

Salvation by Faith Alone, Part 1

Galatians 2:11-13

1655

It's our joy tonight to be able to continue our series in the book of Galatians, and we'd invite you to look with us at the second chapter, Galatians chapter 2. Now as we come to chapter 2, with anticipation we shall look at verses 11-14. Now, the full message would be through verse 21, but I have no hope of getting there. We have come to a subject here that is of great interest because it is the conflict between the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter. It is very important and pregnant with much meaning, and I trust God that we shall be able to extract from it some of those things that are significant for us.

By way of review: As we have seen in our study of Galatians, Galatians was written by the apostle Paul to refute the false teaching of a group of people known as Judaizers. They got the name Judaizers because they tried to Judaize everybody, that is, to impose the system known as Judaism on people. And Paul had founded the churches in the area known as Galatia, which is not a city but an area, and they had followed him in there with their Judaizing doctrine and they had troubled the churches. Last week we saw that they are not to be considered as Christians but sham Christians, or as they are called, false brethren: false brothers, Satan's allies, who undermined the true gospel of grace. Now we haven't really gone into detail on the Judaizers and I'd like to just talk a little bit tonight about who the Judaizers were.

I think we understand the broad scope or the generalities of their operation, but let me give you some historical background that I think will give you a perspective into which you can fit the Judaizers. In order to understand the Judaizers, we have to go back to Cain. That's a long way. We're not going to look at Genesis; we're just going to talk about it. Cain was the first man on earth who displayed this kind of attitude that became the attitude of the Judaizers. Cain, in a sense, was the background on which the Judaizing theology was built. Let me show you why.

Adam, the first man, had instructed his sons, Cain and Abel, in the proper approach that a sinner was to make to God. Now, like a good father, he had informed his sons that the approach to God was through a substitutionary sacrifice. We believe this; we believe that clearly, Adam must have informed his sons about that. And it was a blood sacrifice that was to be a symbol pointing to the actual sacrifice that someday would be made by the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the Old Testament sacrifices were not sin-atoning in themselves but rather they pointed in symbol form to the one sacrifice of Christ which was.

Now the offering of such a blood sacrifice, whether it was a ram or a sheep or a goat or whatever, the offering of that sacrifice alone would not necessarily result in salvation in the Old Testament. And I say that because of this: The offering of any Old Testament sacrifice was only an outward, visible symbol, an outward act, and in order for salvation to be there it had to reveal an inward attitude. It wasn't enough to just make a sacrifice unless there was inward faith to go along with that sacrifice.

Faith in what? Faith in God and faith in the fact that God had designed a substitutionary sacrifice for salvation.

And so that in the Old Testament, an individual could make a sacrifice and it would be of no benefit to him unless, in his heart, he was believing God and believing that God provided salvation through substitutionary sacrifice. Now, for a person to offer such a sacrifice without the faith and without believing was a mockery and a hypocrisy and God condemned it again and again. When God said, "I am not satisfied with your bulls and goats; I am not satisfied with your offerings." He said in Malachi, "You've offered me polluted offerings." He said elsewhere that "all of your religious ritual appears to be near to me, but your hearts are far, far off." And so the actual sacrifice was only valid when it was an outward manifestation of an inward belief that God provided salvation through a substitutionary sacrifice.

Now Cain reacted negatively to the instruction. And he rejected the teaching of salvation through faith in a substitutionary sacrifice. So when Cain brought his particular sacrifice, he brought what? He brought fruit and the things he'd grown. That is not expressing faith in God's standard of substitutionary sacrifice, and so God didn't accept it. Now Cain came on the basis of his own good works, he came on the basis of his own merit, as if to say, "God, I know what You require, but let me show You what I can do. I know what You said, but that's all right, look what I've done!" It was tantamount to rejection of a substitutionary salvation and it offered instead his own personal works. Now you know what Abel did? Abel offered the right thing, didn't he? Abel came and he offered a blood sacrifice and, in effect, his faith leaped across centuries, he touched the cross, and God accepted it because he was believing in a substitutionary sacrifice, and therefore was declared righteous.

Now since the time of Cain and Abel, those two parallel lines have followed through all the history of man. Some people, like Abel, accept God's substitutionary sacrifice for salvation. Other people accept their own human merits. And you have people and you have religions and you have all kinds of philosophies around the world where people actually believe that they're going to get benefit in the end, they're going to have a blessed life after death, they're going to enter into heaven on the basis of what they have done. They're nothing but descendants spiritually of Cain. On the other hand, you have, all through history, those people who believe that God provided salvation only through a substitutionary sacrifice and an individual who believed that was the plan. So those are the two views.

Now watch. Those two views run all through history and they crystallize as Satan's lie and God's truth. God says you have no merits salvation is provided in a substitutionary sacrifice; Satan says you have plenty of merit, you offer God your own good works. And Satan wants to populate hell and he knows that the fastest way to get people to hell is to get them to trust in their own good works.

