

Contending for the Gospel

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[0 : 00] So please turn your Bibles to Galatians chapter 2.! Please follow along as I read.

I'm reading from the English Standard Version. Then 14 years, then after 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas taking Titus along with me.

I went up because of a revelation and sat before them, though privately before those who seemed influential, the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles in order to make sure that I was not running or had not run in vain.

But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. Yet, because of false brothers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery, to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

And from those who seemed to be influential, what they were makes no difference to me. God shows no partiality.

[1 : 58] Those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised, for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised, worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles.

And when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Only they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you this morning for your word that you have preserved over the ages.

And we thank you for the privilege of being able to read your word and now to sit under the preaching of your word. Lord, we thank you for your many promises that you will watch over your word and you will cause your word to perform the purpose that you've sent it to.

Would you use your word this morning to transform our hearts and lives and to build up this local church. We pray, oh Lord, that you would deepen our understanding and our stand on the gospel of grace.

[3 : 45] Father, I ask that you would give us all hearts to hear and hearts to obey. I pray that you would give me much grace as I seek to care for these who are gathered this morning.

Lord, hear our prayers, watch over your word, and cause your word to have its full effect in our lives, we pray.

In Christ's name. Amen. Amen. The section of Galatians that we have come to this morning is a part of Paul's argument, an argument that he started in chapter 1 where he is trying to cause the Galatians to see that his gospel, the gospel that he preached to them is indeed the true gospel. Paul is not starting a new thought, but what he is doing is he is continuing this argument that he began.

And in order for us to appreciate what Paul is saying in these two verses, these ten verses, sorry, we need to bear in mind why Paul went to Jerusalem in the first place and why it was later important to the Galatians as they were deserting the gospel.

[5 : 14] So a bit of background I think would help us. Before Christ came, the way people related to God was through the law. And then when Christ came, things changed.

So the Jews were given the law, they were the ones who had the patriarchs and the covenant, the old covenant was given to them. And if a non-Jewish person called Gentiles would come to the people of God, he'd have to conform, he'd have to become a proselyte, he'd have to embrace all of the Jewish teachings.

He'd have to convert to Judaism and he would have to keep the law. But then when Christ came, he became the way by which people related to God.

And the message of the gospel was that there was salvation through Jesus Christ by the grace of God. That was the message of the apostle Paul.

But there were Jews, there were false teachers who were saying that yeah, you have to be saved by grace, you need to believe in Jesus Christ, but you also need works, you need to be saved by keeping the law as well.

[6 : 45] You can't be saved without keeping the law of Moses. And these false teachers were called Judaizers. believers. And it comes from a word that Paul uses a little later in his letter in Galatians chapter 2 verse 14 and it means to live like a Jew.

And so there were these Judaizers who were requiring Gentiles in particular to conform to Judaism, to live like a Jew if they were going to be saved.

Their philosophy was yes, Christ plus keeping the law. And these Judaizers were a great source of opposition to Paul.

They dogged him in his ministry. They went to places where he left and they would undermine this message that he would be preaching that you are saved.

He would tell the Gentiles, you are saved by the grace of God through Jesus Christ and there was no need to keep the law. The Judaizers would come and say, no, you need to keep the law as well.

[7 : 54] And one of the reasons they were able to do this with some effectiveness was because as we saw last week, the Apostle Paul, for the first part of his ministry, really didn't have any connection with the apostles in Jerusalem.

Remember how he said that his gospel came to him by revelation. He did not go to consult with them. and this section that we now come to in Galatians, we started it last week.

Paul began to talk about how he went other places and he was preaching and he never really knew the people in Jerusalem. and now in these ten verses he recounts a difficult but important meeting that he had eventually when he went to Jerusalem.

He tells us how he defended the gospel against the Judaizers who wanted to distort it. And in doing so, Paul demonstrated his commitment to the gospel and here's what we see.

that Paul helps us to see in these ten verses. A true commitment to the gospel requires a firm defense of the gospel.

