

Galatians 2:11-16

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Preacher: Greg Hendrickson

[0 : 00] In 1756, the people of Virginia lived in fear of French and Indian armies on the colony's western frontier. Samuel Davies summoned them to battle.

Can you bear the thought, he asked, that slavery should clank her chain in this land of liberty?

British troops turned back the French and Virginia was spared.

But 20 years later, the people of Virginia were again in peril. Now the mother country, England, threatened to reduce them to slavery through taxation. With the other English colonies, they sprang to arms to determine, as one put it, whether we shall be slaves.

They declared independence from Britain and they were willing to fight and to die for freedom. The Declaration of Independence began by affirming that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with rights to life and liberty.

Yet at the time when Thomas Jefferson wrote those words, he was personally depriving nearly 200 men, women, and children of their liberty.

[1 : 05] The men who came together to found the independent United States dedicated to freedom and equality either held slaves or were willing to join hands with those who did.

The rise of liberty and equality in America was accompanied by the rise of slavery. So Edmund Morgan, the historian, begins his book, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, a history of colonial Virginia.

And he calls this the central paradox of American history. How over two centuries, a people could have developed the dedication to human liberty and dignity exhibited by the leaders of the American Revolution and at the same time developed and maintained a system of labor that denied human liberty and dignity every hour of the day.

In the end, it took nothing less than a civil war to bring about the abolition of slavery in the United States. It took a long time for this nation to face up to our hypocrisy, the disconnect between what we said that we believed and how we actually lived.

Now, of course, the abolition of slavery as an institution didn't immediately abolish the attitudes that had sustained it in the first place. Attitudes like racism or greed or arrogance.

[2 : 29] And those attitudes continue to play themselves out even now. In different forms. Now, it's easy to look back and criticize the hypocrisy of other people who lived sometime long ago in the past.

It's harder to recognize and then to begin to root out our own hypocrisy today. But that's exactly what our scripture passage is about today.

This morning, we're looking at Galatians chapter 2, verses 11 through 16. It's found on page 973 of the Bibles in the pew in front of you, if you want to turn there. And in this passage, the Apostle Paul addresses the problem of hypocrisy in the Christian church.

How could the Christian community, a people who had been liberated from slavery through the blood of their Savior, Jesus Christ, begin to treat some of its very own members as second-class citizens?

So come and read with me Galatians chapter 2, verses 11 through 16. Paul writes this. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

[4 : 08] But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners. Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ.

So we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law, no one will be justified.

In this passage, the Apostle Paul is telling the story of his public confrontation with the Apostle Peter. And on the surface, Paul seems to be just explaining why he opposed Peter, why he was right, and why Peter was wrong.

But as we look into this passage, we'll see that Paul's not simply recounting the story of a personal conflict that he and Peter had. He's showing us the danger of hypocrisy, the source of hypocrisy, and finally, the cure for hypocrisy.

[5 : 21] Now, before we dive into this passage, let me give a little context. So far, in the book of Galatians, Galatians 1 and 2, Paul has been telling his personal narrative, his story of how he received the gospel, the message about Jesus that he preaches, and also how he interacted with the other apostles.

He's doing this with the goal of defending his authority as an apostle, defending his authority to proclaim the divinely revealed gospel of Jesus.

So in chapter 1, Paul begins by saying he didn't copy or adapt his message just because he heard it from somebody else. He received his message directly from God when Jesus Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus.

But then, as we looked at last week, in the beginning of chapter 2, Paul explains that even though he got his message independently, his message was in complete agreement with that of the other apostles, Peter, James, and John, who were in Jerusalem.

Now, incidentally, this is the same kind of reasoning that modern historians use to justify or to establish the validity of historical claims. If you have two independent sources, but they're both saying the same thing, it's a good sign that they're probably in touch with reality and not just making something up.

[6 : 42] And so Paul may be making a similar point. Now, last week we saw, chapter 2, verse 9, Peter, James, and John gave the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas. In other words, they agreed to partner together, to work together in spreading this gospel message of Jesus.

Paul and Barnabas would go primarily to the Gentiles, and Peter, James, and John would go primarily to the Jews. But they would be bound together by their common faith and also by their common concern for the poor.

In particular, the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem had been undergoing a famine, and they were agreed together that they wanted to help to share in that concern for one another.

