

2026_10_18_Galatians

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[0:00] We're in the book of Galatians, and I can't remember if this is our third or fourth message in the book of Galatians, but Galatians is a true book. We talked about Martin Luther and his affection for the book of Galatians.

He actually called it like his wife, his Katerina, that was the name of his actual wife. But it brought him so much comfort because he, in his life as a monk, came under so much condemnation, and he lacked any kind of assurance that he could really be right with God.

But he found, both in the book of Revelation and, or not the book of Revelation, the book of Romans, and also in the book of Galatians, a lot of comfort in that he could stand confident that he was righteous before God by faith alone, regardless of any good works or religious acts that he did. And it's interesting that he found so much comfort in this book because Galatians is actually quite a confrontational book. It's, as we've read through it, we've seen that there were some initial greetings, but then kind of Paul drives right into the Galatians, and the Galatian Christians, and says, how so soon you have turned away from Jesus Christ.

You've been led astray by a teaching that I did not give to you. And he uses other terms like saying that they have perverted the gospel of Christ, and saying of those who have led them astray, use the phrase, let those people be accursed.

[1:52] After he basically brings up the problem, the concern that he wants to address with the Galatian people, he launches into a personal history about his life before he became a Christian, and then how he came to become a Christian, and then what God called him to, specifically.

That he was called to preach the gospel specifically to the Gentiles. He mentioned that when he was called, he actually did not confer with flesh and blood.

He makes a very, he makes that a very pointed point in his history, and specifically that he never went to Jerusalem. And then he gives a little bit of history.

He said, well, three years later, I did go to Jerusalem, but just for a short while, just a couple of weeks. And really, I spent some time with Peter, but that's it. I didn't really spend time with the rest of the apostles.

He said, I did meet, got a chance to meet James, but that was it. And then he kind of ends there and says, so the big picture is, for most of my early Christian years, I really didn't know this group of Christian churches in Judea, and specifically also, you know, specifically in Jerusalem.

[3:21] He says, I was not known by face to anyone there among those churches. Today, he's going to kind of continue on with that account, but he's going to jump ahead 14 years later.

At this point, Paul is a full-fledged apostle, not just a new Christian, not just a new believer. He has been called to be an apostle, and now he has taken on that role, that mantle fully.

But he's going to describe this visit to Jerusalem again after 14 years. Now, he's not going to Jerusalem to be trained, and he's not going to Jerusalem in order to join the ministry of the apostles and the Christians that are already there.

Instead, he's going to settle some matters of dispute and to explain and present his ministry that he has to the Gentiles in order to get some level of agreement.

And specifically, to settle a dispute that came up regarding his ministry to the Gentiles, and specifically the Gentile believers, whether they were required to keep the law of Moses that the Jews had been under for a couple of thousand years.

[4:52] So this passage, we're going to read Galatians 2, verse 1 through 10. Let's go ahead and read through it, and then we're going to walk through verse by verse here. So Galatians 2.

Then, after 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles,

but privately to those who are of reputation, lest by any means I might run or had run in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in, who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage, to whom we did not yield submission, even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But from those who seemed to be something, whatever they were, it makes no difference to me. God shows personal favoritism to no man. For those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.

But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter, for he who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised, also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles.

[6:19] And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do. As we read this account, if you are familiar with the book of Acts, you might think that this sounds somewhat familiar.

Paul going to Jerusalem and having kind of a meeting of the minds with the believers and specifically the leaders of the church in Jerusalem.

As we read through the book of Acts, we see that Paul, he meets Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. That's kind of his initial calling, his initial conversion.

And then after some time, you know, he actually, starting from the city of Antioch, which is part of the Roman Empire outside of Judea, it's a Gentile city, is sent out on a missionary journey.

[7:35] And he ends up taking three missionary journeys throughout the Roman Empire. But after his first missionary journey, he comes back and he gives a report of all the ministry happenings and how, you know, some people came to faith.

Of course, there were a lot of people that rejected his message and specifically many from the Jews. But one of the things that he notes in that report is he says how that God opened up the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Up to this point, there hadn't really been any kind of ministry to the Gentile world. There was one account related to Peter, right?

Peter saw a vision and was told to go to the house of Cornelius to share about Jesus Christ and about Jesus Christ being crucified and being raised from the dead.