[9 : 17] But we consider this part of Paul's argument and the reason he went to Jerusalem. What was at stake? What we see is that a true commitment to the gospel requires, it necessitates a firm defense of the gospel.

Paul demonstrated his commitment to the gospel by defending it. And the bottom line reason is that there is only one gospel and it needs to be defended when it is under attack by Paul's teachers.

Now in our remaining time this morning I want to consider this account of Paul's defense of the gospel under two headings. The first is evaluating the gospel.

That's the first thing that happened in this meeting in Jerusalem when the leaders of the church there met with Paul and Paul met with them. Paul's gospel was evaluated.

Continuing his testimony to show that his gospel is the true gospel which he received by revelation we see in verse 1 why Paul went to Jerusalem.

[10 : 35] He begins to recount for us what happened. He said 14 years later he went to Jerusalem. Now there's a difference of opinion about what Paul meant by 14 years.

Some people say that Paul meant 14 years from the time he was converted and others say he meant 14 years since the first time he went to Jerusalem. Since his first visit that he went to Jerusalem which he referred to earlier in verse 18 of chapter 1.

It seems to me that the more natural reading of the time is that Paul is referring to 14 years after his first visit as opposed to 14 years after his conversion and really it doesn't matter.

Whichever one is correct the same point is being made by Paul. His point is this a long time elapsed before I went to Jerusalem and really talked with the apostles about my gospel, the gospel I preach.

That's the point that he was making. A long time elapsed. Again, he's trying to show that he preached the gospel that he received by revelation for quite some time before he began to discuss it with anyone.

[11 : 59] And then he adds credibility to his testimony by referring to two others who went with him. He says, Barnabas and Titus went with me. In other words, there are people who can be a witness

to the fact that what I'm saying actually took place.

In verse two, he tells us the reason he went to Jerusalem. He said he went there because of a revelation. Paul didn't go to Jerusalem because he had doubts about his gospel.

He didn't go to Jerusalem because he had some misgivings and was wondering, you know, is this really right? I better go and compare notes with the apostles in Jerusalem. No. Were it not for this revelation, Paul would not have gone here to continue to preach the gospel that he had always preached.

Now, he doesn't tell us the details of the revelation. And the reason he doesn't tell us is it's not important. God tells us in his word what we need to know.

So Paul does not go into the details of the revelation. All he tells us is that he went to Jerusalem on the basis of a revelation. Remember, he received the gospel by revelation in chapter one, and now he is going to Jerusalem to defend it on the basis of a revelation.

[13:19] And he tells us what happened. He tells us in verse two, if you would look there for a moment, that he set before them the gospel he was preaching among the Gentiles in order to make sure he was not running or had not run in vain.

It's important to grasp what the apostle Paul is saying here because it's an important part of the case that he's making to the Galatians. So let's unpack it for a moment.

When Paul refers to them, he is referring back to the Jerusalem apostles that he had referred to earlier in verses 18 and 19 of chapter one.

This is I said before them, these apostles in Jerusalem. But he tells us that he, what you can see is that Paul had obviously two meetings.

He had, it would seem, an initial meeting where he privately set his gospel before the apostles who clearly, based on his observation, were the influential ones.

[14:33] They were the leaders. They were the leaders of the apostles. He set it before them and then it seems he had a larger meeting where others were included in that meeting as well.

Again, we don't know who these influential apostles were. More, we can say that based on verse 9, that among them were the three leading apostles, Peter, referred to as Cephas, James, and John. John. And in verse 9, he refers to James, Cephas, and John as those who seem to be pillars, again, pointing to his unfamiliarity with them.

He didn't know them. He was unfamiliar with the apostles in Jerusalem. Jerusalem. And Paul makes it clear to the Galatians as he recounts this, and really by extension to us, that his gospel was being evaluated by the leading apostles in Jerusalem.