Now, in today's passage, the scene changes from Jerusalem to Antioch. And earlier in the service, we read from Acts chapter 11 about the foundation of the Christian church in the city of Antioch. Antioch in Syria was the third largest city in the Roman Empire at that time, 250,000 people approximately. Now, before the gospel of Jesus spread to Antioch, Christianity was basically a Jewish sect.

[7 : 50] The 12 apostles were Jewish guys who had come to believe in Jesus as the promised Messiah of Israel. But as the gospel of Jesus began to spread, it spread first among the Jewish community in Jerusalem, and then later among Jewish people in the Diaspora throughout that region.

But Antioch was the first place where a large number of Gentiles, non-Jews, came to faith in Jesus. And Antioch was the first place where Jews and Gentiles gathered regularly to worship the risen Lord Jesus together.

In Antioch, the followers of Jesus weren't called Nazarenes or the way, as they were in Jerusalem sometimes, but they were called for the first time Christians, Christ followers.

People realized there was something radically new going on. And the church in Antioch became a model of a multi-ethnic Christian community and a hub for Christian mission to the world.

From Antioch, Paul and Barnabas were sent out on their first missionary journey. And Antioch became the battleground for this conflict, recorded in Galatians chapter 2.

[9 : 07] So the first thing that we see as we look into this conflict between Paul and Peter is the danger of hypocrisy.

Even the best leaders can become hypocrites. You know, the apostle Peter was a successful and respected leader in the early church.

Jesus had said that Peter and the faith that he embodied would be the rock upon which he would build his church. In fact, that's what Peter's name means, rock. Now, you might have noticed that in this passage, Paul doesn't actually use the word Peter.

He calls him Cephas. Cephas is simply an Aramaic name. And Peter is the Greek name, but they both mean rock. It's the same name, just in two different languages, sort of like James in English and Santiago in Spanish.

They sound different, but they're the same name. And in the book of Acts, Peter, in some ways, is a rock. He preaches boldly to people despite great opposition.

[10:12] Peter's public preaching was likely a primary source for the Gospel of Mark, the earliest Gospel in the New Testament. And Peter's letters became part of the New Testament. But Peter, here, is the first to act hypocritically.

Now, the word hypocrite was a theatrical term, actually. It was referring to actors in a play or people who would wear masks pretending to be someone that they really weren't.

Now, interestingly, some of the early church fathers just couldn't believe that Peter could become a hypocrite. And so one of them, Clement of Alexandria, he said, it must be a different Peter who Paul's talking about here, not the apostle.

But that's clearly not the case because Paul refers to him just two verses earlier in verse 9. Some of the other early church writers said Peter didn't actually do anything wrong.

He was just pretending, making a scene so that Paul could make his point, sort of an object lesson. Well, it's a funny idea, but there's no reason to believe that that happens.

[11:24] See, in their minds, it was impossible that such a respected and prominent leader in the church could fall into hypocrisy. But he did.

And you know, this isn't the only time that Peter messed up. Peter denied Jesus three times when Jesus was arrested and tried. Even after Jesus' resurrection, Jesus restores Peter and he says, feed my sheep, follow me.

And the next thing that Peter does is Peter turns around and says, what about that guy? And Jesus says, you know, if I want him to remain alive until I come back again, what does that matter to you? You follow me. Fix your eyes on me. Stop looking at everybody else. But unfortunately, that's exactly what Peter does here.

He starts looking at everybody else and what they think. Now, by the way, if the apostles had simply made up the New Testament to consolidate their power in the church or to advance their own agenda, there would be no reason to include such embarrassing episodes of their shameful failures.

[12:42] They would only be in the New Testament if these things actually happened. The point is this. Even people with high ideals, even respected leaders can fall into the trap of hypocrisy.

Now, maybe you know very well that church leaders can fall. There have been plenty of examples. But is there anyone that you look up to and you think, he or she would never be a hypocrite?

Maybe you think of yourself that way. I would never be a hypocrite. The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians, therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

And James says we all stumble in many ways. Every one of us, no matter how young or old, no matter how successful you are, no matter how strong is your public reputation, no matter how well you know the Bible or how many people you have preached to, you are vulnerable to fall.

And that's why we all need to be in relationships with other people who know us and love us well enough to call us out when we mess up and to warn us when we're drifting.

[14:01] So let me ask you, do you have people in your life who know and love you well enough to challenge and rebuke you? Do you let people into your life at that level?