Now when you come down to the...the time in which Galatians was written, actually you can trace it through the whole history of Israel, even in the Old Testament. For example, in the Old Testament, in the nation of Israel, you have these same two lines. In the nation of Israel, you know there is always one little group of people always existing on the righteous line, always believing in substitutionary sacrifice, always believing by faith in God's provision, always following in obedience to God and they are always known as the remnant, the remnant. Why? Because it's always a little part. And then you have the larger group of Jews in the history of Israel, always depending on their own works, their own good works, their own personal merit. Now you come to the first century, in which Paul

ministered, and there they are again. You say, "Was the little believing remnant there, the little group that believed in a substitutionary sacrifice?" Sure they were. You say "Who were they?" Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Zacharias, John the Baptist, Simeon, Anna, Apollos, many who believed fully the Old Testament; they believed in a substitutionary system, they had followed the Old Testament pattern, their hearts were right before God. And there were many others, many honest saints in Israel, but always the small part. You say, "Well at the time that Galatians occurred and Paul made his ministry and in that first century, was there the second group, the ones depending on personal merit and good works?" You better believe it; they dominated Israel. Who were they? They were the priests, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians and most of the people who believed that they were to observe the sacrificial system, observe the ceremonial ritual, and that God was really happy with them even though they ignored the attitude of faith that should have been in their heart; they were counting on their own merit.

So even in the time of Paul you have the two groups. The Judaizers belonged to the group of those who were depending on their own works. And they were trying to maintain what, in fact, was a corrupted Old Testament view. The Old Testament didn't teach what the Pharisees taught; they corrupted what the Old Testament taught. The Old Testament taught salvation by faith in a substitutionary sacrifice, but they had moved on the basis of human merit and they were, in fact, historically on Satan's lie line as opposed to the line of God's truth.

Now Philippians chapter 3 gives us some interesting statements about this and I want to show you some things in it. Verse 2, here Paul characterizes the Judaizers. Philippians 3:2. "Beware of dogs." That's not a very nice term. It was a reproach among Greeks and Jews. "Beware of evil workers." And then here comes the real shot, "Beware of the concision."

Now that looks like another word, it's just got a missing prefix. It looks like circumcision. But Paul says beware of the concision. Now that Greek word appears only here in all the New Testament, but a related verb is used in the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, and that related verb was used to speak of pagan mutilations. The pagans mutilated themselves, and you remember, perhaps, reading about some of the orgiastic rites of the pagans and how they would literally sexually mutilate themselves in such orgies. And Paul characterizes the Judaizers as this. They say they are the party of the circumcision; he says they are the mutilators. Pretty strong language, they are the mutilators. They weren't offering true circumcision, for Paul said in Romans true circumcision is circumcision of the heart. They were the mutilators, substituting works for grace. In verse 3, he says, "We are the true circumcision who worship God in the spirit" it's an inside thing "and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have" how much confidence in the flesh? No confidence. You see, the true Christian puts no stock in his own merit, no stock in his own flesh, no stock in anything as superficial as circumcision. And those who taught circumcision were mutilators; they were mutilating the doctrine of grace.

Now these people, he says, believe in salvation by the flesh. They have confidence in the flesh. And their good works go right back to Cain, they are in the same line, Satan's lie all the way down the line. Now Paul says, "Look, I've had all that stuff." Verse 4: I might have confidence in the flesh. Sure. If any other man thinks he has reasons for which he might trust in the flesh, I've got more reasons. "Circumcised the eighth day," right on schedule, "stock of Israel, tribe of Benjamin, Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law" what? "blameless." Now he says, if you want to count on your flesh, I can count on my flesh more than all of you. But look at verse 7. "But what things were gain to

me, those I counted" what? "loss for Christ's sake." I just crossed out all that human merit for Christ's sake. "Yea, doubtless, and I count all those things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things and do count them but manure that I may win Christ." He says, all that stuff that I had in terms of personal merit, all of that Jewishness, all of those things that were mine in terms of good works, and in terms of circumcision, and in terms of attachment to Judaism, and in terms of racial identity with Israel, all of that stuff is nothing but manure to me in order that I might win Christ. What is he saying? He's saying you've got to count every bit of that stuff as meaningless nothing to come to Christ. What he's saying is you Judaizers aren't even saved.

He says in verse 9, "I want to be found in Him, not having my own" what? "righteousness which is in the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Paul says, "I don't want to count on my own works, on my own human merit. I could if you're going to talk about confidence in the flesh, I could have it. I count it as manure that I may know Christ and I know Him only through faith."