And when he did, he was surprised that the Holy Spirit fell on these Gentile believers. It was somewhat shocking to Peter. But it was kind of a sign.

[8:50] Hey, God's going to do a work among the Gentiles. But for many years after that, there wasn't any ministry to these Gentile people. In fact, there was a dispersion of the Jews.

There was a persecution in Israel and in Jerusalem. And many of these believers were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire. And it says, I believe this is in Romans 9, excuse me, Acts chapter 9, that they went out, but they went out to minister to the Jews only, to the Jews only.

And so Paul's first missionary journey was kind of this opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles. But after he comes back, and before he goes on his second journey, there is this problem.

And actually, if you turn to, we're going to be going a little bit back and forth here between Galatians 2 and Acts 15. So turn to Acts chapter 15. Acts chapter 15 in verse 1, it says this, And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.

You cannot be saved. Then it continues on, Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question.

[10:24] And so, what it appears, and there is some dispute among biblical scholars about whether Galatians 2 and Acts 15 are the same event, but from my perspective, it seems pretty clear that that's the case.

That Paul is going to Jerusalem to settle this matter. And that is what Paul is describing here to the Galatians, that he wants to make sure that they understand this event that happened and what the outcome of the event was and how it impacts their faith, what they believe, and how they practice

the Christian life.

And specifically, this trouble that they've gotten into with circumcision and trying to keep the law of Moses. So, let's hone in here on the specific verses.

So, verse 1. Then after 14 years, this is back to Galatians 2, by the way. Then after 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas and also took Titus with me.

Titus actually isn't mentioned in the Acts account, but Barnabas is. And we'll get to that in a second. But this is 14 years later. So, there's a lot of, you know, that's a lot of time to transpire.

[11:46] And so, what exactly, you know, what could have been happening in those 14 years?

Well, one of the things that was happening was Paul was being trained. He was being trained for his apostleship, to be an apostle.

But not an apostle to Israel, like the 12 were, but an apostle to a different group of people, to the Gentiles. And not an apostle that is through the covenant of Moses, like the 12 were, but an apostle to the Gentiles that was without the covenant of Moses.

Paul insisted earlier, and this is in verse 12.

So, if you kind of go back a few verses in chapter 1, Galatians 1, 12, he says this about his training, or about the gospel that he preaches to the Galatians.

He says, He's saying, I didn't receive my training from the 12 apostles, or really any other man.

[12:59] It was Jesus Christ himself that actually trained me, that taught me, that taught me the message that I'm supposed to take to the Gentile people. Ephesians chapter 3, verse 3, he says something similar.

He says, How that by revelation, he made known to me the mystery, as I've briefly written already.

So, it was through revelation. In Romans 16, verse 25, he says this as he's ending that letter to the Romans.

Now, to him who is able to establish you, according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, kept secret since the world began.

Jesus Christ himself revealed to Paul a message, a mystery, and a mystery is something that was not foretold. For the Jewish people, God's plan for them, including a future kingdom, was something that was foretold by the prophets.

A mystery is something that was not foretold. It was something that was kept secret. But that secret plan that God had for the Gentile people was something that was revealed to Paul.

[14:10] Paul also describes, if you recall, Paul describes this thorn in the flesh that he received.

And does anybody remember why he received that thorn in the flesh? The reason, and this is described in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, he said it was because of the abundance of revelation that I received.

God was concerned that he might become prideful, puffed up. In fact, this is what it said, exactly what it says in 2 Corinthians 12, starting with verse 1. It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. He says, I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago, whether in the body, I do not know. He seems to be talking about somebody else, but most Bible scholars agree that he's talking about himself.

But he's trying, he's walking this line of boasting about his revelation, but not really wanting to boast, right? It's not a good thing to boast, but there's another place where he talks to the Gentile believers that he is ministering to and he says, I magnify my ministry before you Gentiles.

He says, I need you to know that my ministry to you is important. But he also doesn't really want to boast too much. So this is a kind of a tightrope that he constantly walks. He says, I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago, whether in the body, I do not know or whether out of the body, I do not know.

[15:34] God knows. Such a one was caught up to the third heaven and I know such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows. How he was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words, which is not lawful for a man to hear.

He's really, he's describing himself. Jesus Christ, and he says, I'm not sure if it was a vision or God actually took me to heaven, but it really seemed like I was there in paradise with the Lord, but regardless, he gave me these revelations.

