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SUMMER SERIES 2024 – WEEK 2

Galatians 2: Just Faith = Justification

*We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;
yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ,
so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works
of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.*
– Galatians 2:15-16 ESV

- **From bounty hunter to apostle**

- A brief history of Paul's life
 - o His former life:
 - He was a card-carrying Hebrew
*...circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a
Hebrew of Hebrews... – Philippians 3:5 ESV*

*...as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to
righteousness under the law, blameless. – Philippians 3:5-6 ESV*

*...I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. – Galatians 1:13
ESV*

*But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off
men and women and put them in prison. – Acts 8:3 BSB*

*I persecuted the followers of the Way, hounding some to death, arresting both men
and women and throwing them in prison. – Acts 22:4 NLT*

*Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's
followers. So he went to the high priest. He requested letters addressed to the
synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers*

of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains. – Acts 22:4 NLT

○ His conversion:

- A life-changing encounter

“As I was on the road, approaching Damascus about noon, a very bright light from heaven suddenly shone down around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’” – Acts 22:6-7 NLT

~ Paul met the resurrected and glorified Jesus

~ He lost his sight

~ But he heard Jesus speak

~ He was led to Damascus

~ His sight was restored by Ananias

~ He received his commission

“The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and hear him speak. For you are to be his witness, telling everyone what you have seen and heard. What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord.” – Acts 22:14-16 NLT

- Paul returned to Jerusalem

~ While praying in the Temple, he had a 2nd vision

~ Jesus appeared and spoke to him again

“Hurry! Leave Jerusalem, for the people here won’t accept your testimony about me....Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles!” ^Acts 22:18, 21 NLT

○ After his conversion:

But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. – Galatians 1:15-19 ESV

- Paul returned to Damascus (Acts 9:19)
- Then he went to Arabia (1 Cor 11:32)
- He returned to Damascus (Gal 1:17)
- He fled because of a plot on his life (Acts 9:23-25)
- Traveled to Jerusalem (Gal 1:18; Acts 9:26-30)
- Stayed for 15 days (Gal 1:18)

Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they glorified God because of me. – Galatians 1:21-24 ESV

- **A fight for the faith**

*Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up **because of a revelation** and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. – Galatians 2:1-2 ESV*

Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. – Acts 11:27-30 ESV

- Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem
- 14 years have passed since Paul's first visit
- Many Gentiles have come to faith
- But their conversions are under question
- Something is missing

- **A house divided**

But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. – Galatians 2:3-5 ESV

- This is over 15 years since the death of Christ
 - The Gospel has been spreading
 - Jews and Gentiles have come to faith
 - All in keeping with the words of Jesus

*"I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. **I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold.** I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd." – John 10:14-16 ESV*

*"Therefore, go and make disciples **of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." – Matthew 28:18-20 NLT*

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, **telling people about me everywhere** — in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and **to the ends of the earth.**” – Acts 1:8 NLT*

- The Good News had gone out
 - But not without mixed signals
 - ~ For Jews: It was an **add-on** to Judaism
 - ~ For Gentiles: It was an alternative to paganism
 - This resulted in two versions of the Gospel

...I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised... – Galatians 2:7 ESV

...they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. – Galatians 2:9 ESV

- **A ticking time bomb**
 - The Gospel needed **dissemination**
 - But it also needed **clarification**
 - So it wouldn't result in **misinterpretation**
 - The apostles needed to be on the same page
 - The apostles were God-fearing Jews
 - They brought a Jewish mindset to the Gospel
 - They viewed Jesus as the Jewish Messiah
 - They had expected a Jewish kingdom
 - They saw Gentiles as outsiders
 - They saw Judaism as vital to justification

Acts 9

- Peter covered Judea
- In Lydda, he healed a man and many “turned to the Lord”
- In Joppa, he raised a woman from the dead and “many believed”
- But God was about to do a bigger miracle

- **A divine appointment**

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, ² a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. – Acts 10:1-2 ESV

- This man was a Roman and a Gentile
- He was also part of the Roman occupation
- But he was a “devout man who feared God”

“The description of Cornelius as a devout, God-fearing man probably means that he belonged to the category called “God-fearers,” Gentiles who worshiped the God of Israel and in many cases kept the Mosaic law, but did not take the final step of circumcision necessary to become a proselyte to Judaism.” – NET Bible Study Notes