If you're married, do you go to your spouse and say, I need you to help me become the man or woman that God has called me to be? You probably know me better than anyone else, so if you see things I need to work on, tell me.

I might not always agree right away, but I will listen to you because I need to become more like Jesus and I need your help in this process. Now if you hear that and you say to yourself, yeah, that's how we work as a married couple.

That's great. If not, I challenge you, say that to your spouse this Valentine's Day. Write it in a card to them.

My dear wife, I love you more than anyone else in the world and I need you to help me love Jesus even more. Now since I'm preaching this sermon, I have to do that.

[15:13] But I will. Now some of you might be thinking that's crazy. Why would I open myself to even more criticism? But you know, in the Bible, that's part of what marriage is supposed to be about.

Paul says, husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church to make her holy, cleansing her with washing of water through the word.

So husbands, are we seeking to help our wives become more holy by speaking words of truth in love? wives.

That's part of what it means to be a helper or an ally to your husband. To encourage and challenge him prayerfully to be a godly man.

Now if you're single, you're not off the hook. Do you have a friend, another guy or another woman who knows your struggles? You know, not just somebody that you can chill and shoot the breeze with, not just somebody who always empathizes with you and always takes your side, but someone who will tell it like it is because they love you.

[16:29] And the book of Proverbs says, wounds from a friend can be trusted, but only an enemy multiplies kisses. Paul called out Peter to his face in front of everyone.

Now most of the time, that's, a public confrontation is a bad idea. Paul confronted Peter publicly because the issue had affected the whole community and it was setting a precedent for the worldwide church.

Now in most cases, the right way to begin is go to someone, go to their face, talk to someone personally and directly, but do it privately. It's not easy to do that, to confront someone in a loving way, but it's part of what it means to be a true friend.

You know, this is something that we've been trying to cultivate among the elders here at Trinity. To develop a culture where we love one another, where we share each other's burdens, where we pray for each other, where we spend time with each other, but also where we can speak frankly to each other and speak honestly to each other and know our own strengths and our own weaknesses and know each other's and be able to work well as a team.

That's what we want to do as a team of elders leading this church because we know that no one is safe from the danger of hypocrisy. Now second, the nature or the source of hypocrisy.

[18:03] You might ask, well, what exactly was Peter doing that was so bad? He just decided not to eat with the Gentiles. Well, maybe a little rude, but, you know, Paul, aren't you going a little overboard?

Was it really that bad? Well, back then, there were no drive-thru fast food restaurants or frozen individual meals that you could heat up in a microwave.

No ramen noodles. Most of the time, people would eat together in a household or perhaps at a social club or a religious temple. And eating together was an act of trust and friendship.

Even today, you know, there are some people that you might be willing to meet or interact with in the office or in public, but you wouldn't invite them over to your house because you don't have that level of trust and friendship.

Now, verse 12 says, before certain men came from James, Peter was eating with the Gentiles.

Now, Peter was a Jew, and at that time, most religious Jews did not eat meals side by side with Gentiles because Jews kept kosher and Gentiles didn't.

[19:11] So if you ate with Gentiles, that would compromise your adherence to the food laws. But after Peter's interaction with Cornelius, which we read about again in the passage in Acts earlier in the service, Peter changed his mind.

He realized that the ceremonial laws had been fulfilled in the coming of Jesus. Jews and Gentiles could be accepted before God on the same basis, simply through faith in Jesus as Lord.

So people began, so Peter began eating with his Gentile Christian brothers and sisters. And this was important because when early Christians met together, they almost always shared a meal. they were very frequently, you know, there were no dedicated church buildings like this one for the first 200 years, at least. People met in each other's homes.

And Acts 2 says, they broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.

Eating meals together represented the unity of Christians with one another and with Jesus.

[20 : 12] Christians were brothers and sisters in God's family. So they would come together and eat together in God's presence. They would share the Lord's Supper or communion together.

And Paul writes about that. He says, we who are many are one body for we all partake of one bread. Now we celebrate communion here at Trinity once a month and when we celebrate it, we use rice crackers.

Maybe you've wondered why they're so crunchy. So that we don't exclude several people in our congregation who have gluten allergies. But back then, they would celebrate communion with one big loaf of bread.

Symbolically representing Jesus as the one bread of life in whom they all shared. Paul says, we're one body because we eat from one loaf of bread.

