

Gal. 2:1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

Paul waits 14 years before returning to Jerusalem (can't blame him with the cool reception he got the first time). The key is he was more concerned with doing what God had told him to do (preach to the Gentiles) than in gaining the recognition of the recognized church leaders. We should all be so focused. The allure of recognition and a place of influential position seem to be what is more important to most in this day and age. As children of the King, our focus is first and foremost to obey God.

When he did return, he returned with a purpose (cf Acts 15). Men were going into the area where Paul had been ministering and telling the believers that they could not be saved unless they were circumcised. So Paul and his helpers, Barnabas and Titus, headed to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and get this corrected. Salvation is a matter of grace alone, a gift of God; and again it was Peter and James who gave Paul their support.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Gal. 2:2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

Paul did, however, respect the leaders that God had positioned in the church and made his case to these leaders, not the whole church. He explained the gospel of salvation that he was preaching to the Gentiles not knowing whether or not his message would be received favorably. It's really important that we choose our place of worship well giving strong consideration to the reputation of the pastor, since he has such strong influence as to our understanding of the word God has given us.

"privately....of reputation" – I think this is a point worth emphasizing. God has established positions of leadership, and we should honor those positions. Paul wasn't going in with loud, public accusation or argument. He met with the leaders of the church privately. Instead of facing a defensive leadership who felt the need to protect their pride and reputation, he met with a group that was ready to listen and seek God's guidance for the question at hand.

I'm not sure what "I went up by revelation" means. I would assume it meant according to God's revealed will for him.

Gal. 2:3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

The case being presented and considered, he was given the support of the church leaders. Circumcision was not to be required; salvation is by grace through faith. Not even Titus, who was Greek, was encouraged to be circumcised. How easy it is for humans to look for things they can DO to earn their salvation. You would think that taking a gift would be the easiest thing in the world to do—especially

with the mentality today of thinking that you are "owed" this or that. But when it comes to salvation, man doesn't seem to want to owe God. Strange isn't it?

Gal. 2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

This verse goes on to emphasize what I just said. It's interesting that those who presented the false teaching claimed to be "brothers of the faith." Paul is quick to point out that they were "false" brethren. People today are bombarded with so many false teachers who use biblical language and seem to represent what is good, but they are really instruments of Satan to confuse those who are seeking for something to fill the emptiness in their lives. I have a lady in my small group right now from a Catholic background, who has a Jewish husband, and who has experimented with New Age etc. I know she is lost and hopefully got her to recognize that fact last night. When you explain salvation to her, she will say that is what she believes. But when you have her explain her salvation to you the "holes" show up. She wants to accept part of the truth in the Word but not the whole truth. (She doesn't like the way women were treated in the OT, and she finally admitted that she wasn't convinced that there was only one way to heaven. She still waffles between evolution and creation.) This is a lady in a class of "new believers." She figured that since she "passed" the interview to get her child into the school that she must be OK. I really believe she is seeking the truth, but she is a real challenge for me. I continually pray for the Lord to take hold of my mouth and to bless me with discernment when dealing with her.

"our liberty in Christ Jesus" - It is such a wonderful feeling of liberty not to have to yield to sin, to know that we have victory if we but appropriate the power that God places at our disposal. It's interesting that the world considers our liberty to be bondage and their bondage to be liberty. Satan is so deceptive.

Gal. 2:5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Paul was quick to point out that he rejected these false teachers and their teaching **immediately**. This was done for the good of the Galatians as well as all other believers. One of our motivations for being saturated in the Word and with His truth should be that we can encourage and educate other believers. All believers should be careful to guard and defend the Word with a ready "*answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.*" (I Peter 3:15)

Gal. 2:6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

I like this phrase "who seemed to be somewhat" - that's all it is in the eyes of man, but God doesn't judge people by their outward appearance. We all know that a person can pretend to be someone he isn't and can fool man, but he can never fool God.

Gal. 2:7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel of the circumcision was* unto Peter;

They recognized that Paul was directed to preach to the "uncircumcision," the Gentiles, and that Peter was directed to preach to the "circumcised," the Jews—but that the gospel being preached was really one and the same.