Now the Judaizers weren't even saved. They had piled up all of this manure, if we can use Paul's word, and they were putting their confidence in it, in their flesh. Now let me add this. The Judaizers, an interesting group; they did announce that Jesus was the Messiah. That's what's so interesting. And these who would follow salvation by works did announce that Jesus was Messiah, but watch. They never could have announced that He was the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, no! Because for the most part they didn't even believe they could be responsible for sin since they were Jews, circumcised, and with all of the blessings of God. And I think one of the great illustrations of their hazy, inadequate, and wrong concept of Jesus is the writing of the book of Hebrews. It's amazing to me, as I studied the book of Hebrews, to find out that the writer has to spend so much time proving to these Jews that Jesus, their Messiah, is better than prophets, better than Moses, better than angels, better than Joshua, and better than Aaron. You say, "Well, what does that signify?" That signifies that they thought of Messiah as not such a big deal. And the writer of Hebrews had to go to great lengths to prove that their Messiah Jesus was greater than the Old Testament saints.

Now the Judaizers then were unsaved and were counting on their own flesh. They were counting on salvation by works. And that's the old heresy. It's the same heresy today. It's the same pattern today.

I was reading this week about some of the material that came from the Mormon church and I was reading through their particular view of everything. And they were talking about all of the things that a person has to do to obtain salvation. And they had a tremendous list of these things that were required. There are still groups all over the place counting on your own works to save you.

Now, the Judaizers had a real problem on their hands. Their problem had a name: Paul. And Paul was a problem because he was going everywhere teaching salvation by grace through faith plus nothing. And this was really hard for them to handle. And since Paul was the great champion of grace, Satan knew he had to destroy Paul. So Satan dogged Paul's steps constantly. First of all, remember I told you, first thing Satan tried to do was destroy his authority, didn't he, to deny that he was an apostle. The second thing Satan tried to do was substitute a works system for Paul's gospel of grace. And so Paul writes Galatians to answer these tremendous obstacles that are being placed in the way of the gospel of grace.

Now we said that the book is divided in three parts. Chapters 1 and 2 are personal, chapters 3 and 4 is doctrinal, chapters 5 and 6 is practical. Now, our study tonight takes us to one of the most dramatic portions of Paul's life and to the last part of his defense of his apostleship. They've tried to undermine the fact that he has authority, they've denied that he's an apostle, they've said that he speaks for himself, he has no right to speak for God, that the people aren't to listen to him, they're to listen to the Judaizers, etc., etc. And Paul defends his apostleship in three ways in these two chapters. Now watch. One: By giving apostolic credentials, verses 10-24 of chapter 1. And we saw that through those verses Paul gives his apostolic credentials and proves that his apostleship is independent of men, that it came from God, that God taught him and God gave him his message. Second thing in his apostleship defense is his apostolic commendation. He says, "Though I was independent, though I received my information from God, though Jesus instructs me by revelation, yet I went to Jerusalem and the Jerusalem leaders approved of me." So he was commended by them in chapter 2 verses 1-10. So apostolic credentials in chapter 1, apostolic commendation in chapter 2, and then the third point and the wrap-up, chapter 2:11-21, apostolic confidence. And this is powerful.

His first defense was, "Jesus called me to be an apostle and gave me my message." His second defense was, "The people in Jerusalem accredited me." His third defense is this: "Listen folks, if you want to know how much authority I have, let me tell you about the time I sat Peter down." See, confidence. And I believe in my own heart that this is the most dramatic and the strongest defense of Paul's apostleship, where he exercises superior authority over Peter, who was thought of as the most prominent apostle in the church. Now let's look at it.

As we come to verse 11, the scene changes from Jerusalem to Antioch. Antioch, the chief city of Syria, the place where the ministry of the Gentiles had begun, the place where the first church in Gentile area was planted, the place where Paul was a co-pastor with Barnabas and three other men. As we look at these verses, we're going to see two people. We're going to see Peter and Paul. We'll just give you two points, and then we'll give some sub-points. There is Peter's deviation and Paul's doctrine. Peter's deviation is in verses 11-13, 11-13. Now Peter's deviation falls into three categories: The clash, the cause, and the consequence. Let's look at verse 11 and see Peter's deviation; first of all, the clash.

Verse 11: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed." This is a most interesting statement, because the Judaizers had told all these people in Galatia that Paul was...was a nobody; that he was a second-class apostle; that the big-wheel apostles were in Jerusalem. And Paul says, "Let me tell you about the time I told Peter off, right to the face." And you see what he's doing there is stating his authority. Now these were men of repute — remember how he called them that several times — Peter probably being of the highest repute. Now just to give you a clearer translation of the verse, it reads this way: "When Peter was come to Antioch, I opposed him to the face because he stood condemned." Now both Peter and Paul were Christians, both of them were apostles, both of them were men of God who knew salvation was by grace through faith, both of them had been taught properly by the Holy Spirit, both were called of God as apostles, both were appointed by the church, both were vested with authority by Jesus Christ Himself, both were honored in the church for their leadership and example and for every dimension of ministry possible. Both had been mightily used of God. The book of Acts is divided between the first part, the ministry of Peter; the second part, the ministry of Paul. Those are the two parts the book of Acts falls into. They were stalwarts, the greatest of men. Yet here they are, head to head, in opposition to each other. And it's a dramatic event.

