

Galatians

Week 5 —Hypocrites

Your assignment:

1. Read Galatians once a week (6 chapters).
2. Take the notes each week and review them as you read.
3. Be open to God completely shifting your relationship with Him.
4. Text any questions to 440.557.2822.

(Galatians 2:11-16)

But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions? You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles. Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.

Galatians is all about our **transformation**. We don't struggle to act Jewish, but **we do struggle with believing that faith in Jesus alone is enough**. We struggle to feel like we need to do more *for God*, we need to be a better Christian and we have to accept that **there's no such thing as a better Christian**. What we mean is there is no grading scale on which your Christianity is measured. **You either are a Christian or you are not.**

According to Paul, in a strange way the believers in Galatians were walking away from Christianity by trying to be better Christians.

- They believed that God's message was **believe in Jesus, change, and God will love you**.
- That's not God's message.
- The Gospel message is **believe in Jesus and God's love will change you**.

It seems like a small difference, but it's not—it's completely different.

- One is based on your faith in Jesus
- The other is based on faith in yourself.

Hypocrite is a strong word for most people. It is encouraging that Peter an original disciple, and one of the top leaders in the church struggled with hypocrisy. The question is **WHY?**

- Have you ever prayed and promised God you wouldn't do that thing again but 2 days later you did it?

- Have you ever felt close to God while you're at church but then acted like a completely different person at work, being angry or cursing all the time, or feeling pressure to laugh at crude jokes, or afraid to talk about your faith?

Why do we do these things?

- Is it because we're not really a Christian?
- Is it because we're a fraud?
- Is it because we're bad person?

Paul says **It's Because We Forget The Gospel.**

These verses really **get to the heart of what it means to be a Christian.**

- How you would answer the question if someone asked you tomorrow at work, ***what is a Christian?***

We can often quickly describe the characteristics of a Christian.

- A Christian is someone who **goes to church**
- A Christian is someone who **believes the Bible**
- A Christian is someone who **loves people no matter what**
- A Christian is a person who **helps the poor**

That's Not What Makes Someone A Christian.

**If someone found out you're a doctor, and ask, "what does a doctor do?" you wouldn't say, "A doctor wears a white coat." That's not what a doctor is. It is a characteristic of a doctor, but it's not what makes someone a doctor.

- The false teachers in Galatians said, "**A Christian is someone who has faith in Jesus AND lives like a committed Jewish person.**"
- But Paul passionately says, "**A Christian is someone who has been saved by placing their faith in Jesus.**"

In the Jerusalem meeting with the church leaders, Peter wholeheartedly agreed that there are no strings attached to becoming a Christian, but then on his next visit to Paul, **Peter acts differently than he says he believes.**

Here's what Paul was so upset about.

- In the Old Testament God instituted the "clean laws."
- These were complicated regulations for worshippers to follow in order to be considered "clean" and acceptable to worship God.
- People could not worship God if they ate certain "unclean" foods, if they had touched dead things, if they had a disease or touched someone who did, and so on.

Now why would God care so much about animals and rules? One of the reasons God gave all of these laws and rituals was to prove to them how badly they needed a Savior, because no one could actually keep all of the laws. Everyone was unclean somehow and required a blood sacrifice of an animal.

(Romans 7:7)

Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, You must not covet.

In other words Paul says, **I didn't realize how bad I was until I started keeping score.**

God's Laws Were Never Intended To Convince You That You're Good, They Were Intended To Convince You That You Would Never Be Good Enough.

- The law in the Old Testament was meant to drive the people into the arms of God, like a kid who runs out of school when the bell rings on the last day before summer break.
- But in the Old Testament, you didn't have any other choice. You had to just try your best to keep all the rules and stay clean, and inevitably when you failed, you had to offer a sacrifice to cover your sins.

Jesus Changed All Of That! He became the blood sacrifice for you once and for all.

However, the false teachers said—**THAT'S NOT ENOUGH.** You have to believe in Jesus AND still do your best to meet all the requirements.

(Galatians 2:21)

For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.

What is Paul upset about?

- Because when Peter hangs out with the Galatian Christians he orders a BBQ Pork sandwich with a side of ham and some shellfish appetizers, because he knew there was no such thing as “unclean” food anymore. When Jewish Christians show up, **Peter acts like real Christians would never eat BBQ Pork.**

Paul doesn't say...Peter is a liar!...Peter is a coward! Paul says...

(Galatians 2:14)

“...they were not following the truth of the gospel message.”

- When we're doing something wrong, we think the thing we're doing is the problem, but IT'S NOT THE PROBLEM—our behavior is **just a symptom** of the problem.
- If we're struggling with being hypocritical the problems is not the sex or the gossip or the jealousy or the drugs, the problem is that **we have forgotten the truth of the Gospel.**

We Are Under the Influence of Something Else

What is it that is influencing you?

- Just like the sobriety test, if there are areas of your life where you are not walking the straight line of the Christian life it's because **something else is influencing you besides the Gospel.**

- **The Christian life is about aligning our life with that message**, and when it is out of line, something other than the Gospel is influencing us.

This is the reason we need to hear the Gospel message over and over again, not just when we are first saved. If Peter can be hypocritical because he forgot the Gospel, we can too.

When we forget that we are saved and loved and accepted by grace alone

- We become **legalistic, prideful, insecure, and hypocritical**.
- We condemn ourselves and others for certain behaviors.
- When we forget we're loved, we abuse grace and live in a way that dishonors God.

We Must Remember the Gospel

Because the Gospel says that you are loved and accepted and made whole by Jesus Christ.
Jesus is enough.

Why do you act like a different person at work or at home than you are at church? *Is it because you're an awful person?*

- **It's because you are trying to find something besides Jesus Christ to make you feel loved and accepted.**
- You need Jesus *plus* being accepted and liked by your work friends. Or Jesus plus being accepted by other people.

Why do we get so angry when our kids decide they don't want to play sports or don't make the best grades?

- Part of the reason is because we need them to succeed so we can feel good about ourselves.
- Jesus *plus* peer approval and accomplishment is what we need to feel right and acceptable.

If we could ever truly believe the Gospel is true, we could align our lives up with it.

THIS IS THE DEEP STUFF!

- This is the Christian life, spending everyday believing we are loved and accepted by God based on what Jesus did not what we do.
- Never trying to earn and living with pride or shame based on our behavior.

(1 John 4:17-18)

And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.
Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.