- Cornelius received a vision from God
 - He was to send for Peter in Joppa
- At the same time, Peter was given a vision

*The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” And the voice came to him again a second time, “**What God has made clean, do not call common.**” This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. – Acts 10:9-16 ESV*

- **Confused and commissioned**

- The meaning of the vision escaped Paul
- But not the order to go to Caesarea
- Yet God would make it all clear

*“You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that **I should not call any person common or unclean.**” – Acts 10:28 ESV*

*“Truly I understand that **God shows no partiality**, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.” – Acts 10:34-35 ESV*

*“And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that **everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.**” – Acts 10:42-43 ESV*

- Notice what’s missing:
 - No mention of circumcision
 - The Mosaic Law doesn’t come up
 - Judaism isn’t part of the conversation
- It’s faith in Christ alone + nothing else

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed,

because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. – Acts 10:44-45
ESV

- **“The Rock” gets rolled by Paul**

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy... I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel... – Galatians 2:11-14 ESV

- He calls out Peter’s **hypocrisy** and **duplicity**
- He accuses Peter of man-pleasing
 - He had been “living like a Gentile”
 - Until the Judaizers showed up
 - Then he “drew back” and “separated”
 - He treated the Gentiles as “unclean”
- But Paul calls him out

*...we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but **through faith in Jesus Christ**, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be **justified by faith in Christ** and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.* – Galatians 2:16 ESV

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life 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 ESV

- **Discussion questions**

How did Peter’s actions in Antioch contradict the vision he had been given by God in Joppa, and why did it matter to Paul?

Why was it vital for the apostles to have version of the Gospel? What happens when we allow false gospels to go unchallenged in the church?

How does adding anything to the Gospel steal glory from God and rob us of peace and joy?



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SUMMER SERIES 2024 – WEEK 3 HOMEWORK

WEEK 3 – Galatians 3: Faith-Filled Living

In this chapter, Paul continues to unpack the unique and uncompromising nature of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone. He is battling the Judaizers who are attempting to add law-keeping to the gospel message, essentially teaching the Gentile converts in Galatia that faith in Jesus is not enough. This Jesus-plus formula is unacceptable to Paul and runs counter to the message Jesus commanded His apostles to share with the world. As the God-appointed apostle to the Gentiles, Paul felt compelled to resist any attempt to add to the gospel in any way. In this lesson, we have to help our men understand the danger of forcing human-based, effort-oriented requirements on the gospel message. The message in this chapter mirrors that of the Book of Hebrews, starkly contrasting law-keeping with faith-filled living.

- Read Galatians 3. Write down any thoughts that jump out at you from these verses.
- Now read pages 23-36 of Ken's Devotionary™ on Galatians.
- Go back and read verses 15-21 of chapter two. What is the main point that Paul is trying to make?

What had Peter done that caused Paul to go on this rant regarding justification by faith? What was it about Peter's actions that muddied the waters about how a believer is made right with God?

- Read verses 1-6 of chapter 3. Paul calls the Galatian believers of being fools and bewitched. Why does he use this kind of language? What is it about their actions that gives him the right to be so harsh and condemning?

What do you think Paul means by the phrase, “having begun by the Spirit”? (Read Acts 10:34-48 to get further insight).

Based on what you read in Acts 10, what does Paul mean by “perfected by the flesh?” What is he accusing them of doing?

- In verses 7-9, Paul brings up the Jewish patriarch, Abraham. He tells these Gentile believers that, like Abraham, they have been justified or made right with God by faith. Why is this connection to Abraham important to Paul?
- Read verses 10-14. According to Paul, what is the fate of all who attempt to be justified by works?

Does keeping the law require faith? Why?

Go back and look at Galatians 2:16. Why is Paul so adamant about justification by faith, not works?

- Read Galatians 3:15-29. This is a difficult passage but what is the main point that Paul is trying to make?

For context, read Genesis 22:17-18. God made this promise to Abraham more than 400 years before the Mosaic Law came into existence. Why is this important?

According to verses 19-24, what was the role of the law before Jesus appeared on the scene?

Why should Paul’s conclusion to this chapter have been an encouragement to the Galatians believers (and us)?