



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

GALATIANS LESSON 2

In our lesson last week, Paul spent some time defending his apostleship to the false teachers who were challenging his authority and his message. It seems like the Judaizers were not only trying to preach another Gospel, they were trying to cause division between the apostles and Paul, claiming that Paul was teaching contrary to the church leadership. Here in chapter 2, Paul continues to defend himself against the accusations that he was a self-appointed apostle with a self-devised message. Paul claims that he received his revelation of the truth at a different time and in a different way, but the truth of the message is identical.

As we study chapter 2, read with a questioning mind. Ask yourself different questions while you read, such as: Is there a command that I should obey? Is there a promise for me to appropriate? How does this apply to me? This helps us to understand the text and receive the principles more readily. Please be very thorough in your observation of the text. And always begin with prayer!

First Day

1. Let's begin today by reading Galatians 2:1-21. Observe and list the facts you find. What new characters do we meet? Why is Paul writing this chapter? What is his tone?

2. Read verses 1-10 again. Write a key verse for this section. List any repeated thoughts, words, or phrases that you find.
3. Read verses 11-21. Write a key verse for this section also. List any repeated thoughts, words, or phrases you find in this section.
4. How does this chapter support what Paul was saying in chapter 1?
5. What application do you see in this chapter for your life?
6. What truth did you learn about God from this chapter?

We'll end here for today. As you read the memory verse for this week, take time to meditate on what it means to be "crucified with Christ" and then ask yourself, "Am I?"

Memory Verse of the Week: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20

Second Day

Review your memory verse.

Today we will be looking at chapter 2 again, but a little more closely. Make sure you jot down any questions you have or words that you need defined. When you finish your lesson, go back and see if your questions have all been answered.

1. Read Galatians 2:1-10. For the first 17 years after his conversion, Paul didn't associate too much with the church leadership. Why does he go to Jerusalem now?

2. Who does he take with him?

3. Let's find out a little about these two traveling companions of Paul. Look up the following Scriptures and write any facts you learn about these men.
 - A. Barnabas: (Acts 4:36-37, 9:26-28, 11:19-30)
 - B. Titus: (Titus 1:4-5, 2 Corinthians 8:23)

4. Why do you think Paul brought Titus (who was a Greek), with him to Jerusalem? (What point would his presence make?)

Paul said he went to Jerusalem "again" in verse 1. After his conversion, Paul stayed with Peter for 15 days, where he also met James, the half-brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:18-19, Acts 9:26-28). He later went to Jerusalem for a brief visit to help Barnabas take a collection from the church in Antioch to Jerusalem for relief for the poverty-stricken believers (Acts 11:27-30; 12:24-25). Then, 14 years after his first visit, he went again to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas completed their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-14:28) and returned to Antioch to report all the miracles of the Gentile conversions. Jewish legalists were upset and went to Antioch to teach against the Gospel of grace. Many scholars believe that the trip mentioned here in Galatians 2:1 is referring to this trip of Paul's; to the council that was called to resolve the conflict (Acts 15).

5. Read Acts 15:1-29 for a better understanding of the issue. Describe the events that took place. What was the outcome of that council?

6. Back in Galatians 2, what prompted Paul to go to Jerusalem? Does that contradict Acts 15:2?

7. Why do you think Paul had a talk with the church leaders privately first?

8. What do you think Paul meant by the phrase, "lest I had run in vain"? After all these years, did Paul doubt his message?

9. According to verse 5, how did Paul handle the false teachers?

Paul's journey to Jerusalem was divinely directed. Titus' presence there was a testimony to the truth of Paul's message. Here was a Gentile who accepted Christ, but had not adopted the religious practices of the Jews. (A Gentile is a term Jews used for all non-Jews. Most Jews regarded Gentiles with animosity.) They couldn't argue with the fact of Titus' conversion. He was absolute proof that circumcision and Mosaic regulations are not necessary for salvation. To have Titus circumcised would have been giving a victory to the Judaizers. Later, Paul had Timothy circumcised, but Timothy was half Jewish (Acts 16:1-3). His circumcision had nothing to do with his salvation, but simply gave him entrance to Jewish synagogues, from which he would otherwise be excluded.