Notice the word "withstood." He says, "I withstood him to the face." It means "to set oneself against." And it's a defensive word. Hang onto that thought. It's a word that is used in defense. In other words, the word usually applies when the initial attack comes from another source and you set yourself in defense. Now what Paul is saying is that Peter was the aggressor and I stood my ground and stopped his aggression. So Paul sees Peter as the aggressor. Paul sees Peter attacking the gospel of grace, if you can imagine that, if you can imagine Peter attacking the gospel. Now you say, did he do it on purpose? No I don't think Peter attacked the gospel intentionally. There was a certain intention in what he did, but I don't think he really thought through what he was doing. He was in the habit of sticking his foot in his mouth, as we have called him many times, "the apostle with the foot-shaped mouth," and he was forever doing the wrong thing, and he was forever hurrying in before he thought things through. Evidently here, in classic Petrine fashion, he blunders into this thing and winds up taking an attack against the gospel and Paul stands nose-to-nose to him and tells him off.

Now it says that he was condemned, or he stood condemned, or he was to be blamed. Literally, he stood condemned. Now, what is the Spirit saying to us here? He stood condemned in what sense? Well, one, he stood condemned by his own act. A man condemns himself, doesn't he? Isn't that what it says in John chapter 3, verse 18? "He that believeth not is condemned already because he doesn't believe." In other words, you condemn yourself by what you do. And I've illustrated that many, many times to you in the same way, and I think it serves to illustrate it again that way. If I go in and I see a great work of art and I say it's lousy, it stinks, when it's already been approved by the world as a masterpiece, then I have not condemned the painting, I've condemned myself. I don't know art. If I hear a great symphony and come out and say, "That's lousy music," somebody says to me, "I'm sorry, sir, that music has already been deemed to be masterpiece music. You've just condemned yourself. You don't know music." And so it is, in a sense, that when Peter did what he did, didn't need somebody else to condemn him. He made a fool out of himself. He condemned himself. But there may be another angle here implied here. When he stood condemned, it may have been that he was condemned by the Gentile Christians at Antioch. They knew better than what Peter had done and we'll see what he did in a minute. So perhaps there was the self-condemnation and perhaps he got some flack from the Gentile Christians at Antioch.

It's an interesting thing to see again here how God overrules this particular problem. Instead of it becoming...and I love this. Instead of this becoming some great, horrible problem in the church, it's wonderful that it happened. You know why? Because now Paul can use it as a defense of his authority; God has a purpose in even the worst of things. And what could have been a tragedy, God then uses here in this passage so that Paul can defend his authority and establish his right to speak for God. Now this is a strong argument.

All right, so there was first of all the clash. Bang. And these are two strong men, believe me. Secondly: The cause. You ask, "Whatever caused them to have this clash? What did Peter do?" Verse 12, watch: "For before certain men, certain ones, came from James, Peter did eat with the Gentiles. But when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision." Now stop there. You say, what caused the clash? What did Peter do to attack the truth? All right, let's look.

Peter was in Antioch, that's obvious from verse 11, "He was come to Antioch." Now apparently, he was there for quite a while. Sometime after the Jerusalem Council of chapter 15 of Acts, Peter, you know, hustled off up there to Antioch and just kind of hung around. And he was there, and I want you to notice that it says in verse 12, "He did eat with the Gentiles." You see that? And in the Greek,

that's an imperfect tense verb, which means it's continuous action. He was in the habit of eating with Gentiles. He had no problem, he went up there, and he'd just sit down, and have the meal that was provided with the Gentiles. And it was no problem; he knew that was the right thing to do. If anybody knew, he knew. And he could go a long way back to the revelation of that knowledge.

Jesus had said to him and the other disciples in Mark 7:19, "Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the stomach, and goeth out into the draft, purging all foods," and then Jesus said, "It is not that which goes into a man that defiles him, but that which comes out of him." What goes into him just goes through his system and is eliminated; it's no big deal. And for the first time, Jesus had introduced the concept that what a person ate didn't matter. Mark 7:19; that was a big, big introduction to a Jew.

And to show you how much of a problem that was, in Acts chapter 10, remember Peter had a vision? And the Lord showed him all those animals and the Lord said, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat. You can eat any of those animals." And Peter said, "Wait a minute! I have never eaten an unclean animal. I can't do that!" And God says to him, "Look Peter, don't you dare call 'unclean' what God has set aside. When God says something is clean, don't you call it uncommon, don't you call it unclean." So Peter had had two very straightforward lessons on the fact that you could eat anything, and you could eat with anybody. That vision in 10 was to show him that he could eat with Gentiles. And did you hear what happened in chapter 10? Cornelius sent the men to Peter's house and what did Peter do for those Gentiles that arrived there? He lodged them in his house. And then he went to Cornelius' house and stayed at Cornelius' house a few days. He ate with Gentiles at Cornelius' house; Gentiles ate with him at his house. Jesus had told him two times - once in person, once through a vision - that it was fine to eat anything and it was fine to eat with Gentiles.