And then he says in verse seven, unless I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

So Paul received an abundance of revelation directly from Jesus Christ. Now for most of us, if we are trained to be a missionary or a minister of the gospel in some kind of way, where do we get that?

Do we pray and ask an angel from heaven to come deliver our training for us or to be taken up into heaven or receive some kind of vision or dream in order to train us?

[16:51] No, we can go to the scriptures, to the word of God. You can go to a seminary or some kind of training school for other men to pass down the faith that was passed down, you know, from the apostles and prophets down to God's people.

That's how people are normally trained and that's how people are trained in the Bible times as well. But for Paul, he wanted to make it clear, my training was different.

It came directly from Jesus Christ. So he goes up to Jerusalem after 14 years after he's officially a full-fledged apostle here and he brings with him two people, Barnabas and Titus.

Barnabas was a traveling partner of his. He was actually a Jewish believer in Christ and Titus, though, was different. Titus was actually a Greek, somebody who'd been converted most likely on that first missionary journey.

that Paul took. He was a Greek, a Gentile, a non-Jewish man who became a believer in Christ. And this is important because as we'll see here in a moment, Titus was brought as somewhat of a test case.

[18:07] Titus was not circumcised. And this was a test to see if Titus would be able to escape from Jerusalem still unscathed, so to speak.

verse 2, back to Galatians chapter 2, verse 2. He says, I went up by revelation and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.

He went up by revelation. This wasn't something that he just decided to do. You know, most of Paul's ministry, and I think much of the ministry of the rest of the apostles, was, hey, we've got a message that Jesus gave us to preach.

And so, hey, guys, what do you think we should do? Let's go over here to these people, or let's go help the saints over here, or, you know, just making decisions based on reason and wisdom, good judgment.

But every once in a while, you see God providing a vision to Paul. For example, he received, remember when he received a vision of a man from Macedonia?

[19:14] He said, oh, God's calling me to go to Macedonia. But he wasn't planning to go there. He was planning to go somewhere else. And so, every once in a while, you'll see God directing him to go to a specific place.

But for most of his ministry, he's just kind of going where he thinks is best. But in this specific case, his trip down to, or up to, Jerusalem is God's idea.

And then he says, I went to them and I communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles. But privately, to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run or had run in vain.

So he's going to communicate to them the message that he is delivering to the Gentile people. And the reason that he wants to communicate this message, this gospel that he preaches among the Gentiles is because there are some differences with the message that he's giving to the Gentiles and the message that is, that the Jewish apostles are giving to theirs.

It's not completely different by any means, but there are some differences. Paul is actually, it's interesting as we read some of his letters and he talks about the gospel, many times he actually refers to it as my gospel.

[20:46] In fact, there are three different times. Romans 16, 25, Romans 2, 16, 2 Timothy 2, 8. He says that several different times.

He calls it my gospel, which seems kind of strange. Why do you call it your gospel, Paul? It's not yours. It belongs to everybody. But he had been given, delivered a message as the primary messenger of this gospel to the Gentile people.

and then he says, I delivered to them to tell them about the message that I take to the Gentiles, but he says, I did it privately. I didn't give a public speech explaining my ministry.

He says, I just went to a small group of the leaders and he says, here's my concern. Here was the risk involved. That if I did this in a public manner, that I might, my mission might be in vain.

My mission down here to Jerusalem might fail. And, why would it fail?

[22:06] You know, when you think about touchy issues, maybe controversial issues, you can handle them in a very public manner, but when it comes to something that's controversial or touchy, the more public it is, the more people are involved, the more kind of emotions, people get excited and passionate, and you have lots and lots of voices everywhere speaking about something.

So, whenever there's something that's very sensitive or controversial, it's always best to kind of have a small group, a meeting of the minds that doesn't involve a large group of people.

I actually think about this with, you know, in political terms, right? You have, today our Secretary of State is Marco Rubio and you might have a trade dispute with our neighbor Canada, right?

And one of the things you could do is just hold a press conference and you could talk about your dispute with Canada, with the whole world. Right? And, but then, everybody, right, both in Canada and America and maybe even other countries of the world, they all have an opinion on, well, what this dispute is about and how it should be resolved.

And that just causes a lot of passion and excitement and it can cause a lot of confusion and can really, you know, cause problems in trying to resolve that dispute.

