

2026_10_25_Galatians

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[0:00] All right, Galatians, turn in your Bibles to the book of Galatians. By the way, so when you try to figure out how to find things in the Bible, you've got the first four Gospels, and then you've got the book of Acts, which is a transitional book. We'll actually be talking about that this morning.

And then you've got Romans, and then 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. Oh, thank you. I think I'm good. Yeah. Actually, I'll take that if that's for me. Thank you.

She brought me some water. But then it's easy to get confused about what the next few books are. So people have come up with these, what do you call them, acrostics or acronyms for how to figure out the next one. So it's Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, and...

No, what did I say? I'm already confused. Galatians, Philippians... Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.

[1:14] General Electric and Pepsi-Cola. Okay, so I've got a few. General Electric and Pepsi-Cola. So that's one of the ways you can remember it. Now, one of the ones I've heard, good evangelists preach Christ.

That's a good one because it's a nice, good truism in there as well. Now, one of my favorites, though, is from our friend John Jordan in the back. And his is, Girls Eat Potato Chips.

So, if you want to remember, there's lots of different kind of ways you can approach that, but that will help you get the order right. But in the beginning of that grouping is the book of Galatians, the letter, Paul's letter to the Galatians.

And that's what we're going to be looking at this morning. This is our third or fourth, I think this is our fourth week in this series. I want to start just with a little concept here.

In the business world, there's this book. It's pretty popular. I'm not sure how long it's been around. At least 20 years, maybe 30 or 40. And it's called Who Moved My Cheese?

[2:17] Who Moved My Cheese? It's a funny name for a book. But the concept of the book is about change in business. Change is difficult. If you've ever had any kind of transition, any kind of change in your life, it's the same way in the business world for any organization.

When you have some kind of change, a new leader, maybe a new product, the world is constantly changing around us, and we need to kind of move along with the times, a lot of times.

Sometimes we need to stand our ground, right, even though the world is moving. But when it comes to morality and fundamental truth, but when it comes to other things like cultural things, you know, we need to kind of continue to move along when it comes to technology.

And this book, Who Moved My Cheese?, is about how to do that, the challenge of it. And it uses kind of a story or an illustration of mice in a maze to make the points.

But I bring that up because what we're going to be looking at today and what we've really been looking at the last couple of weeks is about change that happened in the biblical account.

[3:22] There's this transition that happened, and it was very, very challenging. for all of those involved. And we need to understand that challenge, the challenge of change in general, but the challenge of this specific change and transition, in order to really understand kind of where we stand today.

I'm going to go just to a little bit of a summary of what we've looked at so far. You know, this letter, Paul writes, is a very confrontational letter. Paul starts with some, you know, greetings and some basic pleasantries, and then he quickly gets into a confrontation here with the Galatians.

This is a church, by the way, that he helped established with the gospel. And he says this, he says, I marvel that you have so quickly turned away, turned aside to a different gospel.

He says, I delivered to you a gospel, and you have turned away to a different one. It's so serious that Paul uses this phrase. He says, you have turned away from Christ.

He uses the phrase in a warning. He says, there are those who are perverting the gospel of Christ. And it's so serious to him that he says, those who are perverting the gospel, those who are troubling you, he says, let them be accursed.

[4:51] But here's the challenge. Who is Paul talking about? Who are these troublemakers? Who are the ones here that are leading these new believers, these young believers? Who's leading them astray?

Is it the pagans that are, you know, part of their culture? No. No. No. Is it the unbelieving Jews that are leading them astray?

No. Actually, it is other Christian believers. We call them, we use this term, the Judaizers. These are Jewish Christian believers, those who have trusted in Jesus Christ, who are going to these Gentile believers and telling them that you need to keep the law of Moses.

Specifically, the thing in particular view is circumcision. In order to truly be a real Christian, you need to become circumcised and keep the law.