Now this would mean that he was there in Antioch, and he wasn't hung up, he was eating with Gentiles. So what was he eating? Well, I don't know what the menu was, but I know that he was eating, you know, at somebody's house, having meals, and also he was probably having the...the love feast. And the love feast was usually followed by communion, or the Lord's Table. So he was participating in the love feast, the Lord's Table, and just having dinner with various folks.

Now the love feast was something, that if you want to read about it, the Corinthians abused. First Corinthians chapter 11, they really messed up the love feast. The Lord rebuked them strongly through the apostle Paul. But the Christians were in the habit of, instead of eating at home, of bringing together some foods — although they would sometimes eat at home in preparation — bringing together some foods and sharing around table fellowship they would eat together. Following the eating of those various things, they would then have communion. The Corinthians had turned the whole thing into an orgy. But here in Antioch it was good: Gentile and Jew, in the love of Christ, were eating together. Now this was a real breakthrough because you know, if you know anything about Judaism, you know that no Jew ever ate with a Gentile. You know I told you, when we studied in the gospel of John the death of Jesus Christ, remember that when the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate, they wouldn't go in Pilate's house. And they turned Jesus loose at the door and just sent him in and said they wouldn't go in because they didn't want to defile themselves. A Jew wouldn't even go into a Gentile's house. Oh they had some strange view, historically, that Gentiles put their aborted babies down the drain and that if they went into a Gentile's house, they would contract a seven-day defilement. So they wouldn't even go into a Gentile house, let alone eat in there.

Now there were some Old Testament rules that made this reasonable. You know when God put

Israel in the land of Canaan, if He hadn't made some rules, they would have gotten more messed up than they did. So God set apart a certain diet for the Jews. You know why? So they wouldn't intermingle, you see? God wanted to prevent their intermingling, but now in the church, He doesn't want to prevent intermingling, He wants all to be one in Christ, so He removed those barriers. But in the Old Testament, the Jews had prescribed dietary laws - you can read them in Leviticus 11 - unclean and clean things are listed there.

And for centuries, Jews had followed these divine ordinances of diet and kept themselves unspotted from Gentiles in that sense. In fact, Josephus, the historian, puts into the mouth of the Midianite woman who came to seduce the Israelites these words: "Your kinds of food are peculiar to yourselves, and your kinds of drinks are common to no others." So it was known historically that the Jews just didn't eat like everybody else did. And God had ordained that in order to maintain the separation so that Israel would not get involved with intermarriage and interactivity with pagans. Daniel 1:8, remember it? "But Daniel resolved in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's food, nor drink what the king drank." That was very, very Jewish.

Now in addition, and this is interesting, in addition to the Old Testament laws, there were some man-made laws. As I've told you before that the Jews just kept stacking on laws and laws and laws, and they had all kinds of laws that prohibited any kind of eating with Gentiles in addition to the Scripture. For example, the Jews were permitted to buy meat from a Gentile meat market, which was quite a concession. But here are the conditions. They could buy meat from a Gentile meat market when the animal had been slaughtered by a Jew. If you're a Gentile, you own a meat market in a Jewish neighborhood, you get a Jewish butcher. Because, you see, if the meat had been touched by a Gentile, it was defiled. Also, they could buy the meat if the meat had never been brought in contact with a pagan religious ceremony. Remember the problem of 1 Corinthians 8 of eating meats offered to idols? The Jews were just hung up on that. That was because historically, the rabbis had forbidden them ever eating any meat that had been in a pagan ceremony. And you know something else? When a Jewish person went there to buy the meat, the meat market owner had to guarantee that he never handled inferior meat and he never, ever sold any meat prohibited for Jewish use. So if you were a Gentile meat market owner, you really had to toe the line to do any business in a Jewish neighborhood.

And then they had some rather strange interpretations of other features too in the Old Testament; John 4, and the law of purity, the law of defilement, Leviticus 15. There was another thing, just to mention it to you, called the *halakhah*. The *halakhah* is a body of traditions come from the elders, and the *halakhah* said this — this is interesting — that before eating, the Jew had to wash his hands. Was it in... I think it's Matthew 15. Let's look at it. I'll read it to you. You don't have to look it up. Matthew 15:1: "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees who rebuked him saying, 'Why do your disciples transgress the traditions of the elders' the *halakhah* 'for they wash not their hands when they eat bread'?" Now they're not saying, "You know, you've got some really messy disciples. They don't even have common cleanliness habits, they eat with dirty hands. They don't even know what my children know, got to wash their hands before dinner." That isn't the point. The kind of washing that the *halakhah* prescribed was washing ceremonially out of fear that the hands had been contaminated by contact with a Gentile or something that belonged to a Gentile. Now if you had to figure out how you're going to eat at a Gentile's house when 1, you couldn't go in the place; 2, you had to make sure no Gentile ever touched the food or any of the utensils, you'd have a tough time going to dinner.