It's the point that he is making by recounting what actually happened. These meetings that he had, he laid before them the gospel that he was preaching.

[15:58] Now, again, why did Paul, why did Paul do this? Clearly, as we touched on before, Paul is not doing this because he had doubts of his gospel.

He's not doing it because he has some secret misgivings that something may be wrong and he wants to be adjusted or he wants to be corrected. Paul knew that he got his gospel by divine revelation.

He was determined to persecute the church and the Lord Jesus Christ met him and stopped him dead in his tracks and revealed himself to him. And Paul knew that anyone who preached another gospel was under a curse, a divine curse.

God said he saw the need to set before the apostles in Jerusalem the gospel that he'd been preaching to the Gentiles.

And clearly, such a setting before them would have entailed explaining the connection between Moses and the law and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[17:07] It would have required that he would go into the understanding of all the Old Testament, how it fits together, and how, as he would say, it no longer applies to those who would be saved.

So why would he do this? Well, he tells us in the last clause in verse 2. He says, I did it in order to make sure that I was not running in vain or had run in vain.

Paul recognized that there was only one gospel and the true gospel was received by him by divine revelation, but he had experienced the Judaizers.

He had experienced these false teachers who were undermining both his apostolic call and the gospel he was preaching. and so it would appear that the Judaizers were taking advantage of the fact that Paul had no connection with Jerusalem.

He was unknown to them largely. He had no connection to them. And so the argument would go something like this. When Paul would leave these churches, they would come behind him and they would say, come on, why are you listening to Paul?

[18 : 37] He's not a real apostle. All the real apostles are in Jerusalem. They're the ones who walk with the Lord. And while you're listening to his gospel saying that you don't have to keep the law, you need to keep the law.

Paul is by himself. He is the minority on this. We had the law and we had the Lord Jesus to walk among us and you should be listening to us and not listening to Paul.

And so every place where Paul would leave, these Judaizers would somehow find their way and wiggle their way in and they would be undermining his ministry.

You'll see a lot of this in the book of Acts where Paul is just fighting these situations. In chapter 11 you'll see it, in chapter 15 you'll see it, and we're not exactly sure which account Paul is referring to. It could be the one in Acts chapter 11. But they were troubling these churches and distorting the gospel the same way they were doing it in Galatia.

[19 : 41] So Paul's strategy for setting his gospel before the Jerusalem apostles was to seek their support for him and for his preaching of the one and only gospel because it would minimize the opportunities that the Judaizers had to undermine the churches that he had already established and churches he was going to establish.

Paul did not want to run in vain. Paul was not just content in just preaching the gospel, knowing that he was preaching the gospel, yet at the same time ignoring the fact that there were these Judaizers who were just tracing him and troubling the churches and undermining his work.

Paul didn't go to Jerusalem because he was being dissed by these churches and these false teachers.

He didn't go there because his ego was being affected. He didn't go there because he personally needed endorsement. Paul went there for the sake of the gospel that he did not want to run in vain. And what we see is very clear from verse 3 that Paul had the Judaizers in view. Look at verse 3. It says, but even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised because he was a Greek.

[21 : 10] It seems that Paul intentionally took Titus with him on this trip to demonstrate to the church in Jerusalem that the Gentiles had full inclusion in the church.

and they did not have to fulfill the requirements of the law of Moses. And you would notice that he just raises the issue of circumcision because this is the chief thing that the Judaizers were obsessed with.

We see from Luke's account in Luke 15 1 where he records that the Judaizers were doing the same thing at the church in Antioch. Luke records in Acts 15 1 but some men came down from Judea, Jerusalem, and were teaching the brothers unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses you cannot be saved.

And so they were saying look we're from the mother church, we're from headquarters, Paul doesn't go to headquarters, nobody knows him there, you need to listen to us, unless you're circumcised you cannot be saved.

So the Judaizers were the key issue Paul was fighting and no doubt it was the reason he brought Titus along in the first place.