There may be many reasons why Paul met with the leadership privately first. Paul wasn't hoping to confirm that his message was true, but instead, he was seeking to find unity within the leadership so they would be able to present a united front to the rest of the Jews. Paul simply presented to them the Gospel of salvation by God's grace through man's faith -- a Gospel contrary to the Gospel of works that the Judaizers were preaching. John MacArthur said, "Paul went to Jerusalem to prove that the Gospel he preached was identical to that preached by the other apostles, having been revealed to him directly, though separately, by the Lord Jesus Himself. Paul did not go to confirm the apostolicity of his message in his own mind but in the minds of Galatian believers who were being confused and deceived by the Judaizers." This private confirmation set the stage for the decision in the public council that followed.

10. How does Paul refer to the church leadership in verses 2-9? Do you think Paul was being sarcastic? Why or why not?

Let's take a minute and define some terms. The word "circumcision" literally means "a cutting away of the foreskin" and was an important Jewish rite handed down from the days of Abraham. According to Genesis 17:10-14 and Leviticus 12:3, every Jewish male and every foreign male who became

part of the nation was circumcised as a sign of God's covenant with Israel. The rite signified an invitation for God to cut the man off from his life and his people if he ever broke the covenant. Submitting to circumcision meant accepting and obeying the whole Jewish Law. Warren Wiersbe said this: "Actually, the Jewish people had forgotten the inner, spiritual meaning of the rite (Deut. 10:16; Jeremiah 4:1-4; Romans 2:25-29), just as some churches today have lost the spiritual meaning of baptism and have turned it into an external ritual. The true Christian has experienced an inner circumcision of the heart (Colossians 2:10-11) and does not need to submit to any physical operation (Philippians 3:1-3).

11. What was the difference of Paul's ministry and Peter's ministry, according to verses 7-8?
12. Does God call everyone to the same ministry, the same people group, with the same method? Read 1 Corinthians 12. List some key verses in this chapter that answers the above question.
13. What ministry has God called you to? What gifts has He given you? (Are you using them?)

I pray that you each recognize the call that God has placed on your life. We all should be "ministering" or "serving" the Lord every day. Let's not compare our ministry with the ministry of others. God has a unique calling on your life. Have you responded?

Third Day

What's your memory verse? Is Christ living in you?

1. Read Galatians 2:1-10 again. How did the pillars of the church respond to Paul? (Pillars is a Jewish term used to refer to great teachers, emphasizing the fact that they were instrumental in establishing and supporting the church.)
2. What James is Paul referring to? What do we know about him from the following verses? Read Matthew 13:55; John 7:1-5; Acts 1:13-14; 1 Corinthians 15:5-7; Acts 15:13-23; and James 1:1.
3. Who is Cephas? (Matthew 10:2; John 1:42)
4. Who is John? (Matthew 4:21-22, 10:2)
5. What did they give Paul and Barnabas?

The Judaizers were probably surprised that the leadership accepted and affirmed Paul's ministry. Paul was offered the "right hand of fellowship." Campbell says, "This was a sign of agreement and trust and an indication to all present that they endorsed the division of labor." In the East, to clasp the right hand of a person was to make a solemn vow of friendship and was a mark of partnership. They were now partners in ministry with Paul, unified in the message of salvation.

6. Why do you think they asked them to remember the poor? Read Acts 11:28.

7. What do the following verses tell us about helping those in need?
 - a. 1 John 3:17
 - b. James 2:15-16
 - c. Romans 15:25-27
 - d. Matthew 25:34-40
 - e. Acts 20:35
8. Do you have a heart to help the poor and those in need? Are you a generous giver? Ask the Lord to give you His heart for others.
9. Are you guilty (like the Judaizers) of judging others' Christianity by the outward appearance? Do you measure a man by the amount of works he does?
10. Can you think of any "rules" that Christians have tried to add to the Gospel of Grace?
11. If you were ministering in another culture, how would you decide which "American" Christian practices would be abandoned and which would not?

Think about what grace really means. It's something we don't deserve. Let's rejoice that we don't have to "do" anything to be saved, except believe.

Fourth Day

Practice your memory verse. Are you living by faith?