Now in view of all this, it's easy to see how positively wicked a Jew thought another Jew was if he ate with a Gentile. Well, when Christ came along, He nullified all of that. He erased all of the...all of the things that were ordinances. And He... Remember the Bible says, in fact, He took all the ordinances and nailed them to His cross? And Paul says in Ephesians that He smashed down the middle wall of partition and everything was to be one. And all the dietary laws were gone, they are set aside, God has made all things to be clean, "Rise Peter, kill and eat," no more distinctions. God had abolished all that but many Jews still couldn't handle that, they were still hung up.

Well, old Peter got up there to Antioch and you know he checked it out, and there weren't any legalistic Jews so he just you know went over and had dinner with Gentiles and had a great old time. Free Antioch, they were really loose up there, understood their unity, understood their liberty in Christ, exercised it; they were all brothers. Peter arrived, fell in line, had a great time eating.

And, beloved, there really is a great lesson here. A Christian church cannot be what it claims to be if there's any kind of racial or class distinction that separates people, no matter what cultural factors involved. The labels that men wear are absolutely irrelevant to God. To Him, man is neither Jew nor Greek, rich or poor, he's just a sinner for whom Christ died. And once he comes to Christ, he's equalized. And I'll tell you something, if men share in a common Sonship, then they must be brothers, right? That's right. If men share in a common Sonship they must be brothers. And if they're brothers, then there can be no way that they can be severed, if they have the common eternal life provided by Christ. All earthly barriers are cut across.

I couldn't help but be somewhat chagrined this week when I read an article in a particular paper that said that a particular Christian institution in America had lost its tax-exempt status because of failure to comply with the 1964 Civil Rights Act. And they stated that it was part of the teaching of their theology and their conviction that the Bible taught that there should never be a mingling of any races. Beloved, that is absolutely the antithesis of all that the New Testament says. And that is something that, if Paul were around, he'd go there and stand against them face to face and exercise his authority. There can be no division in the body.

But in Antioch there wasn't any, until, watch, "Certain men came from James." Hmm - James who? James representing the church at Jerusalem; James is kind of the leader. Now here came the Judaizers, always dogging Paul's steps and always saying "We're from Jerusalem! We're from James!" Of course, if you read Acts 15:24, James doesn't claim them. They may have represented their own view of the church at Jerusalem, but they were liars, they were not the true church. It's true James did have some problems with freeing himself from Judaism. Even in Acts 21 verses 18-26, he's still a little bit tied to it and that becomes very evident there. But it seems unlikely to me that James would look up at Antioch and he would see the Antioch fellowship beautiful in unity and he would send a bunch of Judaizers up there just to make a mess out of it. That makes no sense. James was a godly man, and James isn't going to create chaos where there's harmony. He's not going to create discord where there is unity. So from my standpoint, it can't be that certain men came, authored and given authority by James, but rather that they came claiming to have been sent by James but in fact were Judaizers.

And the reason I know they were Judaizers and I'm sure James didn't send them is because at the end of verse 12, it says they were "of the circumcision." And in the Council of Jerusalem, James had put the circumcision in their place, hadn't he? And he said, "My judgment is that we do not buy this circumcision bit. We add nothing to the Gentiles." Certainly, if he had said, "We're not going to add

anything to them," he wouldn't have sent these Judaizers up there to mess up the picture. Well, when it says they "were of the circumcision," it gives them away. They are the Judaizers who want to impose a legal system and make everybody get circumcised, keep the law, and earn their own salvation.

Well, you know what happened when they got there. Peter did this: "When they were come, he withdrew and separated himself." Peter! You know what he did? The circumcision party got there and Peter stopped eating with the Gentiles! That's what he did. The word "withdrew" is the word used to describe a strategic military operation. Philippians used the word of drawing back troops in order to get shelter, and so Peter sort of draws back. And it's interesting; it's in the imperfect tense. It was sneaky. Peter just kind of just slid out, a little less, and a little less, and he drifted out. And the word "separated" is also imperfect and indicates a gradual separation. So Peter just kind of just sneaky, gradual drifted away and stopped taking invitations anymore from Gentiles, and just kind of faded out. That just... That is so sad to see! Here is the same old guy again, same old Peter. That's the same Peter that stood up and, "I confess the deity of Christ." He said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," and then turns right around and repudiates Jesus when He predicts He's going to die. He's the same Peter who is called to preach and later on goes back to fishing. He's the same Peter who would die for Christ, but when he gets a chance to speak for Christ, he denies Him. So it's the same Peter. We see him manifesting the same weaknesses.