And we have one Lord and one Savior, Jesus Christ. And then after they would share the bread and the cup in the Lord's Supper, they'd usually, it seems, they would have a meal together. 1 Corinthians 11 seems to assume that the context, the normal context for celebrating the Lord's Supper is during a meal.

[21 : 18] And that was practically helpful. There were many Christians who were poor. And so this made sure that every Christian who gathered wouldn't go hungry. And it was also an opportunity for more wealthy Christians to show generosity and hospitality and contribute to each other's lives.

So in the church at Antioch, where there were both Jews and Gentiles, they'd all share the Lord's Supper and they'd all eat together, eat meals together. But then, certain men came from James. Now James was a leader in Jerusalem and Paul doesn't actually seem to have a problem with James. But he does seem to have a problem with these men from James. Now we don't know exactly why James sent these men.

We don't know exactly what they said. We don't know if they said exactly what James wanted them to say. But whatever they did or whatever they said, Peter drew back and separated himself from the Gentile Christians.

And the verb tense indicates that it didn't happen suddenly all at once but gradually over time. And it wasn't just Peter. All the Jews, even Barnabas, Paul's closest colleague, drew back and separated themselves.

[22 : 29] See, the church at Antioch went from being the first church where Jews and Gentiles gathered together to worship Jesus in one community regularly with a large number of both.

It went from being a model of a multi-ethnic church, a mission-minded church sending people throughout the Roman Empire to spread the gospel and it'd become a church where the Jewish and Gentile members wouldn't even eat at the same table.

Now imagine if next week when we have a potluck, imagine if you were to go downstairs and you would see that every table has a sign on it and some tables have a sign that says white people only and some tables have a sign that says everyone else.

I think we'd all agree that would be a denial in practice of the gospel that we proclaim and that's exactly what Paul says to Peter in verse 14.

He says this refusing to eat with Gentiles is not in step with the gospel. Paul used the same phrase back in verse 5 the truth of the gospel where he explains Titus the Gentile was not forced to be circumcised so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

[23 : 56] Paul's saying Peter you're beginning to act just like the false teachers just like the people who say that it's not enough to repent of your sins and believe in Jesus you also have to get circumcised and obey the whole Old Testament law to be a true Christian.

Paul says no we agree on this there's only one thing necessary repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The irony is Peter agreed with Paul Peter didn't actually believe what the false teachers were saying.

Peter knew that Jesus died to set people free from bondage to create one new family with no second class citizens. Peter was acting not out of his convictions but out of fear.

You know fear of other people leads to all kinds of hypocrisy. Pretending to be someone you're not doing things that you know are wrong saying things you don't really believe drawing back and separating yourself from people who belong to your family.

Where does this fear hit home for you? Are you afraid to speak to your colleagues at work about the fact that you're a Christian and that you believe in Jesus because you think they would no longer respect you intellectually?

[25 : 34] Are you afraid to write a term paper with a thesis statement that you know your professor will not agree with for fear of being downgraded?

are you afraid to be yourself when you come to church or hang around with people from church? Do you feel pressure to maintain a certain appearance? You know maybe you're here today maybe you're not a Christian maybe you're not or maybe you're not sure what you believe you've just come because you want to listen and I want to say we're glad you're here we invite you to come listen ask us questions come back again ask us more questions be yourself be honest but consider whether this gospel whether this message about Jesus that we proclaim whether it is true and what it might mean for you if it is you know fear can be a powerful motivator you know sometimes we can act out of fear of what other people are thinking when they're not even thinking what we fear they're thinking I don't know maybe you've seen the movie courageous it came out recently there and Jane and I saw it a week or two ago but there's a scene where a guy whose family is barely making it financially he gets called into the boss's office and the boss says we want to promote you to be the warehouse manager same hours more pay but I need her to do one thing tomorrow a shipment will arrive with 17 crates and I need you to write on your report 16 crates arrived he goes home wrestles through it comes back in the morning he says sir I cannot accept the job because to do that would violate my conscience and the manager says finally after six interviews we finally found someone who's willing to be honest or maybe you're tempted for some reason to draw back and separate yourself from another brother or sister in