And so, this other gospel, this, what's, they're being led astray, not by being pointed to, you know, some newfangled revelation, like the Book of Mormon, right?

[6:01] We have this new gospel today from the Mormon church and from, what is his name? Joseph Smith, right? Came up with this new revelation, said some angels, you know, came.

And I got these, not tablets, some kind of plates or something like that. I forget exactly how the story goes. And here's this new gospel. That's not what these Judaizers were pointing these Galatians to. They were pointing the Gentile believers, these Galatians, they were pointing them to where? To the Bible. To the scriptures. To the law of Moses.

And so, after Paul, you know, has this confrontational, kind of confronts them on them turning away from the gospel, he then launches into this personal history about his background and how he got to where he is now.

And why is he doing that? Well, it's because he is competing now for the trust of these Galatians. Because they have been persuaded by some other believers of something that is not true.

[7:18] And so, he is trying to tell a backstory to help explain to them why they need to listen to him over these other believers, this other group.

And to clarify the difference between his ministry that he was given and the ministry that these others are a part of. So, his story, he tells his story about how he used to be an anti-Christian crusader.

Not just an unbeliever. Not just a Jew. But he was actually persecuting the Christian church and anyone who was a believer in Jesus Christ. And then God called him.

God called him to trust in Christ. But then also to be an apostle. To be a leader. To be a messenger of God.

And a messenger to a specific group of people. A messenger to the Gentiles. He said that he received his message and his training, we might call it.

[8:21] Not from other men. He says this. I did not, when this happened, I did not confer with flesh and blood. He says, I did not go down to Jerusalem.

He says, later on, a few years later, I did go down, but just for a couple of weeks. And I only spent time with Peter. But I didn't really spend time with anybody else. And he says, and he insists on this. He says, he basically swears. Like a pinky promise. Right? Except much more serious. Because he says, before God, I do not lie.

He's invoking the name of God. Which is a very serious thing. And he says all this. To say, I did not come under the authority of the church that was in Jerusalem and in Judea.

At the time. I received my revelation. I received my training directly from Jesus Christ. And then he continues on with the story 14 years later.

[9:26] And he said, now that he is a full-fledged apostle, he's received his training. And he goes again to Jerusalem. This time, he's not going to receive any more training or to join with them.

In their ministry. But he goes down to Jerusalem. Or up to Jerusalem, as he calls it. To explain his ministry to them.

To explain what he's doing among the Gentiles. And ultimately, to settle a dispute. Because he had already had this scenario in which some people.

Some men from James. Men from the churches of Judea. Had come up to Antioch. Which was his home base. And had told the believers there that they must be circumcised in order to be saved.

That's Acts chapter 15. Verse 1. And so, they have this counsel. He goes down. He's quite careful. He treads carefully. But he wants to settle this dispute.

[10 : 34] And at the end of this meeting. He says, I received the right hand of fellowship from them. So, they accepted him and his ministry as legitimate.

And they also agreed on a couple of things. One. That the Gentiles do not have to circumcise. Nor keep the law of Moses.

In fact, Paul had specifically brought down one of his converts. Somebody who was working with him in the ministry. A man named Titus. Who was a Gentile.

An uncircumcised Gentile. And he brought him down with him to Jerusalem. As a test case.

Because he says. As he's telling the story.

That through all of this. Titus was not compelled to become circumcised. And so, that was kind of proof positive. When he came back to Antioch.

[11 : 34] Hey guys. Titus is still whole. So to speak. Excuse me. And, you know. This is proof of our agreement.

That, you know. It's not just me. But even the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Have agreed that you Gentiles do not have to keep the law. But there was another part of this agreement.

And it was this. That they said. Alright, Paul. Your ministry is to the Gentiles. And our ministry is to the Jewish people.

So you will go to the Gentiles. And we will go to the Jews. It actually says this. This is in Galatians chapter 2. Verse 7. 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.