You know, it's really a startling thing, and it's startling for two reasons biblically. One, the vision that he had in the case of Cornelius when he saw what God's pattern was, that they would...there would be nothing unclean, that Jew and Gentile would eat together. But the second amazing thing was his statement in Acts 15, where he stood up at the Jerusalem Council and said, "Look, we're one with the Gentiles, we'll have to accept them just like God did." All of that in his background and he blows it. You say, "Well why? Why would he pull out and start eating with the Jews?" You know what he was doing? He was...he was... Paul got so angry. He just struck a blow against the gospel of grace. He was, in effect, saying, "I'm with the circumcision party." That's right. I don't think he thought of that in his brain. You say, well why did he do it? It says at the end of verse 12: "Fearing them who were of the circumcision." He was afraid. Afraid of what? Afraid of losing his popularity, that's what. He was afraid that the circumcision party would go back and they would say, "Ah, you know Peter's up there doing this and that," and he'd lose his reputation. They'd give a bad report to the rest of the like-minded, legalistic people in Jerusalem and Peter wanted to hang onto his prestige. You say, "It's kind of sad to see Peter do that." It is. You know he gives us a good pattern of most Christians.

You know how the Christian life goes? The Christian life is to be growth, right? But your Christian life doesn't go like on a line like this. You know how your Christian life goes? You know how I know that? Because that's how mine goes. No, it doesn't go like this. You see, when you dip is when you start learning lessons that push you up again. And then you fail a little bit and God teaches you through discipline or trial and up you go again. It just goes like that. And Peter went down, but later on, we find Peter going up again.

Well, he was playing right into the hands of the Judaizers. What a dumb guy to do a thing like that. And Paul absolutely...and this isn't a temper tantrum on Paul's part, he doesn't just blow his cork. He sees a biblical principle here. You know what Peter had done? He had separated himself from the Lord's Supper with Gentiles, from eating the love feast with Gentiles, and he had created a schism in the church. And here was a group of Jews meeting, and a group of Gentiles, and that's just what God did not want and God went to tremendous lengths in granting the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts

and in the early history of the church to make sure it was one body. And here was Peter and he was going to split it into two. And people were going to believe that Peter supported the circumcision view of salvation by works. It is a sacrament of unity, the Lord's Table, and to refuse to eat the Lord's Table with any other believer is really to bring schism into the body. There are some people, you know, who want to have a separate communion just for the super holy or the super separated, and I'm afraid that what they do is exactly what Peter did here. This kind of disunity affects the picture of the body given to the world as if there is a super group over here, and this...the rest of us are something else. So Peter's deviation started with a clash and there was a cause.

And look at the consequence, verse 13, the consequence. "And the other Jews dissembled in like manner with him." The rest of the Jews who were Christians in the Antioch church all pulled out with Peter, and now all the Jews were over here having their own deal and left the Gentiles alone to have theirs. And Peter was Satan's pawn. It has an emergency effect. Look at verse 13. "Inasmuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their hypocrisy." Now that... That was the final blow. Even the pastor of the church at Antioch, Barnabas, Barnabas! Their own pastor split. The whole church went split right down the middle. All the circumcision and all the ones who were going to be along the legalistic lines and the poor Gentile Christians over here trying to figure out what happened, and the super pious group over here. And Peter had fallen right into the hands of the Judaizers and, believe me, Peter was a leader. Every time he did something wrong he took somebody else with him. He always did.

He was up there on the mount, you know, in Galilee. Jesus said, "Wait till I get there in Galilee. Don't do anything until I come." And Peter was up there on the mountain. He waited and waited, you know and he's looking at his sundial and waiting and waiting and waiting. Time is passing, time is passing, and he doesn't know what's going on. And finally, he says, "Oh, I'm going fishing." That's all he said, and took off down the mountain. There were a lot of other disciples and they said, "And we're going too!" And the whole group trudge down the mountain, get in a boat, go out and fish. God reroutes all the fish in the Sea of Galilee and none of them come near the boat.

And the point... The point is that when Peter did something right, people followed and when he did something wrong, people followed. That's the kind of man he was. And here he moves out and the power of his person and the power of his presence, and the dynamic and popularity of the man drew other people to him. And these Jews just pulled out, and a terrible, tragic thing was happening to the beautiful, loving oneness of the Antioch church.

You know something? Don't put your trust in men, even the best of them, even the best. They make mistakes. The church was split wide open. Here's a little group of Gentiles over here, Paul is one of the pastors at Antioch. He's with them. Here's a little group of Jews over here, and another of the pastors of the Antioch church is with them, and they're split and there are pastors on each side. I'm sure it must have been a strange thing to come together in two love feasts. "We love each other." "Well, we love each other."

The word "dissembled" is *hupokrinomai*. Interesting word, from which we get the word... Well, literally *hupokrinomai* means "to answer" *krinōmai* "from under" *hupo*, to answer from under. You know what the word was used for? It was used for an actor who spoke under a mask. And you know what word came from it? Hypocrite. *Hupokrinomai*. Hypocrite. A hypocrite is somebody who masks his true self. They played the part of a hypocrite.