Christ is there another Christian that you would refuse to sit down and have a meal with because of some past conflict that you are unwilling to resolve or forgive or do you draw back from relating to certain kinds of Christians maybe because they're so conservative they homeschool all their kids or because they're so liberal they send their kids to daycare and both parents work you know we have the whole range here at Trinity and as parents we need to help each other and learn from each other or maybe you've had a bad experience in the past with people from a certain ethnic or cultural group and even though you might never say so in public in your heart you draw back and separate yourself from those people you would never take initiative to invite one of them to your house for dinner see we're all vulnerable to the trap of hypocrisy and it's often rooted in fear of other people but what is the cure how can we actually root out hypocrisy from our own hearts and lives how can we actually change you know think about it this way why do we fear other people so much that we become insincere and fake that we put on masks isn't it because we're afraid that if other people saw us for who we really are that they would reject us so what we really need is to know that we're accepted that we're accepted as we are you know if you're depressed and you go and see a psychologist they'll usually say among other things something like you need to develop a better self-image you need self-esteem self-acceptance you need to be okay with who you are but the problem is if you're even halfway honest with yourself you know that you're not okay you know you're self-centered you know that you're full of fear and anxiety and guilt and shame and unforgiveness and all sorts of other things that's partly why you might become depressed in the first place and if you start reading the bible and looking at yourself and comparing yourself in light of God's law you'll realize that you're even more deeply flawed than you first thought so the problem is this in order to stop putting on masks you need to know that you're accepted as you are but if you're brutally honest with yourself and if you especially if you see yourself in light of God's law you can never be accepted as you are because you fall so far short of God's pure standard but the good news is this this is the gospel

[31 : 05] God justifies sinners through the work of Jesus Christ God accepts sinners because Jesus died in their place verse 16 says a person is not justified not justified by works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ so turn from your self-justifying attempts trust in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ trust in his death on the cross where he was condemned so that you could be accepted look to him and receive from him God's verdict of acceptance which no one can appeal or overturn through faith in Jesus you can be cleansed from sin released freed from guilt released from shame you can have a new identity as a beloved child of God you don't have to wear a mask anymore because God who sees through all the masks anyway has accepted you in Christ you don't have to fear what other people would think and say because in the end there's only one judge whose verdict really matters and through

Jesus you can know that you're accepted in him the cure for hypocrisy is the gospel the good news of Jesus Christ the light of that gospel drives back the darkness of fear and hypocrisy in our hearts

in our churches in our world and that same gospel changes us so that instead of drawing back and refusing to share fellowship with others we extend gracious hospitality to one another you know in the gospels if you read the gospels it's striking how often you see Jesus sharing meals with people all kinds of people Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners at Levi's house he was anointed during a meal at Simon the Pharisee's house he fed the 5,000 in the desert he ate in Martha and Mary's house invited himself to Zacchaeus another tax collector's house for dinner Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper during a meal and after his resurrection he cooked breakfast for his disciples on the beach

Jesus was known for welcoming sinners and eating with them some people even called him a glutton and a drunkard a friend of tax collectors and sinners he went to excess to befriend tax collectors and sinners Jesus told parables about the kingdom of God as a great banquet to which all are invited and his meals with people represented that kingdom come to earth see Jesus came to earth so that you and I who are naturally separated from God because of our sin could come home to God and have a place in his family at his table forever that you can know you have a place in his family you have a place at his table so if Christ has welcomed you to his table welcome others to yours don't draw back from someone that Jesus has drawn near to don't put up barriers that Christ died to tear down as a church let's make a habit of sharing meals with one another and extending hospitality to our neighbors you know one of the most practical ways you can apply this passage is simply to invite somebody over this week to your house or your apartment or your dorm room for a meal for dessert or for tea you know it doesn't have to be a fancy thing

Proverbs 17 1 says better a dry morsel with quiet with peace than a house full of feasting with strife in other words better ramen noodles in a messy dorm room with peace than a steak dinner at Carmen Anthony's with hypocrisy as Pastor Matt said last week when we're sharing meals when we're talking together after the service and when we have fellowship hour downstairs let's talk not only about our common interests but also what draws us together spiritually let's ask each other questions like what's your spiritual background what brought you to Christ or to this church what's God been teaching you lately let's feast together on Christ the bread of life let's pray our heavenly father we thank you for the gospel of Jesus Christ the good news that we can be liberated through his death and resurrection from our bondage to fear and hypocrisy that we can live in the freedom and in the grace that you have bought for us

Lord we pray that our lives might be in step with the truth of the gospel that we may live to the praise of your glory in Jesus name amen ■■■■■■■■ heh mort pit them by so can offer yes to password to legendary as far we have read theWith R these