[12 : 28] For the apostleship to the circumcised. Also worked effectively in me. Toward the Gentiles. And then in verse 9 he says. That we should go to the Gentiles.

And they to the circumcised. So Paul had a message to the Gentile people. That was. He calls a message. Or at the gospel for the uncircumcised.

And Peter. Had a message to the Jewish people. Which he called the gospel. To the circumcised.

And they agreed. That we will have separate ministries. Separate kind of missionary fields.

We might call it today. And so really. We kind of see that there are. Not just two different mission fields. But even two. Somewhat different messages.

Not completely different. They're both preaching Christ. And him crucified. And resurrected. Repent it. But. What the Jewish believers.

[13 : 32] Have been preaching. This whole time. And are continuing to preach. Is the gospel of the kingdom. That is what. That is what Jesus preached. The gospel of the kingdom. Repent. For the kingdom of God.

Is at hand. And there was this. Thing that had been prophesied. That God would restore. The Jewish people. To their kingdom. To the great kingdom. That they had at one.

One time. And that kingdom. Would be restored. They would be the head. Over all the nations of the earth. And not the tail. But Paul had been raised up.

To go to the Gentiles. And to give them. A message of the gospel. Which is. Jesus Christ. And him crucified. God. But that did not.

Include. A kingdom. Or. Specifically. The law. The. The Gentile people. Did not come to God.

Through the law of Moses.

[14 : 27] But as it were. Kind of. Around it. They. Bypassed. This whole. Law of Moses thing. So this is where. We're at. Today.

We're going to be looking at a. Confrontation. That comes later. Between. Peter. And. Paul. You know.

What we read last week. Was. Paul. And. I am convinced. That during this message. I'm going to mix up. Peter and Paul. Because they both start.

With the same letter. But I'm going to try to. Try to keep it clear. Paul. Went. Up to. Jerusalem. He says. That was. Kind of the. Home base. For.

The Jewish. Christian. Church. Now. Peter. He's going. Down to. Antioch. Which is. Kind of the home base. For this.

[15 : 22] For. For Peter. And. Excuse me. For Paul. And his ministry. And there is some behavior. That Paul observes here. From Peter. That really gets him. Upset.

And he confronts. Peter. Dramatically. You know. While he was in Jerusalem. Paul. Treads somewhat carefully. He says. He was careful. And kind of.

How he interacted. Because he didn't want to. He says. That I might not have run. In vain. In vain. He was concerned. About that. It seems. That Paul. Is no longer. Concerned. About.

How. His. You know. How his. Interaction. With Peter. Might. Impact. Things. He's not treading. Nearly as carefully. As he was. Before. But let's go ahead.

And read this passage. We're actually going to read. Through Galatians 2. 11 through 16. And then go through. Verse by verse. And look at this. So Galatians 2. Verse 11. Now when Peter.

[16:17] Had come to Antioch. I withstood him. To his face. Because he was to be blamed. For before certain men. Came from James. He would eat with the Gentiles. But when they came.

He withdrew. And he separated himself. Fearing those. Who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews. Also played the hypocrite. With him. So that even Barnabas. Was carried away. With their hypocrisy.

But when I saw. That they were not straightforward. About the truth of the gospel. I said to Peter. Before them all. If you being a Jew. Live in the manner of Gentiles. And not as the Jews. Why do you compel Gentiles.

To live as Jews. We who are Jews. By nature. And not sinners. Of the Gentiles. Knowing that a man. Is not justified. By the works of the law. But by faith. In Jesus Christ.

Even we. Have believed. In Christ Jesus. That we might be justified. By faith in Christ. And not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law. No flesh. Shall be justified.

[17:16] So. You know. Paul finishes up. With his history. Of him going to Jerusalem. And then he. Switches over. To this event in Antioch. And he starts off. Right away.

Saying when Peter. Came to Antioch. I withstood him. To his face. Because. He was. To be blamed. Now. Like I said.