You know why Peter was a hypocrite? Because Peter knew, he knew what was right, didn't he? Sure he did. He knew that there was one body. He knew that there was to be fellowship with Gentiles. Why did he separate himself? Because he was afraid that he would lose his popularity with the Jews. Ego. Ego. He played the hypocrite. They all played like good, legalistic Judaizers, pretending to agree when in their hearts, they knew it was not so. He was carried away with their hypocrisy. "Dissimulation" means "hypocrisy." But the saddest of all, Barnabas.

Bad enough for Paul to see old Peter go, but to see Barnabas. You know, Paul had just gotten back from a wonderful journey with Barnabas, just spent some time with him at the Council in Jerusalem. In fact, the first time Paul ever went to Jerusalem, who was it that put his arms around him and took him to the...to the church? Barnabas. Barnabas loved Paul, Paul loved Barnabas. They were buddies, co-ministers, traveled all over, bore burdens together, suffered together, preached together, fought together, hurt together, pastored the same flock. And now, Barnabas plays the part of a hypocrite and goes with Peter and leaves Paul. And all this time, Paul's been preaching grace. Paul shed blood over the gospel of grace. Paul trudged all over the world for the gospel of grace, and his dearest friend walks away from it.

You know, one of the things that anybody and everybody goes through in the ministry is times of great discouragement. But can you imagine what that must have been like for dear Paul, to see his own friend side with the Judaizers who had tried to destroy everything Paul did? Sad. And I think in my mind that this may have been the first little step that caused the rift between Paul and Barnabas that finally came over John Mark. Because soon after that, when Paul was going to take his second journey and he invited Barnabas to go, he and Barnabas had an argument about whether to take John Mark and Paul finally said, "No," and their relationship was severed. And maybe this was the precursor to it.

Well, how did Paul react to this? I'm going to tell you that next time, and what you're going to see is a fantastic statement of justification by faith alone. It's going to be exciting; don't miss it. Let me close with this, just to point out a couple of things. Don't miss this please, this is important. I just want to wrap up with some lessons. One: Even great ministers of the gospel make serious mistakes. That's right, fallibility. God's Word is infallible, God's people aren't. And believe me, friends, this is a warning against ever giving to any human being the robe of infallibility. Interesting that some Catholic theologians state that this Peter was a different Peter than the apostle, and they do that in order to maintain his infallibility as the first pope. No, men are fallible.

Second lesson: We learn from Peter that it isn't enough to believe the gospel unless you're willing to obey it, right? His sin was not in his creed, he believed right. His sin was not in his doctrine, he was taught right. His sin was in his behavior, you see, and beloved, that may seem the small part, but it is not the small part because your theology is only as significant as your life that backs it up.

Third lesson: We learned that the truth is more important than keeping peace. Paul withstood him to the face. Why? Because he didn't care what the reaction was, he would fight for the truth. You know, there are some people who just want to keep the peace at all costs.

I talked to a pastor not long ago who said, "Oh, we have this terrible issue at our church but I just don't say anything, I just stay out of it altogether. I just want to maintain the peace." Well, if you're maintaining peace at the expense of truth, you have missed it. You have missed it. What you're doing is this. That's not peace; it's compromise. Peter thought his little compromise wouldn't be

noticed, and he forgot that the Christian is called to obedience, not compromise for any reason. How easy it is to use situation ethics.

Fourth lesson: I believe that we must openly oppose those who deny the gospel, like Paul. Whether they deny it in their creed or in their practice, I believe it is the Christian's obligation, face to face, to confront and oppose those people. You say, "Does that mean if you know a Christian who believes but is not acting it, that you should go to that Christian?" Absolutely. Absolutely. We're to rebuke one who is in sin, we are to reprove him, Paul says. Take the case of an elder before the church, that others may learn not so to do.

Now we have all kinds of pressure groups trying to get to us. All kinds of people denying the truth, and we've got to be able to stand our ground. Many lessons. Well, Paul picks it up from there in one of the most thrilling responses that sets off the pattern for the rest of Galatians. We'll see it in two weeks. Let's pray.

Father, we're aware that there are lessons that the Spirit would probably want to teach each of us individually from this text which I haven't even mentioned. And so we would just pray that the Holy Spirit would have free reign to move in our hearts and teach us what it is we need to know. Lord, we are thankful that we have this Word; how we love it. We feel like Jeremiah when he said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and Thy Word was in me sweet, joyous and rejoicing came to my heart." Father, we thank you for such a Word. May we devour it like babies drink milk. May we thirst for Thy Word. May we read it for its history, for its theology, for its application to our own lives. Father, help us to learn even from the little piece of life that we saw with Paul and Peter tonight, and to learn those lessons God would teach us through His Spirit. I pray in the name of the Son, amen.

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