[22 : 39] And he says Titus was not forced to be circumcised. In other words he's saying to the Galatians they are there compelling you to keep the law of Moses. I took Titus with me to Jerusalem among the apostles the most influential apostles no one compelled him to be circumcised.

Again there are witnesses to this Paul would be saying Barnabas was with me and Titus was with me as well. But then in verse 4 he says he introduces a part that helps us to see that the visit was not that smooth the visit was actually a very difficult one.

He says in verse 4 yet because of false brothers secretly brought in who slipped and despised our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus so that they might bring us into slavery to them in verse 5 to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

Paul refers to these Judaizers as false brothers he tells us they were secretly brought in we don't understand how but they were brought in and this would seem to be the larger meeting other than that first meeting with the influential apostles where he said before them his gospel they probably met privately and then they invited some others to join them and Paul says here's the reason they

were brought in they were brought in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus so that they might bring us into slavery and he tells us how they responded he said we did not yield to them for a moment not for a split second did we yield to them and no doubt this was a you know scripture doesn't go into all the details but this was a back and forth this was a spiritual fight this was a tense discussion and the apostle Paul was contending for the gospel and defending the gospel and I imagine the

Judaizers were appealing to him come on Paul you're in minority what's the big deal let him be circumcised there are people who would try to get you to compromise in what seems to be the smallest way perhaps they would have said to Paul listen Paul we know the most important thing is Jesus Christ we know that you you got to be born again we know you have to receive Jesus Christ that's the big part what's the big deal if he gets circumcised Paul says we didn't yield to them not for a second perhaps they pulled the unity card on Paul Paul this doesn't look good we're divided we need to be united we should be fighting in this way what's wrong with keeping the law Moses fall in line Paul and besides you join he can lately these are the apostles they were here a long time you came late you should join the line and just fall in line

[25 : 51] Paul didn't budge he did not budge let me share with you three very important observations from statements that Paul makes in verses 1-5 that we should not overlook first by referring to the Judaizers as false brothers Paul helps us to see that not every person who is physically a part of the church is a true believer and more particularly those who are not trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation are not true believers Paul calls them false brothers now you can rest assured that these false brothers were comfortable enough with Jesus Christ and that story about his death and that he was the Messiah and all the other stuff an orthodox Jew would not countenance that they would reject that they would not be around that so these false brothers they accepted that but they required something else and Paul says you're not saved and those are strong words those are strong words he did not call them mistaken brothers or misguided brothers he called them false brothers and while this may seem in your face while this may seem arrogant judgmental as many people determine today

Paul was speaking the truth to them and he was saying to the Galatians really they are not saved because they are not fully trusting in Christ and here lies my concern for a lot of Seventh-day Adventists not all of them there are some Seventh-day Adventists who are not trusting in the Sabbath they are trusting in dietary laws they are trusting in Christ but there are Seventh-day Adventists and I have met many of them who are trusting in the Sabbath and they are trusting in keeping all the dietary laws what Paul would say to them you're not saved you're believing that your salvation is hinged on keeping the Sabbath and if you don't you go to hell if you believe that your salvation is hinged on not eating lobster not eating conk you are trusting in your works and not in Jesus Christ there are some Adventists who would say that we are not saved because we're worshipping this morning on a Sunday and if you have lobster or conk or something that prepared to eat today or pork so you're going to hell the guy Paul Miller says you're going to go to hell with it in your teeth now no doubt there are wonderful benefits for abstaining from some foods or eating them in moderation there is a tremendous benefit in approaching a day as a day of worship and focusing on the Lord and fellowshiping with brothers and sisters and resting tremendous benefit to those things but there is no salvation benefit to them there is no salvation value to be added to them anyone who adds salvation value to them

