and one reason for what the Lord did was the ministry that was to be given to the Apostle Paul: that of taking the Gospel to the Gentiles! And the controversy surrounding that ministry made up the main problem the early church faced in the first century. It was not the only problem, but it was the major problem. And Paul's instruction at the hand of the Lord made him very sensitive to the slightest departure from the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ alone!

Many expositors have expressed their conviction that the doctrine of justification by faith was the basic doctrine of the early church. Luther, for one, taught that no church could survive as a church if it abandoned the doctrine of justification by faith. The Apostle Paul would agree with that statement.

Now, in spite of the personal instruction that the Apostle Paul had with the Lord, he felt that he wanted his message checked and approved by those who were apostles before him. (Read what he did, and what their response was, in the first 10 verses of Gal. 2.)

Not only did they have no changes to suggest to Paul, but they agreed that Titus, a Gentile, should not be circumcised. So this was an added victory for the Gospel.

All of this explains why Paul was so quick to rebuke Peter publicly when Peter did what Paul related beginning with verse 11 of chapter. Peter's action seemed harmless enough, but Paul saw in it a contradiction of the Gospel of the grace of God. And Paul knew that if such actions taken by the Apostle Peter were allowed to pass, this could and would lead to other departures from the true doctrine of justification by faith. And, as I said earlier, this doctrine is extremely important because it is the foundation upon which other doctrines rest, including the doctrine of sanctification.

If we need further proof, remember what the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8 when speaking of God calling people to salvation, he went on to say, "And whom He called, them he also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:30b). Between justification and glorification, as the epistle to the Romans makes very clear, is sanctification. So for people to be wrong about justification would make it impossible for them to be right about sanctification.

I would add to this Paul's words in 1 Cor. 1:30-31:

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Now not all people who are right on justification are right on sanctification. I say this because many are willing to say that we are not justified in any way by obedience to the Law, but then when it comes to sanctification and teaching about the Christian life, they go back and pick up the Law and make it the means, or a major part of the means, of our growth in the Lord – which is sanctification. The Law has no part in either. The book of Hebrews tells us,

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God (Heb. 7:19).

Again, quoting from Paul and his words which we find in Rom. 8:3-4,

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through

the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

But just in case we are inclined to minimize the importance of the Law in the plan and purpose of God, Paul said this in Galatians:

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:21-26).

II. WHAT DID PETER DO? (Gal. 2:11-13).

Paul's words are very clear. Before that delegation came up from James in Jerusalem, he was having fellowship with the Gentile believers, but when they came, because he was afraid of what other Jews might think, he "withdrew and separated himself."

Paul had just one word for this: He called it *hypocrisy*. You see, you can be a hypocrite by doing the wrong thing, but you can also be a hypocrite when you don't do the right thing. And it was clear to the Apostle Paul that Peter "was to be blamed." Peter had not done the right thing. He was more afraid of men than he was of God.

The seriousness of what Peter did is described in verse 13. Others followed his example, and even Barnabas was "carried away" – a word which indicates *compromise*. And to show you the practical effect of what they did, let me borrow the first few words from verse 14. Paul was writing about himself when he said, "And when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel." Their actions were a denial of one of the basic truths of the Gospel, and so we see that they were really denying a very important aspect of the Gospel, and that was that Jews and Gentiles, both in need of salvation, must come to Christ in exactly the

same way.

III. WHAT DID THE APOSTLE PAUL SAY? (Gal. 2:14-21).

Peter's offence was known to all who were present, and so Paul, instead of making an appointment to talk to Peter, brought charges against Peter "before them all."

A. He began with a question (v. 14).

(Read verse 14.) The question was addressed to Peter, but Paul meant it for all who had done what Peter had done.

It seems evident that Paul did not want an immediate answer. He expected to follow his question with some teaching, but at that moment he wanted them to think about what they had done, and how it would affect the thinking of others concerning the Gospel. Clearly Peter had been inconsistent. Was it easier for the Lord to save a Jew than to save a Gentile? Was Peter agreeing with those Judaizing teachers who were teaching that Gentiles had to submit to certain Jewish requirements which they had under the Law if they were to be saved? Cf. Acts 15:1:

And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

That matter had already been answered by the Council in Jerusalem.