[23:37] But, if you are a wise Secretary of State, instead of holding a press conference, you just have a one-on-one meeting with, you know, a prime minister or maybe an ambassador or something like that to have a private conversation about this dispute.

And I think that's what's going on here with, with Paul. He, he doesn't want to make a big scene. He wants to have a private discussion so they, they can talk about this in, in rational terms and he can get some agreement specifically from, from the leaders.

This is a, a situation that must be handled delicately. Well, so he has this conversation and he, he kind of tells us a little bit about the outcome of the situation in verse 3.

He says this, yet not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. So he's kind of saying, hey, we, we actually had some success here because Titus came out unscathed unscathed.

And, that was a, an indication that the mission was accomplished. That these Jewish apostles in Jerusalem and Judea were not going to make or force Gentile believers to try to keep the law of Moses and specifically with circumcision.

[25:06] And then verse 4, he says this, and this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us into bondage to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

He's here describing the people who had kind of caused this trouble to begin with. And it's not totally clear exactly who he's talking about, these, these false brethren.

who exactly these men were. It's not clear to me whether he's talking about the men who came up from Judea to Antioch or is he talking about men that were there in Jerusalem.

And actually if you turn to Acts chapter 15 again, there is a mention that as they're having these discussions that there are some Pharisees. this is what it says in Acts chapter 15 verse 5, but some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up saying it is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

Now, a lot of times we think of Pharisees as those are the bad guys, right? They were the ones who refused to trust in Jesus Christ. But there were actually Pharisees who did believe in Jesus.

[26:29] They trusted him as their Messiah. But, the Pharisees were most well known for what? Their dedication to the law.

Now, or also, right, their traditions, the traditions of the elders which may not have been part of the law. But they were very careful to keep the law of Moses.

And so, as he's talking, he's mentioning here these false brethren who were brought in secretly.

And what it sounds like is that these Jewish believers had heard, well, there's something going on. These Gentiles are coming to faith. And we've heard that, you know, they're still uncircumcised and they're not keeping the law of Moses. Let's maybe send out some people and check it out and see what's going on because that doesn't sound right to us.

You know, if somebody is going to come to the Lord, this is what God gave us as the Jews to do to keep this law in order to be his special people.

[27:34] And so, if these Gentiles are also going to be coming to the Lord, you know, they need to be doing the same thing as well. So, they sent out a little delegation. He refers to it as like spies

coming in by stealth to spy out their liberty which they have in Christ Jesus.

and he said that they might bring us into bondage. Now, from what I can tell, it doesn't sound like these men had some kind of nefarious motivation.

They were just under the impression that, hey, as believers in the Lord, this is how you live out a faithful life as a believer.

This is what we've been taught. This is what we've been grown, this is what we've grown up with our whole lives and for centuries before us. But, he says, ultimately, regardless whether it was these men who came up to Antioch or these Pharisees in Jerusalem, we didn't yield to them. You know, they were convinced that our Gentile converts need to keep the law, but we resisted that from them. We didn't yield even for an hour.

[28:47] And he says this, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. And this is Paul's driving motivation in his letter to the Galatians in trying to resolve this.

That the truth of the gospel is this, is that Jesus Christ died for your sins and that you can trust that he died for your sins and be saved without having to go through the law of Moses.

you can kind of skirt around it, go straight to the cross. And that's an important fact, that's an important part of this gospel and specifically this gospel to the Gentile people.

And so, Paul is fighting, fighting for this truth. He's trying to do it in a somewhat diplomatic way. then he says in verse 6, but from those who seemed to be something, whatever they were, it makes no difference to me.

God shows personal favoritism to no man for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me. So he makes this point that there were certain leaders among the Jewish church there in Jerusalem and in Judea that were men of renown.

[30:13] They were respected. These were the leaders. They had a certain amount of authority. And he's making clear here that he is not himself impressed by their authority.

He says when it comes to their authority, that doesn't in any way impact me and my authority. You know, you think for most of the people that came to Christ and became leaders in the early church, the apostles were the top dogs.

They were the leaders. And when somebody became a Christian, if they wanted to be a part of the ministry, they would come under the twelve apostles, Peter and James and John, and submit themselves to the ministry that they led.

Paul is very specifically saying, I did not come under them. They may have been men of reputation in that mission field among the Jews, but my ministry is different and separate.