Paul would say you are a false believer another point that is important for us to not miss from what Paul says is that we who have put our faith in Christ have freedom in Christ and to yield to anything else for salvation believing that it brings salvation he says it is like spiritual slavery it puts you in slavery he says these guys came in to aspire the freedom that we had and they wanted to bring us into slavery getting us to add something to our belief in Christ and then third in verse 5 you see that Paul shows us why it was important for him to contend for the gospel why it was important to him to go to these influential apostles and argue the case of the gospel that he preached he says speaking to the Galatians so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you he says that's why we did it we did it because we wanted the truth of the gospel to be preserved for you and brothers and sisters this was true for the Galatians it was true for us as well when Paul went to Jerusalem and he contended for the gospel and he fought for the true gospel of the grace of God he fought for us as well he fought for us as well and that's important because there is no other way of salvation there is no other gospel but the one true gospel and that is why we too must do all that

we can defend the gospel in verse 6 Paul tells us that the influential apostles in Jerusalem added nothing to him he says they seemed influential but they added nothing to me and let me just say this Paul it's easy to think that Paul was being disrespectful to them by saying those who seemed influential but I think it just points to the fact that he didn't know them he really didn't know them he hadn't been to Jerusalem wasn't focused on what they were doing there he knew

[31 : 55] God appeared to him gave him a message and he was preaching that message but he makes the point he says whoever they were doesn't really matter to me and I think this is important it's important to the extent that sometimes we compromise because we are in awe of people and their stature and their standing and their reputations and they can cause us to compromise the truth of the gospel Paul says it didn't matter to me who they were and the reason it didn't matter to him he says it doesn't matter to God God is not partial God does not show favoritism doesn't matter if it's the pope if the pope is wrong the pope is wrong so Paul says in verse 6 he said they didn't add anything to me in other words they didn't adjust my gospel he said the Galatians says he says that same gospel I preached to you I said it before them they added nothing to it they added nothing to it they took nothing from it they added nothing to it nor to me in other words he's saying they evaluated my gospel they saw nothing wrong with it so instead of condemning

Paul's gospel as the Judaizers had hoped the Jerusalem apostles commended Paul's gospel gospel and this brings me to my second and final point commending Paul's gospel notice in verse 7 that Paul points out that rather than adjust his gospel the Jerusalem apostles recognized that he had been entrusted with taking the gospel to the uncircumcised which means the Gentiles in the same way that Peter was entrusted with taking the gospel to the circumcised which means the Jews Paul says the apostles came to this conclusion notice what he's not saying he is not saying that there were two gospels and he took one to the Gentiles and Peter took another to the Jews he's not saying that he's saying there was one gospel and he and Peter were primary apostles to two different groups of people he went to

God sent him to the Gentiles and God sent Peter to the Jews one gospel for all people and this is a very important point it's a very important point because even today there are people like John Hagee who are saying in all kinds of different ways that there's a special gospel for the Jews that's different from the gospel to the Gentiles saying that the Jews are going to be saved some other way other than the gospel by which Gentiles are saved that is heresy that is not true because there's only one gospel and anyone who's going to be saved is going to be saved by the one and only gospel it is misleading to tell people oh there's some other way for you you can stay in your unbelief you can stay in your blindness because somehow someday when Jesus returns you're just going to believe in Jesus there's one gospel for all people

Paul says this in Romans 1 16 he says I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it's the power of God to salvation to the Jew first the gospel goes to the Jew first and also to the Greek meaning the Gentiles the gospel is centered on the person and the work of Jesus Christ the work that he accomplished on Calvary's cross no other gospel no other way for salvation and so Jews who reject Jesus Christ cannot and will not be saved just like anyone else who rejects Jesus Christ but by dividing the mission to Jews and Gentiles what the Lord was doing really was recognizing the differences between these two people groups between the Jews who had the revelation of the law and all the patriarchs and then the