It is hard for us to realize how bound to the Law the Jews were by their culture, and how quick they were to avoid any criticism from the fellow-Jews even though in their hearts they knew the truth.

The second thing that Paul did was very important:

B. He did some teaching (vv. 15-21).

He began by saying what they as Jewish believers knew. See this in verses 15.

Let me read this to you in the NASB because, while it changes nothing, I believe the translation may be clearer to us. This is how it read in the NASB:

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?

The translators put everything from the question in verse 14 all the way down through verse 21 in quotes, indicating that this was what Paul said to Peter on this occasion – and I believe they were right in doing so.

15 "We {are} Jews by nature, and not sinners from among the Gentiles;

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, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.

17 "But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!

18 "For if I rebuild what I have {once} destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

19 "For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live to God.

20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 delivered Himself up for me.

21 "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness {comes} through the Law, then Christ died needlessly" (Gal.2:14-21).

Peter and the others, including Barnabas, were telling the Gentiles present that it would have been better for them if they had been born Jews instead of Gentiles. And so Paul took that expression of contempt which the Jews used against the Gentiles to see if there was any validity to it.

If a Jew is to be saved just like a Gentile, then he takes his place as “a sinner of the Gentiles.” But what if he goes back to the Law? How does the Law judge a Jew? He is a transgressor. Which is worse, or is there any difference? Well, the Law spelled sin out for the Jews, and so you could probably say that, if you had a choice it would be better to be a Gentile instead of a Jew because you wouldn’t have known enough to be a transgressor. And yet Paul said this in his epistle to the believers in Rome about Gentiles:

13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) (Rom. 2:13-15).

So, although the Gentiles were never put under the Law like the Jews were, God has written the Law upon their hearts. So all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, know the difference between right and wrong. So whether you are a Jewish transgressor, or “a sinner of the Gentiles,” the result for both is condemnation.

What then is the answer? See verses 19-21.

Paul claimed that as far as the Law was concerned, he was dead. The Law had no further claim upon him. Every demand of the Law which called for his death had been satisfied! What a claim to make! But how could he prove that it was true. Verse 20 gives us his answer.

“I am crucified” is in the perfect tense, and should be translated (as it is in the NASB), “I have been crucified.” And the perfect speaks of something that has happened in the past, but which has results which carry right up to the present.

Do we say to a person who has just been saved, “Now you have been crucified with Christ”? Of course, not! If you were crucified with Christ, you were crucified when He was crucified – on the Cross almost 2,000 years ago! Everyone who will ever be saved was united with Him in His death. And, as a side, this to me is one of the strongest arguments for Particular Redemption. Could we possibly say that a person could be united with Christ in His death, and still go to hell? How could it be? If we died with Him, our salvation is absolutely secure. Christ died not only as a Sacrifice, but as a Substitute for particular sinners.

But Paul not only died with Christ, but he was raised with Christ, and at that very moment Christ was living in Him!

And the same is true of all of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ today. We were crucified with Him, raised with Him, and now He lives in each one of us. This is why we don't need the Law. Remember Rom. 8:3-4:

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,

and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

And Paul concluded with verse 21. To “frustrate the grace of God” is *to set it aside, to do away with it, or to disregard it*. In fact, he did just the opposite; he magnified the grace of God by making it clear that there was no hope for either Jew or Gentile apart from the grace of God. Christ’s death was offered in grace as the one and only way for either a Jew or a Gentile could be saved.

Concl: Justification is by faith in Christ, and not by any good works that any of us can do, whether we be Jew or Gentile. To understand this will keep us from doing what Peter and Barnabas and several other Jews did. There is only one way to salvation for any sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, whether living in the first century or in the twentieth century – or any other century. And regardless of what nation he might be a part of. And through the Cross of Christ we not only have a secure salvation, but have the power of the living Christ within us, and it is through Christ, and only through Him, that we can live lives that are pleasing to God, and glorifying to Him.