1. Read Galatians 2:11-21. Explain what Paul was accusing Peter of. Why did this make Paul so mad?

2. What had Peter already learned in Joppa? Read Acts 10:1-11:18.

3. How did Paul handle his issue with Peter?

It's unclear exactly where Paul stops speaking to Peter and begins speaking to the Galatians, but the message remains unaffected either way. Up to this point, Peter obviously had been enjoying fellowship with the Gentiles, eating whatever they ate and participating in the Lord's Supper. Peter was probably cherishing his new-found freedom in Christ and his union with Gentile believers. What happened? We know that Peter stood for the doctrine of faith alone in Acts 15, so why this change of heart? It seems that when the Judaizers came from Antioch, Peter got scared. I don't think he was afraid for his life, but of losing popularity and prestige with a group of self-righteous hypocrites.

Why was eating with Gentiles such a big deal? William Hendriksen said this: "This was taboo for strict Jews. One might eat food 'unclean' according to the Old Testament dietary law (Leviticus 11) or food that had been sacrificed in idol worship, which was often sold in the public market (1 Corinthians 10:25-28). Even if the food itself was pure, the Jews believed that contact by touch could make both food and person unclean. Mosaic Law designed to quarantine disease (Numbers 19:11-22; Haggai 2:12-13) was applied to externally separate Jews from paganism. Close association with Gentiles would physically link a Jew to all kinds of evil practices. In addition,

many devout Jews followed such detailed rules of seating, blessings, serving, and etiquette that eating with Gentiles was difficult, if not impossible. Jesus Christ rejected this emphasis on external defilement during His earthly life (Mark 7:14-19; Luke 5:30-31). In His death, Christ removed the legal (including dietary) barrier to fellowship (Ephesians 2:14-16).

The Greek word “**hypocrite**” originally referred to an actor wearing a mask to indicate a particular mood or type of character. Today, a hypocrite is someone who masks his true self. Peter was saying one thing, but his actions said another. His life was contradicting his beliefs.

4. Search your own heart. Are you “playing the hypocrite” in any area of your life? Do you have any masks in your closet?

5. Most of us deal with the issue of peer pressure. Have you ever succumbed to peer pressure? What was the result?

Peter was seeking to please man, instead of doing what he knew was right. It didn’t matter to Paul whom Peter was; he was being a hypocrite. Paul had enough courage to face Peter and correct him because the truth of the Gospel was at stake.

6. Did Peter’s actions influence anyone else?

Everything we say and do affects those around us. Hypocrisy in our life can keep others from desiring to know the Lord. If they see us preach one thing, yet do another, we are doing much harm to the cause of Christ. Peter’s hypocrisy caused others to sin. Paul wasn’t condemning Peter; Peter’s own conduct condemned himself. How careful we must be to live in a way that will represent Christ honorably.

7. Are you representing Christ in your home in an honorable fashion? Are your kids able to see Christ in you? Is there any hypocrisy in your home?

8. Paul wasn't scared to confront Peter in his sin. Why is that so uncomfortable for us to do at times?

9. When should we overlook sin and when should we confront it? Read the following Scriptures to help with your answer: Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; Titus 1:9-16.

Let's end here for today. Tomorrow we'll look at what it means to live by faith. Have a great day praising God for sending Jesus to die on the cross for you and me. Never forget the heart of the Gospel message. It's our **"Reason to Rejoice."**

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory. It's a long one -- can you do it?

Peter seemed to listen to Paul and receive the correction. This event isn't recorded anywhere else, and by reading Peter's epistles, we see that his writings support the teachings of Jesus. Peter, like you and I, made a mistake and reacted in the flesh. He fell to peer pressure and fear and was blurring the message of the Gospel. Even great men like Peter make mistakes, and we thank God that forgiveness is made available to us.

1. Read Galatians 2:11-21 for one last time. Can you summarize Paul's words in verses 14-21?

In verse 14, Paul reminds Peter that he hadn't been living like a Jew, so why was he expecting the Gentiles to live like Jews? In verse 15 Paul is not calling Gentiles sinners in the behavioral sense of immorality, but in the legal sense in which it was frequently used by Jews.

This is the first time the word "justified" is used in this book. It means "an act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous in Jesus Christ." MacArthur explains it like this: **"The basic term was originally used forensically of a judge's declaring an accused person not guilty and right before the law. It was the opposite of being declared guilty and condemned. Throughout Scripture justification refers to God's declaring a sinner to be guiltless on the basis of faith in Him. It is the free and gracious act by which God declares a sinner right with Himself -- forgiving, pardoning, restoring, and accepting him on the basis of nothing but trust in the Person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ."**

Justification is not a process, it's an act of God. If it was about works, it would have to be a gradual process.

