

Galatians 2:1-21

“A Calling to the Whole World”

1. Begin with prayer and read Galatians 2:1-21 [5 minutes].

2. Review briefly the previous lesson on Galatians 1:10-24 [5 minutes].

3. Discuss how the other apostles affirm Paul in Galatians 2:1-10 [15 minutes].

- A. Paul's second visit to Jerusalem occurs 14 years after brief 15-day stop noted in chapter 1; brings Barnabas (Jewish) and Titus (Gentile) with him
- B. Purpose: inform about message Paul and team preaching/teaching to Gentiles; need for unity in gospel message to be shared with all (if not in synch, need to know now!)
- C. Titus received respectfully and not asked to be circumcised (v. 3); but there were those wanting to “enslave us and force us to follow their Jewish regulations. But we refused to give in to them for a single moment...” (vv. 4b-5a NLT)
- D. James, Peter, and John have nothing to add or change: instead, note and affirm Paul's commission to Gentile world as Peter has to Jewish world (vv. 6-8)
- E. Today: popular for some to differentiate “Petrine,” “Johannine,” or “Pauline” gospels, as though distinctions are profound/numerous, and “Paulinism” as Paul's gospel different from what Jesus teaches... “But all this is mistaken. The apostles of Jesus Christ do not contradict one another in the New Testament. Certainly there are differences of style between them, because their inspiration did not obliterate their individual personalities. There are also differences of emphasis, because they were called to different spheres and preached or wrote to different audiences. Consequently, they stressed different aspects of the gospel... But they complement one another. There is only one gospel, the apostolic faith, a recognizable body of doctrine taught by the apostles of Jesus Christ and preserved for us in the New Testament.” (John Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 32)
 - *How do Paul, Peter, and John in their New Testament writings show they are on the same page regarding the gospel? Please give at least two examples.*
 - *Identify two local congregations from Christian traditions different from MDPC's. Then compare how MDPC understands and proclaims the gospel to how they understand and proclaim the gospel. Similarities? Differences?*

4. Discuss how Paul must confront Peter in Galatians 2:11-16 [10 minutes].

- A. However, old habits, traditions, and patterns hard to break: Peter in Antioch first eats with Gentiles, but then when Jewish Christians from Jerusalem come, he ignores Gentiles; others follow suit
- B. Paul forced to confront Peter publicly: public confrontation often needed for public transgression (*a la* the eminent theologian Barney Fife: “Nip it! Nip it in the bud!”)

- C. Paul's words to Peter reference Peter's experience in Acts 10-11 (re-read if necessary)
- D. Paul expresses the significance and importance of justification by faith in v. 16: made in right relationship with God through faith in Christ, not by obedience to law
- E. Key corrective tool used by Paul is clarity about what the gospel is: absolutely grace through faith, Peter, and you know it, I know it, and thus we should live by it
 - *How you would explain the justification by faith taught in v. 16 to someone unfamiliar with Christian language? What terms would you avoid? What terms would you define first and then use?*
 - *Reflect upon Jesus's teachings in the Gospels. Locate and describe a time Jesus clearly comes down on the side of grace, not law. How does this example connect with Paul's rationale in Galatians 2:11-16 here?*

5. Discuss how Paul further explains his rationale in Galatians 2:17-21 [10 minutes].

- A. Some disagreement on where Paul's words to Peter stop, and Paul's words to the Galatians begin: some say quotation goes through v. 14; others v. 16; still others all the way through v. 21
- B. Shift from "you and I" to "we" starting in v. 17 (ESV, NIV, NLT), leads this writer to think vv. 17-21 are statements made by Paul more for Galatian audience and not to Peter (see quotation marks in NLT), while Keller book holds that vv. 14-21 all said by Paul to Peter
- C. Verses 17-18 convoluted syntactically, but intent is to show that if you advocate living by law instead of gospel, then you're actually accusing Jesus of leading us into sin, because Jesus emphasizes grace in his teaching, not law
- D. Verses 19-21 much clearer: dying to the law in order to live for Christ... "My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (v. 20 NLT)
- E. Paul brings home his argument, stating that if we could keep the law, we would not need Jesus; but we cannot keep the law, so we need divine intervention
 - *What does it mean for you to be "crucified with Christ" (v. 20)? Define what this phrase means. How does your new self given by Christ look, sound, and act in comparison to your old self?*
 - *Living by the gospel it proclaims has often been historically difficult for the Church. Select a situation when the Church clearly failed to live by its own teaching. Why do you think it happened? What harm did it cause? How do we keep it from happening again?*

6. Close in prayer.