Antioch. Was kind of the home base. For Paul. Paul went on several. Missionary journeys. And we see that he always. Started. And he was actually. Sent out. In his very first. Missionary journey. It says that. The believers there. The leaders there. At the church in Antioch. Gathered together. They prayed. And they. By the spirit of the Lord. They sent him out. On his first. Journey. And whenever he ended. Those journeys. He finished them. There in Antioch. And then went back out. Again. From Antioch. So. And we see this kind of today. With missionaries. Right. A lot of times.

[18:09] The missionary will have. What we call. A sending church. And for Paul. The church in Antioch. Was his. Sending church. And so.

Like I said. Paul had. Previously. Gone to. Peter's home church. But now. Peter is coming. To his. Home church. Kind of his. His home territory.

And so. He says. I withstood him. To his face. Because he was. To be blamed. What in the world. Is it. That Peter.

Did. You know. Was he like. Worshipping idols. Or. Doing something like that. No. Verse 12. For before certain men. Came from James. He would eat.

With the Gentiles. But when they came. He withdrew. And he separated himself. Fearing those. Who were. Of the circumcision. You know.

[19:06] Peter. Came to Antioch. For a visit. We're not sure why. He doesn't really say why. But he was just coming. For some kind of a visit. It sounds like. He came by himself. Originally. And.

Typically. When you visit. With other believers. One of the things you do. Right. You get together. And you have. You know. Meals together. And that's what was happening. And so. As he was there.

Visiting. He. They. He would have meals. With these other Christian believers. Who were Gentiles. And he would eat. With them. And then. Some other visitors came. Paul describes them as. Men from James. What does that mean? What James are we talking about here? Well. If you know a little bit about the history. In the book of Acts. During the Jerusalem council. We'll. We see. That the leader. It seems. And it's not stated explicitly. But most theologians. I think. Recognize this. Is that James. Had become. The leader. Over the church.

[20:00] In Jerusalem. He was kind of the top dog there. And this. By the way. Is not James. The brother of John. James. The brother of John. Had actually been killed. At this point. But this was actually. I think there is.

A little bit of dispute. I think most people. Consider. This James. To be James. The brother of the Lord. And James. The Lord's brother. Actually. Is mentioned.

Previously. In. In. In Galatians. Here. When we were reading. When Paul went the first time. To. To Jerusalem. So.

Some men. From. The church. In. Jerusalem. Came up. Also. Behind. Peter. And when they arrived. Peter. Changed.

His behavior. He had been eating. With. The Gentile believers. But when they came. He decided. It would probably. Be best. For him to. Instead of eating.

[20 : 55] With the Gentiles. To only eat. With. The Jewish. People. Paul describes it as. He separated. Himself. You know. Makes me think.

I don't know if any. I know. I'm thinking about my kids. They're homeschooled. So they might not be as familiar with this. But. When I was in school. During lunchtime.

You go to the cafeteria. And people kind of segregate themselves. Don't they? You have various different groups. At this table. You might have the gamers.

At another table. You got the metal heads. Right? And over here. You've got the nerds. And the geeks. And then at this table. You've got the jocks. And the cheerleaders. Right?

And you have this kind of segregation. And typically. There are two. Kind of major groups. You got the. Really popular. Cool kids. And then you got the kids. that just, they're not cool.

[21 : 50] And we can all probably self-identify whether we were part of the cool kids or we were the uncool kids. And that's just kind of how the world works, isn't it?

We kind of tend to segregate ourselves in all kinds of ways. But that's really what was happening here. You have this one church that should not be segregated, by the way, but that's what these Jewish men were doing.

And Peter was going along with it. Now, why would he do this? Where did this come from anyway? Well, this was actually an important Jewish custom that the Jews were not supposed to eat with or really fraternize, socialize with the unbelieving Gentile world.

In fact, if we go back to Acts chapter 10, we see Peter, he's actually given a vision. Of the sheet of animals that come down and God speaks to him and tells him to take and eat.

