

Galatians – Part 4 | 9/23/18

- **Introduction**

- This passage of Scripture covers an a very rare occurrence where we see Paul rebuking Peter because of his hypocrisy.
- Thus far we have seen why Paul wrote this letter to the churches of Galatia so that they would know the truth of the Gospel because they had let false teachings come into their midst.
- Paul sets out to refute that in this letter.
- What we find is that Paul had to refute Peter because Peter by his actions was giving credit to the Judaizers who were adding to what it took to become a Christian.
- This contrasted the truth of the Gospel message that salvations is by grace through faith.

- **Peter’s hypocrisy and the importance of standing our ground for the truth | Galatians 2:11-14**

- **Read Galatians 2:11-14**
- **This passage deals with a sin in Peter’s life where instead of standing for the truth of the Gospel, he feared man and showed hypocrisy by stating (with his actions) that the Gentiles had to live like a Jew to be a Christian.**
 - The “men from James” (who likely were not really sent by James) were the Judaizers who believed that one must keep the Mosaic ceremonies and various other laws to be a Christian.
 - **Peter was agreeing with the Judaizers by his actions**, which is what Paul has been trying so hard to refute.
 - This then showed a **contradiction to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith** that Paul will so adamantly speak to in the rest of the Book of Galatians.
- This event was significant and a was a sad time for the church.
 - **Peter, we know is no stranger to the Scriptures having recorded his failures and sins.**
 - Peter denied Christ 3 times as He was on his way to the cross.
 - However, this **event took place long after the cross**, the ascension, the receiving of the Holy Spirit and Peter’s defense of the Gentiles at the council in Jerusalem.
 - **At a time when Peter needed to be standing his ground for the truth of the Gospel more than ever, he faulted and instead of standing with the truth he gave into the world.**
- **Prior to the arrival of the Judaizers Peter had been eating with the Gentiles showing they were all the same in Christ.**
 - Before these Judaizers came down Peter had been showing his belief that regardless of your background everyone was the same in the eyes of Christ.
 - Peter would happily eat with the Gentiles and saw them as equals, they were all Christians.
 - **This is because Peter knew that Jesus had removed these requirements both for dietary restrictions and associating with other people (Gentiles).**
 - In the Old Testament God had given the Israelites certain dietary restrictions that required them to refrain from certain foods and also not to eat with non-Jews as not to make them unclean.
 - Leviticus 11:25-26
 - However, Jesus Christ under the new covenant removed these restrictions, Christians were not required to follow them.
 - Mark 7:18-19

- Galatians 2:14a
 - “But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel...”
- Peter’s actions did harm to the cause of Christ.
 - **This is why Paul rebuked Peter, because instead of staying with the Gentiles and “Practicing what he preached” he instead chose to act the same as the Judaizers.**
 - Peter was harming the ability for them to spread and teach the truth of the Gospel.
- **Christians too can and will find themselves in the same predicament as Peter and become hypocrites to the truth of the Gospel by our actions.**
 - Christians in their heart know and understand the truth of the Gospel of Christ.
 - Yet they will be concerned to still “fit in” and be accepted by the world so they will compromise their faith.
 - **They love and know Jesus yet allow themselves to be put into places or situations that say otherwise only so they are not looked upon in a negative way from the world.**
 - They will by their actions make it seem as if their beliefs are different because of the positions they put themselves in.
 - This of course leads to the Christians being hypocrites.
 - **What might this look like for a modern-day Christian? How might we find ourselves compromising our beliefs just to fit in with the world?**
 - **How might we find ourselves doing things that just make us hypocrites?**
- **Peter’s draw from the Gentiles was likely gradual.**
 - In verse 12 when it says he “drew back” the use of the Greek words is a term that refers to a strategic or gradual withdrawal.
 - This gives us the impression that perhaps Peter didn’t immediately draw away but perhaps did this slowly.
 - He might have made some excuses at first and just distanced himself before he fully drew away.
 - Regardless of how he drew away, the gradual withdrawal is something that Christians know of all too well.
 - When we fall away from God or back into old habits it is rarely all at once.
 - We almost always do this on a slow gradual decline.
 - **Why does the “gradual decline” almost always succeed in one completely falling away?**
- **Peter’s hypocritical actions caused others to pull away from the truth**
 - Peter’s hypocritical actions didn’t just affect himself. Peter was a leader and others looked up to him.
 - So when they saw Peter pulling away from the Gentiles the others (even Barnabas) was led astray.
 - Galatians 2:13
 - “And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.”
 - **The result of Peter’s actions effected other Christians, they saw what he did and followed suit.**
 - **His sins caused others to sin.**

- **When Christians show hypocrisy, it can also lead others to pull away from the truth.**
 - It is bad enough when we act in sin showing our hypocrisy, but it is even worse when it causes others to sin.
 - We must understand that **people are always watching us both the Christians and the lost.**
 - When we strive to live Godly lives with the character of Christ, there are great and wonderful things that happen.
 - That is how the love of God is shared, how the world see's what it means to be a Christian.
 - This is when people say hey I want what they have.
 - **But when we go astray and live our lives in hypocrisy, where we say and believe one thing but do another. We will inevitably take others with us.**
 - We may not usually think of ourselves as influencers. Some of us may have positions of authority and others may not.
 - But regardless **we all do influence someone** if that's just our family or the people we come into contact on a daily basis.
 - When we live in lives in hypocrisy, if we proclaim to be Christian yet live our lives like the world, then we tell others that this is OK.
 - That it's OK to be a Christian and to still sin in whatever way we might be susceptible to.
 - The results of this are that others will in fact see us and it WILL have an impact.
 - Our actions will rarely ever only affect ourselves.
 - Christian must strive to live Godly lives with a character that reflect Christ.
 - We must strive to live our lives free of hypocrisy and live as God has called us to.
- **Do we think of the impact on others when we choose to act in hypocrisy? Or are we usually just thinking of ourselves?**
- **What are the negative impacts that can happen when others see us act this way? Both Christians and the lost?**
- **How damaging is Christian hypocrisy to furthering the Kingdom of God?**
- **Peter's actions show us that even the strongest of Christians can have moments of weakness.**
 - Jesus called Peter His rock, yet Peter still failed.
 - John 1:42
 - "He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "you are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).
 - "Cephas" in Aramaic means rock, in the Greek it is translated to Peter.
 - Even though Jesus called Peter a rock, we know that he was not the perfect Christian.
 - Yet Jesus used him for great and mighty things, he was commonly seen as the chief of the apostles.
 - Even the strongest Christians can fail (they do) and act in hypocrisy.

- While this is not a license to do it, it shows us that we all are weak, and we most certainly will fail at times.
 - Yet God will still use us for great and mighty things to glorify Him and grow the Kingdom of God.
- **Paul shows us how important it is that we do not let ourselves become compromised and to stand for the truth.**
 - Paul recognized that Peter's actions were wrong, and he took a stand for the truth of the gospel.
 - **When we have a strong relationship with God we too will be able to see when either ourselves or others are going astray from God.**
 - We must strive to not let ourselves become compromised but instead to live our lives in its truth.