2. What do the following verses tell us about justification?

- A. Romans 5:1
- B. Romans 8:33
- C. 2 Corinthians 5:21
- D. Romans 4:1-8

You can remember the meaning of justification like this: We were made ... **"Just as if we've never sinned."** Before we trust Christ, we stand **GUILTY** before God, but the moment we trust Christ, we are declared **NOT GUILTY** and we can never be called **GUILTY** again!

In verse 17, Paul reminds Peter that if they are sinners for associating with Gentiles, then Christ was a sinner Himself! If the Judaizers were right, then Jesus was wrong and He was a minister of sin. Imagine how Peter felt after that blow! If Peter denies the Gospel of Grace, he denies Christ Himself and declares that His death was in vain. If man is justified by works, then why did Jesus die? In verse 18, Paul goes on to say that if he tries to rebuild what grace has destroyed, then he also is a hypocrite and a sinner for abandoning grace for the law.

3. Why can't the Law justify us? (Romans 3:10-20, Galatians 2:15-16, Romans 5:21)
4. Paul gives a personal testimony in verse 20. Explain what you think it means to be "crucified with Christ." (Romans 6:1-14)
5. How does a person live by dying? (Matthew 16:24-26)
6. How do we practically "live by faith in the Son of God"?
7. How do we practically "die to self"?

When we accept Christ, our old man, the old self, is dead, crucified with Christ, and the new man lives (Colossians 3:9-10). **The true Christian life is not so much a believer's living for Christ as Christ's living through the believer.** Because in Christ "all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9), the fullness of God also dwells in every believer, as partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). We no longer have to struggle for life by trying to keep the Law, but we can live by faith in the Son of God!

The Judaizers believed that if they weren't obligated to keep the Law, believers would pursue a life of sin and lawlessness. If they had no "rules," what would keep them holy?

8. How would you answer the question above?
9. Can you mimic the words of Paul in Galatians 2:20? Do his words apply to your life?
10. What thought or verse from this chapter specifically spoke to your heart this week?
11. How can we practically keep ourselves from succumbing to peer pressure and conforming to certain worldly practices that others around us participate in?

The truths taught in this chapter are vital to our life as Christians. The doctrine of justification is extremely important to understand. To know

what it means to live by faith is crucial and we will look at that more in depth next week. I must say that Galatians 2:20 has made a dramatic impact in my own life this week, as well as Christians all around the world. As I write this lesson, I sit before my computer, paralyzed as the news that terrorists have attacked our nation scream out on every radio and TV station. **Today is September 11, 2001.** As yet, we have no idea who was behind the suicide planes that flew straight into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. I do know that our nation has said this is a declaration of war. Against whom, I don't know.

The people in that plane and the people in those buildings had no clue that today their life would be over. They were going about their life, business as usual. These shocking events remind us that a life in Jesus Christ is our only hope. We are not promised a long and happy life on this earth. **James 4:13-14** tells us "Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."

Did you get that part? Our life is only a vapor. It's over quick and we don't know when. Although we have no hope in this life, we do have hope in Christ. Because Christ died and rose again, we too are made alive together with Him (Ephesians 2:5). We have a place reserved in Heaven for us, as believers. We will live forever, enjoying our God, while others who refused Christ, will not.

What's the point of all this? Time is short! We need to do exactly what Paul says here in this verse ... live by faith. Don't trust in riches, don't trust in people. Don't spend all your time working to buy things and striving to be successful. Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus. That's all that matters. You've all seen the bumper sticker, "He who dies with the most toys, still dies." It's true.

Are you following Jesus? Have you committed your life to Him? Is serving and pleasing Him the goal of your life? I pray that what happened today will shock the world enough to realize how bad we need the Lord Jesus Christ. Tomorrow is not certain. Don't put off your decision for Christ. Follow Him today. I pray that we also are stirred to share our faith with our friends and neighbors who don't know Christ. It's important that they know the truth. Warren Wiersbe said, "**The best way to defend the truth is to live the truth.**" Are you?