And these animals are unclean animals, animals that he's not supposed to eat, that Jews are not allowed, according to the law of Moses, to eat. And Peter says, well, not so, Lord. I would never do such a thing.

[23 : 02] But it comes down three times and then the vision disappears. And he's like, what was that all about? That is super strange because we're not allowed to eat unclean food. And some men come and says, well, we came to take you to the house of this Gentile man.

He's like, well, this must be what the Lord is telling me. I should go to the house of this Gentile man. And he gets there to the house of Cornelius. And he's like shocked. He's still not sure what's going on. But he tells Cornelius, this is in Acts chapter 10, verse 28, you know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation.

By the way, that word nation is the same word as Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. God was showing him something here.

But God was showing it to him, right? Because he needed to kind of break this, to some degree, break this custom, this tradition. Now, where did this custom come from? Was there anywhere in the law of Moses that says that Jews are not allowed to eat with or socialize with Gentiles?

There actually isn't anything that explicit. But there are commands that the Jewish people need to separate themselves from the nations of the world.

[24 : 21] They are called to be separate from the nations and separated unto God. And specifically, they're commanded to avoid the idolatry of the nations and their dietary practices.

Because the Jews were to maintain a certain diet and keep all these kinds of regulations and ritual laws in order to keep themselves as kind of a unique people in the world.

And so, fraternizing with the Gentiles could lead to breaking these commands. In fact, in Exodus 34, God warns against the seduction that might come by fraternizing with the pagan world.

It says this in Exodus 34, 15, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifices to their gods. And one of them invites you and you eat of his sacrifice and you take of his daughters for your sons.

So, there was this real concern that if you were to too closely associate with the Gentile world, you would get sucked in to some of their practices that were not allowed for the Jews.

[25:34] That you would be enticed to eat this food that was sacrificed to idols or this food that was unclean for you to eat. Or you might be attracted to their women or their men and you would end up marrying them.

So, while eating or socializing was actually never strictly forbidden in the law of Moses, there were these warnings. And so, one of the things that happened during the intertestamental period, this is the period between when the Old Testament ends and when Jesus kind of arrives there in the New Testament.

And so, it's a period of about 400 years. We call it the intertestamental period. And these customs had been formed to where it was strictly forbidden for the Jewish people to socialize or to eat with Gentiles.

In fact, there's an extra-biblical book written by the Jewish people at the time called the Book of Jubilees. And it says this, Separate from the nations.

Again, that word means is the same as Gentiles. So, separate from the Gentiles and do not eat with them. Do not act as they do and do not become their companion. For their actions are something that is impure and all their ways are defiled and something abominable and detestable.

[26:50] And so, really, I think that this tradition that was formed was a positive one, a good one. You know, there were other traditions that the Jews had that were not.

If you recall, Jesus many times rebuked the Pharisees, the Jewish leaders, for their traditions that actually ended up undermining God's word.

But he never speaks to this tradition in that way. He never rebukes the Pharisees for this tradition of refusing to eat with the Gentiles. But this tradition was completely ingrained in their culture and in their psyche and their way of life.

And so, you can imagine why this would be so shocking for Peter when he was first told to go to the house of Cornelius. In fact, not only was he telling Cornelius that he wasn't supposed to be there, he shows up at Cornelius' house and he says, I'm not supposed to be here, but God told me to come, so here I am.

But then, after he finished at the house of Cornelius, he went back to Jerusalem and he got interrogated by his own people, by other believers. Well, what were you doing at this Gentile's house, Peter?

[28:04] And he had to justify his action. Well, God told me to go and he had to tell the whole story in order to justify what happened. So, this was a serious, it was a big deal, eating with Gentiles.

You know, really, it's a good thing for believing people, for God's people to separate themselves from the world.