My authority is separate from theirs. And then he explains why they didn't add anything to Paul. In verse seven, but on the contrary, but on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter, for he who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcision also worked effectively in me towards the Gentiles.

[31:50] And then he goes on and one of the interesting things about this whole passage is that in the Greek, all ten verses is one sentence.

Paul is known for his run on sentences, but a lot of times it will take quite a while, quite a few verses for him to connect one verse or one thing that he says with another.

But basically he's going to say it seemed when James, Cephas, and John who seemed to be pillars perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

So he says instead of me coming under their ministry, we actually came to an agreement that we would have separate ministries in which they would go to the Jews and I would go to the Gentiles. He calls these ministries by two different phrases, a gospel to the circumcised and a gospel to the uncircumcised.

[33:02] The King James actually says the gospel of the uncircumcised and the gospel of the circumcised. And these are two different messages.

Now they're not completely different. The gospel of the circumcised was a message to the people of Israel. Israel. And in other places we read in the early parts of the gospels both with John the Baptist and with Jesus himself that they preached a message called the gospel of the kingdom. That God had a plan for Israel to save them out of their sins and to deliver to them a kingdom in which they would reign with the Messiah reigning on the throne and them being the head and not

the tail over the nations of the world.

That was really the culmination. That was the end goal. The prophesied plan. The culmination of God's covenant with the Jewish people.

And the actual content of this message, if you remember what Jesus preached, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. God. And then there's this gospel for the uncircumcised or to the uncircumcised.

[34 : 28] Paul calls the message that he preached the gospel of the grace of God. That's the title that he gives it, the gospel of the grace of God. And it was a message specifically to the Gentiles and totally separate from Israel's covenant.

the Galatians were under this gospel of grace. They were not under this gospel of the kingdom.

And so there's this agreement made that Paul would go to the Gentiles with his message that was, and by the way, these messages, are they completely different?

No, in fact, they're really mostly the same except for a few important details, important enough that Paul is bringing this out.

And they're the same way. We're both preaching Jesus Christ, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Peter preached that. Paul preached that.

[35 : 33] That salvation comes through Christ alone. Peter preached that. Paul preached that. But we do see a difference when it comes to the law of Moses.

In fact, this same James that is the leader here in the Jerusalem church, and by the way, this is most likely, we know that it's not James, the brother of John, because James at this point was killed.

He was martyred for his faith. And so most people believe that this is talking about James, who is the Lord's brother. And so the book of James, the letter that James writes in our Bible, is the same person.

And one of the things that we see with James, who is an apostle to the Jews, is that when he writes his letter, he's actually writing it not to people in Israel or in Judea, but people who are out among the Gentile nations.

And he says specifically that his letter is to those of the dispersion. In fact, I didn't write it down, so let me find it.

[36 : 54] James chapter 1. To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad. That is his audience. To the Jewish people, the twelve tribes scattered abroad.

That's who his letter is written to. And as we read his letter, we find some interesting things that are actually different from some of the things that Paul would teach. James 2.

Verse 11. He says this, For he who said do not commit adultery also said do not murder. Now if you do not commit adultery but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So he's speaking about the law and he's actually speaking about the importance of keeping the law of Moses.

In verse 12 he says this, so speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. He's saying listen, you need to live out your Christian life as one who will be judged by how well you keep the law.

Is that what Paul teaches to the Gentiles? It's actually quite different. Later on in that same chapter, James says you see then that a man is justified by works and not by faith only.

[38 : 07] And this passage in James has caused no amount of dispute among Christians about to what degree should believers do good works in order to be saved or maybe in order to be considered closer to God or a better Christian.

And James here says you see when it comes to justification, works are required. You have to do things. It's not just faith only.

He says a few verses later, for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead. And so many people today in Christian circles teach that, well, we have to have faith in Christ in order to be saved, but it has to be a faith that does good works.

And so it's a faith that does good things, that keeps the commandments. And that seems to be what James is saying. I think it really is what James is saying.

But Paul, this is in Romans 4, verse 5, he says this, but to him who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.

[39:20] Paul's very clear. When you have a faith, not a faith that works, but a faith that doesn't work. Not that you shouldn't do good things, but he's saying the faith that matters, the faith that is required, is a faith that does not include the works.

It's a faith, as some people say, a faith plus nothing. And so there is this difference here in the message that James is delivering to the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad and the message here that Paul is giving to the Gentile people of grace alone.