Gal. 2:8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

"He that wrought..." - The same God was empowering both Peter and Paul and causing both of their ministries to be effective. That's another key for the believer to hold on to. It makes me think of the passage in I Corinthians that talks of one body and many parts. God has a plan for each of his children. No matter what that plan, He will empower each one to be effective as the vessel He intends for them to be if they commit their lives to being the servant God would have them be. Whether as pastor or church volunteer or wife or parent or caregiver or _____, God is glorified when we are effective in our service through His enablement.

Gal. 2:9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should* go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

James, Peter and John, the recognized leaders of the church as far as the Jewish community was concerned, recognized that Paul and Barnabas had been given the same grace that they had been given and gave them public affirmation of the position to which God had called them in ministering to the Gentiles. It's a shame that more "denominations" in the church don't adopt that same recognition of the fact that God has different ministries for different audiences. It's not a cookie cutter church. If the true *gospel* according to the Word is being preached, that is the truth that matters.

Gal. 2:10 Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

It's hard to imagine that one could honestly preach the gospel and not reach out to the less fortunate. Paul didn't seem to take offense at this request; he just recognized it as a natural part of the ministry. The fact that Paul was "eager" regarding reaching out to the poor tells me that he considered this a priority and a privilege, not just a duty. How many things do we do because of duty? (It's better to perform from duty than not to perform at all.) I ask the Lord often to show me if my heart becomes motivated by any other desire than to serve Him. It's so easy to fall into other motivations because we all love attention and praise. My prayer is to be "pure in heart."

Gal. 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

As Paul continues to talk to the Galatians, he is quick to let them know that he is not controlled by the thinking of the "spiritual leaders of the day," such as Peter. When Peter needed correcting, he didn't back down from the task, but confronted him "to the face." So often we are quick to talk about people behind their back, but don't have the gumption to confront them personally. Probably because most of the time our motives aren't pure, and we are motivated by

jealousy or a “holier than thou” attitude or whatever. If something is worth refuting, we should be able to do that with someone personally with solid explanation and scriptural foundation.

Gal. 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

Evidently, Peter had been fellowshiping with the Gentiles until a group of men from the very conservative “high brow” Jewish group came to town; these men were identified as connected with James. Peter became concerned about what these men would think of him and therefore began disassociating himself from the Gentiles.

Gal. 2:13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

The other Jewish believers in town followed his lead—including Barnabas. You know, we may not have the position of a Peter in a community, but our example does impact those in our circle of association. The more responsibility the Lord allows us to have as we grow in our relationship with Him, the more impact our life has on those around us. When we claim the name of Jesus, we need to be so careful to ensure that our reputation before Jesus, not men, is what is most important.

Dissimulation in the Greek refers to hypocrisy; Peter and Barnabas were being hypocritical in their actions.

Gal. 2:14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Gal. 2:15 We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

Gal. 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

“uprightly” = a straight course, not crooked or wavering

Paul confronted Peter publicly when he saw that they were not walking according to the gospel. I think Paul is confronting the whole group in the process and recognizing Peter as their leader. This sin was very public and needed to be dealt with publicly. It wasn't just Peter, it was the whole group of Jewish believers in the city.

2.14b-16 - I think you have to take the whole next section in one thought. He is reminding Peter that although he is a Jew, he is living like a Gentile (not under the law, but under grace). So why would he try to get the Gentiles to conform to the customs of the Jews? I think in verse 15 he is pointing out the special position of the Jews before God—because both Jew and Gentile are sinners. Just observing the law does not justify a man; it is faith in Jesus Christ that justifies.

They know that no one will be justified by observing the law because no man can keep the law—we are all sinners. Only faith can justify, not works.

Psalms 14:3 "...there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...."