Gentiles Jews were not required to abandon Jewish culture they're Jews you come to Christ we're Bahamians the same way Jews they didn't they didn't have to abandon their Jewish culture but they were not to import anything from their Jewish culture to believe that it had some salvation value in how they served the Lord when it comes to serving the Lord all people from all cultures come with empty hands keep your culture enjoy your heritage but when you come to Christ you all come with empty hands and you share the same spiritual heritage together in verse eight Paul helps us to see what the Jerusalem apostles saw look at what he says in verse eight says for he who worked through

[37 : 40] Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised work also through mine for the Gentiles they recognize that God was at work in Paul's ministry they perceived it says in verse nine the grace that God had given to him they were able to see it and as a result of it he says they they welcomed him they gave the right hand of fellowship in short the Jerusalem apostles the pillars in particular Peter James and John they commended Paul's gospel they evaluated it they also commended it and here's the interesting thing in commending his gospel they commended his

apostleship they commended the very thing that was being undermined that

Paul addresses from the very outset of his letter that Christ called these apostles they recognized that Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles right alongside Peter who was an apostle to the Jews and again this is important for the Galatians to hear he'd been questioned by the Judaizers and now he's being vindicated by the pillars who were in Jerusalem one of the things I think we should not read over Passover in verse nine is in verse nine we see another aspect of the grace of God the broad definition of grace is that grace is God's goodness to undeserving sinners sinners who deserve wrath that's the grace of God but grace is also in terms of a ministry or calling that God has gifted a person for when God gives us gifts to serve in particular ways those are that's an expression of grace those are grace gifts that he has given and it was evident to the apostles they couldn't deny God gave Paul grace God gave him grace to do what he was doing to go to those Gentile churches and to preach the gospel to establish them and so as Paul notes they gave him the right hand of fellowship they asked one thing they said you know what just remember the poor and Paul says it was something he was eager to do on this point I think it is important for us to note that remembering the poor is not a part of the gospel not a part of the gospel that was an add on last thing they said you know preach the gospel you're preaching it's the same gospel we preach we agree with your gospel as you go though remember the poor

Paul says it's something I was eager to do in fact it is something that Paul had been doing you read the book of Acts in particular you see how that was being worked out remembering the gospel it is an implication of the gospel it is the compassion that we are to have for the poor gives evidence that our lives have been affected and transformed by the gospel but it is not the gospel helping the poor doesn't save us doing good works like that cannot save us and what has happened is some churches have reduced the gospel to a social gospel where they are believing that the church's role in society is to do good and a lot in society is saying that about the church why doesn't the church do this you need to get out there and do this and do the!

not necessarily institutionally but individually not necessarily that we need to put a bunch of programs together and run them but as we the church go into the world we do good works but that's not the gospel that's what we have been reading about in the sermon on the mount how we have to let our light shine before others that they may see our good works and they say praise the Lord but that in itself is not the gospel we can feed the poor until the Lord comes and they won't be saved by them being fed I don't think there's anyone who fed the poor more than Jesus Christ and when he died and was buried and resurrected and ascended to heaven you could only find 120 people the thousands that he fed were not to be found let me conclude with a couple of thoughts it is easy for us to get lost in these historical details that Paul is giving us up front and in particular as he was making his case to the

[43 : 18] Galatians that his gospel was an unadulterated gospel he received it from Christ it had been tested and evaluated and commended we can get lost into the details of all of that so here are the two key things that we need to take away from this further installment of Paul's case before the Galatians first Paul wants to show that there's only one gospel there's only one gospel the gospel he preached was the gospel they preached in Jerusalem they evaluated his they commended his the Judaizers could no longer take advantage of that and say Paul is out of step with Jerusalem and then second Paul wants to show that the gospel must be defended it must be defended the stakes are too high to allow the gospel to be undermined and distorted and remember when the gospel is distorted the glory of God and the souls of men are at stake we must be willing to contend for the gospel we must be willing to defend the gospel and we must not be swayed by personalities in the process whom I tempt us to compromise and this is becoming increasingly difficult more and more it is becoming increasingly difficult to stand and say this is the gospel and that is false because the world is increasingly pluralistic workplaces are increasingly pluralistic and it's difficult to stand and say there's only one way in a pluralistic society it's difficult to say there are false religions sometimes even if they are