We actually see that this agree, because they make this agreement, right, that, well, Paul, you'll go to the Gentile and us Jews, we're going to continue to go to the Jewish people, to the circumcised people.

Paul takes a few more missionary journeys through the Roman Empire, and then he actually, finally, this is before he's arrested and is sent up to Rome for a trial.

He goes to Jerusalem for a final time, and he meets with James again. This is in Acts 21. Go ahead and turn there. Acts 21.

[40:37] He meets up with James again, and he takes the opportunity to share with James how his ministry among the Gentiles has been going.

Now, they had made an agreement. Paul, you're going to go to the Gentiles. We're going to stick with the Jewish people here. They even sent out a letter, if you read in Acts 15, to kind of solidify the agreement that they had made.

Hey, Paul, we're going to send this letter with you and Barnabas, and we're actually going to send some of our own guys, just so they know it's legit. And the letter is going to tell them, hey, you guys, you Gentiles who believe, you don't have to keep the law of Moses.

Now, they did say, well, there's a few things we'd like you to do just to not offend the Jewish people out among the Gentiles. So if you would do that, that'd be great, but you don't have to keep the law. And so Paul comes back for the final time to share his ministry among the Gentiles. This is what he said, Acts 21, 19. When he agreed to them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

[41:44] And when they heard it, and they as the Jewish apostles, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, you see, brother, how many myriad of Jews there are who have believed.

So they're saying, yeah, you've had so much success there. We've had some success here in Israel too, in Jerusalem. And then they continue on. And they are all zealous for the law.

And so Paul, are his believers zealous for the law? Well, no. They have no obligation to keep the law of Moses. But for these Jewish believers in Judea and Jerusalem, they are zealous for the law of Moses.

And then he continues on, but they have heard, they've been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to their custom.

There was this accusation that Paul was receiving that, well, you know, we made this agreement that you go to the Gentiles. You tell them that they don't have to keep the law, but some people have heard that you're also saying the same thing to the Jews out there who live among the Gentiles.

[42:56] That wasn't part of our agreement. And so they eventually, and we won't get into the details, but they had him do this ritual in order to kind of prove that he wasn't doing that that he was accused of.

But what we find here is that the Jewish apostles continued to preach only, they preached Jesus, they preached him as the savior of the Jewish people, and even the savior of the world.

They knew that God was doing a work among the Gentiles, but he was doing a work among the Gentiles with this other ministry led by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

back to Galatians 2 verse 9, and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, isn't it interesting, he's like, eh, they weren't really anything to me, but they seemed to be like the big shots.

I don't really know because I wasn't really a part of their ministry, but they seemed to be kind of the top dogs there. James, Cephas, and John, by the way, Cephas is another name for Peter, so he's talking about James, Peter, and John, who by the way, if we, besides the letters written by Paul, who are the other letters written by?

[44:15] James, Peter, and John. There's only one other letter, Titus, that is not written by these other three, and then Hebrews, we're not really sure who wrote Hebrews, but between Paul and these other three guys, we're basically the whole, almost the whole New Testament.

I lost my place. Okay, and when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.

It says that these men of Jerusalem, these leaders, these leaders of the Jewish church, they perceived the grace that had been given to Paul. Now, there's kind of two ways I think you can take that.

One, they just saw that, well, God's actually doing a work in this man's life, and we need to accept that his ministry is legitimate, it's legit. But then also, that word grace, that is the word that really is the theme of Paul's ministry.

So they perceived the grace, as in the gospel of the grace of God, had been given to Paul. I think you can take it either way. And then he says, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.

[45:35] And what is the right hand of fellowship? Well, this is 2,000 years ago, so there were, I'm sure, these traditions, cultural traditions that we don't maybe really understand too well today, but it sounds like today we might call it a handshake, right?

Well, we agreed upon it. We shook hands on the deal. This is our agreement. You're going to go over here, we're going to go over here, and we're all in agreement. And it's a right hand of fellowship, by the way.

And that fellowship is a word you could also use a term like partnership or camaraderie. We're in this together. Now, we're in this together, but we are, we do have separate ministries.

We're on the same larger team, but we have two different mission fields. I've heard some people, but ultimately, you know, we are together.

He could have walked away and these apostles have said, we think that Paul is a con artist, that he's, he's, he's scamming everybody. But that's not what happened.