Romans 3:28 "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Gal. 2:17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

Gal. 2:18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

Even when seeking justification through Christ, we are going to sin—but that isn't the fault of Christ. (12/13) I like David Guzik's comment: "As the men from Jerusalem saw it, the idea that we are made right before God by faith in Jesus *alone* wasn't "real" enough. After all, Christians still struggled with sin. How could they have the "accepted by God" issue settled if they still battled sin? In their thinking, this made Christ . . . a minister of sin, because Jesus' work of making them right with God apparently didn't make them right enough!"

If one starts building up rules and regulations according to the law in addition to grace by faith, then you are just building all over again that which you destroyed. When you accepted Christ through faith, you basically eliminated the law as the ruling influence in your life. It is wrong to put yourself back under the yoke of the law and sin.

(12/13) Again, Guzik makes another good observation: "Of course, this is the great tragedy of legalism. In trying to be *more* right with God, they end up being *less* right with God. This was exactly the situation of the Pharisees that opposed Jesus so much during His years of earthly ministry. Paul knew this thinking well, having been a Pharisee himself."

(5/08) K. Wuest clarified the difference in Paul's use of the word "sinners" in verse 17 and "transgressor" in verse 18.

"sinners" = from "hamartolos" – one who disregards the letter of the law

"transgressor" = from "parabates" – one who disregards the ethical spirit of the law

Gal. 2:19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

This is a hard verse, but I think it is saying that he recognized his sin through the law and realized that he was as good as dead if he tried to live under the law. It showed him his need for the Savior, and he had found new life thru Christ.

(1/05) I am currently in a study of Romans and thought an excerpt from that journal applied here.

Rom. 7:2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband.

Rom. 7:3 So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Example—A marriage places a woman in a position of submission and obedience to her husband as long as he is alive. If the husband dies, the woman is free to marry again if she so chooses. The husband can no longer exert any authority over her life from the grave. If, however, a woman leaves her husband to marry another man while her husband is still living, that woman is called an adulteress by the law and she is subject to the penalties of the law accordingly.

Rom. 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Paul now makes application from his example to the believer. The believer has chosen to accept Christ as His Savior. He has killed / crucified / reckoned dead his old self and has become a new creation in Christ.

2Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

"married to another" and "him who is raised from the dead" = Jesus Christ

The believer becomes a new creation with new life free to enter into a new marriage relationship. Sin no longer has any authority over this new creature; Christ becomes your new "husband."

What is the focus of this marriage? To bring forth fruit unto God. Fruit is produced by any work we do in obedience to God.

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Paul is identifying himself with the Savior. His sin nature was crucified with Christ, and now he lives because Christ lives in him. He is living as man in the flesh, but he is living in the spirit by faith in the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him. I think so many Christians focus on using the sin nature as an excuse for their failures rather than focusing on the fact that as Christians, Christ is living in them in the person of the Holy Spirit. There is really no excuse for our sin. The more our faith grows, the more victory we should be having in our lives.

Paul is also emphasizing again that Christ is the Son of God. That's the kind of power and goodness and love we have at our ready. We have all this because Jesus "loved us and gave himself for us." So often I think we read this, and it is just words. We should really take time to meditate on the love of Jesus and what it meant for Him to choose to be obedient and give Himself (become the sacrifice) for us. He chose to be judged for our sin out of love for us. Our culture has so warped the definition of love, I'm not sure we'll ever really truly understand the word until we get to heaven.

(5/08) I am reminded of words from one of the worship songs we sing—"I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross."

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 "...we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

(12/13) I liked this observation from Martin Luther: "When we look at ourselves we find plenty of sin. But when we look at Christ, we have no sin. Whenever we separate the person of Christ from our own person, we live under the Law and not in Christ; we are condemned by the Law, dead before God. Faith connects you so intimately with Christ, that He and you become as it were one person. As such you may boldly say: "I am now one with Christ. Therefore Christ's righteousness, victory, and life are mine." On the other hand, Christ may say: "I am that big sinner. His sins and his death are mine, because he is joined to me, and I to him."

Gal. 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Paul is not going to "frustrate" or do anything to make less the grace of God. If man could be righteous through obedience to the law, then Christ died for no reason. The obvious conclusion—salvation is by GRACE; man can't earn it.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."