Even us Christians today should separate ourselves to some degree from unbelievers. Now, not completely. In fact, Paul himself says, this is in 1 Corinthians 5, verse 9, he says, I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

Yet, I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world or with the covetous or extortioners or idolaters. Since then, you would need to go out of the world. And so, he's saying, I'm actually more concerned about keeping company with Christians, people who say they're Christians and are immoral and not living an upright Christian life.

But, he also says this, and this is in his second letter to the Corinthians. 2 Corinthians 6, 14. And his concern is Christians being led astray by unbelievers.

[29:25] He says this, do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.

And as God has said, I will dwell in them and walk among them. And I will be their God and they shall be my people. Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean.

And I will receive you. And I will be a father to you and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. Paul here is telling Christian believers, and these are Gentiles, by the way.

The church in Corinth was a Gentile church. And he's actually quoting Old Testament scriptures about how the Jews are supposed to keep separate from the Gentiles as a lesson on why believers

should keep a certain amount of separation from unbelievers.

[30:34] And so, this is an important thing for Christians because, as the Bible says itself, a little leaven will leaven the whole lump. It's so easy to get led astray by others.

we can lead other people astray. And if we spend too much time and get too close to people who are, maybe would be unhealthy for us, they can end up leading us astray.

So we need to be careful about the friends that we choose, the people that we spend time with. Again, inviting a colleague from work over for lunch or for dinner with the family, there's nothing wrong with that.

But if every night you're going out and hanging out with, you know, the unbelievers at the bar, eventually, right, that's going to catch up with you. That's going to have an impact on you.

So we need to be careful how we socialize. So, but in the past, right, in the past Jewish world, being a Gentile meant that you were not part of God's people.

[31:36] If you were a Gentile, you were an unbeliever. You were an idolater, almost certainly. And at that time, the only legitimate way to become part of God's people, to become a real believer, was to join yourself to the Jewish nation.

God had one path to come join his family, and that was through the law of Moses, God's covenant with Israel. So to join God's family at that time, you must join the covenant that was established through Moses that God made with the people of Israel.

That included circumcision, it included sacrifices, and it included a whole list of laws and rituals that must be kept.

And those laws ended up becoming what we might call a wall. A wall of separation that would separate the unbelievers from the believers.

believers. Because if you did not keep that law, you were on the side of the unbeliever. But if you were willing, you could join yourself to this nation, you could become circumcised, become a proselyte or a convert, and you could be part of God's people.

[32:51] And you would cross that wall. But you had to cross the wall of the law. But now, something had changed.

Things were different now. God was doing something unique that he had never done before with the Gentiles. He was bringing the Gentiles to faith.

Not through the law of Moses, not by the Gentiles becoming circumcised, but without the law. They could come to God apart from the covenant of Moses.

And this was a really difficult thing for the existing Jews to understand. In Ephesians 2, verse 14, Paul talks about this new group of people that he calls the body of Christ.

God has raised up, he said, a new group of people called the body of Christ that includes Jew and Gentile together. Not the Jews over here and the Gentiles over here with this wall in the middle.

[34:00] And he says he did this by taking down the middle wall of separation. And what is that wall that he took down? The law of Moses. He took it out of the way in order that there could form this new group of people, God's people, the church, the body of Christ.

Yet, old habits die hard. Don't they? What is it exactly that Peter did anyway?

He didn't say anything, he didn't teach false doctrine with his words. And why did he do it?

Well, it says that he did this thing, he ate separately because he feared those who were of the circumcision. Peter succumbed to the fear of man.

That's something the Bible speaks of over and over and over again. We ought to fear who? God. And not man. We always ought to do what is right before God regardless of what other men might think.

[35:08] But this was Peter's, and we see Peter falling to this, right, when he denied Jesus three times, people asked him, hey, you're one of Jesus' disciples, aren't you?

No, you must be thinking of somebody else. It's not me. He was afraid because men might recognize him. So he denied Jesus. And here, again, he succumbs to the fear of man.