[46:35] They agreed. Paul, your ministry is from the Lord. I've heard some people talk about when, especially among Christian circles, when they have a dispute or disagreement, when it doesn't go well, and they say, well, I received the left foot of fellowship.

In this case, they didn't receive a left foot, they received a right hand, which, which is good. And then the final verse here that we'll look at, verse 10, they desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

That's kind of a strange thing. Of all these things, well, you go over here, and we'll go over here, and you've got your group, and we've got ours, but, hey, we want you to remember, hey, if you see any poor people, just make sure you give them a helping hand.

That's actually not what they're talking about. They're not just saying, hey, in general, be gracious or generous with the poor. They're specifically talking about the poor in Jerusalem.

Now, if you remember what happened in the very beginning of this church in Jerusalem, they're all excited. Jesus said, the kingdom is coming, and we need to go out, and we need to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and tell these Jewish people, hey, you guys need to repent, and the kingdom's coming, and so we all need to, everybody needs to be in the ministry.

[47:51] And so, if you've got a job, quit your job, and go into the ministry. And if you have a house, well, because you don't have any job anymore, you don't have any income, so if you have a house, or land, or property, let's just sell it.

We'll hold everything in common, and try to support our ministry, and then Jesus will come back, and we'll have our kingdom, and it'll all be great. That's what they did. And then Jesus didn't come back, and didn't come back, and didn't come back, and all that money started drying up.

And we find out later in the book of Romans, right, that at some point along the way, God said, you know what?

Israel is not turning to their king. And so I'm going to do something. I'm going to cut off Israel, not permanently, but for a time, and I'm going to graft in the Gentiles.

I'm going to give them the gospel of the grace of God. I'm going to make the Gentiles my people for a while. And then ultimately, when I'm done with the Gentiles, when the time of the Gentiles is complete, is how he puts it, I'm going to graft those, the Israel, back into their promises, and we'll

pick up where we left off.

[49:02] And I'll bring to them, I'll deliver to them, their kingdom. But back to this whole issue of the poor, they had kind of given up everything. They had put all their chips in on this gospel of the kingdom.

them. And when it didn't work out for that season, they were left destitute and poor. And so what they're asking Paul is, I know your mission field is to the Gentiles, and so that's where you're going to put all your effort and focus.

And we're going to stay here in Jerusalem and in Judea. But would you help us out? We could use a helping hand. We're really struggling financially, and Paul was very excited to do that, to help them out.

In fact, we read in many of his, several of his letters, as he's writing to the Corinthians, I forget who else, I think it's the Philippians, and he's talking about the collection that he's taking for the saints. And those are the saints in Jerusalem. And so they conclude here, we're going to have separate ministries, and in our ministry, as we're going to the Jews, there's an expectation that these Jewish believers will continue to keep the law.

[50:12] But among the Gentiles, that you are going to, Paul, we're in agreement. They don't need to keep the law. And this is the whole purpose of this story that Paul is telling, is because these Galatians have been hoodwinked.

Somebody has told them that if you want to be a really good Christian, you're going to get circumcised according to the law of Moses. And Paul is making it very clear, that's not how this works.

Everybody's on Team Jesus. Jew, Gentile, we're all on Team Jesus. But we do have some distinctions here that we do need to keep in mind. We're going to finish up there.

Next week, we're going to kind of finish up Paul's historical lesson. He's going to talk about sometime later, after this event, when Peter comes to visit his church up in Antioch, along with some other Jewish believers.

And there is a very intense conflict in which he says, I withstood Peter to his face because he was to be blamed.

[51:18] Peter, in some kind of fashion, through his actions, not necessarily his words, undermines the agreement that they had made about Paul's ministry to the Gentiles.

and something that needed to be addressed. So we'll look at that next week. But let's go ahead and close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for your ministry that we find founded in the scriptures.

Thank you for offering grace to us Gentiles. You didn't have to do that. You could have just kept the Jewish people your special people. But you raised up Paul to take this gospel, this gospel of grace, that we could trust in Jesus Christ, have all of our sins forgiven without having to do any of these rituals or works of the law of Moses.

And we're so grateful for that. Help us to uphold the grace of God in our Christian life and rest in that grace that we might, that our whole life would be pleasing to you.

And we thank you for all of this in Jesus' name. Amen.