Christian brand false religions but we must be willing to take the narrow road walk the difficult road and defend the gospel next week we're going to consider the final bit of historical information that Paul presents to the Galatians in verses 11 through 14 where he confronts Peter himself so here you have now the primary apostle to the Gentiles confronting the primary apostle to the Jews because Peter was not walking in step with the gospel and again Paul is doing this all for the Galatians to help them to see that his gospel is the true gospel and then the following week we

begin to consider the salvation theology that Paul begins to lay out for the Galatians so the first thing Paul had to do was he had to argue for his gospel he had to show them this is the true gospel and now when he has settled that he is able then to go in and unpack the truth of the gospel and I want to encourage you to do your very best to be a part of the remainder of this series as we get to the heart of why Paul is writing them

Paul is wise he could have jumped right into the theology and told them all these things but it would have probably gone through one day and other next because they weren't sure about his gospel but Paul has artfully argued for the one gospel and having artfully argued for that one gospel he begins to show us the theology of that and I would say I've said it before and I'll say it again many people in this country have never heard the gospel never heard the gospel they heard moralism they heard stop doing this and start doing that but they have not heard the truth of the gospel that Paul was confronting the Galatians with and as we continue to unpack this letter week by week I know many of us by the grace of God we've heard the gospel and

I pray that it would be joy to our ears to hear fresh the good news of the gospel but I imagine there would be some of us who will be hearing the gospel for the first time in the providence of God so I encourage you to be a part of that so let me close by suggesting how we can apply this sermon in our lives this week false gospels are all around us in many ways it's the air we breathe people we love and care for family and friends have embraced false gospels false gospels are shared every day over social media so here's what I want to encourage us to do for this week let's pray and ask the Lord to help us to discern and recognize false gospels see a false gospel is not just something that says this is the way to be saved and it's the wrong way that's not that's not the only false gospel we hear another false gospel is here's the way to get hope here's here's here's a way that you can lift your spirit and you can get hope and they point us to something or someone other than Jesus Christ that is a false gospel and I tell you social media is brimming over with that kind of false hope calling us to let our hope be built on other things other than Jesus blood and his righteousness so let us pray and ask the Lord give me give me wisdom give me discernment to recognize these false gospels whether it's a false way to come to Christ or it's just some false application of the gospel and then let's pray for wisdom to respond and a wise response may be to ask questions if you're able to maybe you can engage the person so what do you mean by that it's better to ask questions than start to correct right away maybe it may be engaging another brother or sister to say what do you think about this how does it sound to you is that right it may cause us to go and clarify our own understanding of the gospel

[50 : 30] I was looking yesterday at the devotional and table talk for this weekend and it's entitled how the gospel creates the church I encourage you to read this it's very timely it's on page 57 and what's interesting is he refers to this encounter that we're going to cover next week between Peter and Paul and Paul confronts Peter because he was not walking in step with the gospel I encourage you to read this because what the author does is the author interacts with a false gospel statement a false statement that you've probably heard where people say I love the gospel but I can't stand the church so you've heard people say things they are I love Jesus but I don't love Christians and sometimes we can even repeat those things or we just accept them as being true but they're anything but the truth

I encourage you to read this devotional I think you would find it to be very very helpful who are you hoping in this morning who are you trusting in this one who are you truly trusting in are you truly trusting in Jesus Christ alone or you have a little bit more that you're trusting in your own righteousness maybe the length of time you serve the Lord maybe the things you do for the Lord not to discount those things as wonderful things but when it comes to salvation they have zero value our hope is to be built on nothing less than Jesus blood and his righteousness and I pray that more and more as we go through this series we'll be able to see that let's pray together