He had made an agreement with Paul about the Gentiles being full-fledged believers. But his actions were communicating something else.

Verse 13, again, back to Galatians here, Galatians 2.13, and the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Peter's actions didn't just, they weren't just him alone. And I think we need to take this as insight for our lives as well.

[36:09] When we do things, when we say things, other people are watching and we can influence other people, both positively and negatively. But when Peter did this thing, when he separated himself from the Gentile believers, it caused other Jews and even Barnabas.

Barnabas, if you know Barnabas' history, he was a Jewish believer that came from Judea, but he ended up going up to Antioch and he wanted to find out about this Paul guy.

He had heard that this Paul guy who had previously persecuted the Christians was now a believer. And he ended up getting Paul, finding him and he brought him back to Antioch. Really, it looks like Barnabas was a part of Paul's, kind of introducing Paul to the rest of the church.

And we know that Barnabas was Paul's primary companion on his first missionary journey. Now later, there was a dispute about John Mark before the second missionary journey and they parted ways.

But Barnabas was one of Paul's closest compatriots as he went out among the Gentile world to preach the gospel to them. Even Barnabas was carried away with Peter's hypocrisy.

[37:28] And notice what he calls it. He calls it hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is when you say something in one scenario or in one arena and you do something else usually in another.

Why does he call this hypocritical? Well, because he had changed his behavior, right? Before these men from James came, well, Paul was behaving in one way. And then when these men, other men came, these men from Judea, he acted in a different way.

And hypocrisy is a problem that has been a part of the church from the very beginning. And by the way, we'll continue to be so. We'll never drive hypocrisy completely out of the church.

Now, we can hopefully drive it out of our own lives and the lives of our families. Hypocrisy is probably the number one reason people, unbelievers, criticize the church.

Oh, those Christians, they're all hypocrites. And you know what? They can show you specific examples and they're true examples. They can show you real, actual, true Christians that are hypocrites.

[38:39] And it's such a tarnish on God's church. But people shouldn't judge, right, whether they should come to a relationship with God based on what God's people are failing to do.

But unfortunately, many people do do that. They make their decision about whether to seek God based on what his people do or don't do. But we can do the same thing and, you know, in little ways or big ways.

We can find ourselves maybe in the workplace or at our school or among a certain group of people. We act one way and then when we're at church, we act a different way. And God forbid that that would ever be true of us, but sometimes it can be.

And so we need to live the same kind of life regardless of where we're at and who's around us. The same kind of life. And sometimes it's more, many times, it is more difficult to live the Christian life when you're surrounded by unbelievers who are pressuring you, who are mocking and ridiculing the Christian way of life.

But regardless, we should not live in a hypocritical fashion. Verse 14, but when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, if you being a Jew live in the manner of Gentiles and not as Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?

[40:13] Well, the first thing I want to point out here is that he's saying, here's what's at stake, the truth of the gospel. Peter is not being straightforward in his behavior. He is perverting the gospel. Peter never said anything as far as what's recorded here, but instead it's just his actions, and it's these subtle actions that were subverting the message of the gospel, because it was teaching something to those or insinuating something to those around them.

How is it that Peter was living as a Gentile anyway? You know, some people claim, well, Peter actually, you know, he stopped keeping the law of Moses, like, you know, probably for a while, and so he, that's why Paul says that he was living as the Gentiles, but it's actually not clear to me that Peter ever stopped keeping the law of Moses.

You know, we see that account with, you know, the vision before the house of Cornelius, and we actually look off into the future, you know, after this account, Paul's final missionary journey, he goes back to Jerusalem, and we looked at this last week, but he goes to James, and he visits with James.

He says, James, look at all these Gentile people who've come to the Lord, and James says, praise the Lord, brother. By the way, we've had a lot of people come to the Lord in Jerusalem here, and by

the way, they're all zealous to keep the law.

The Gentile, or the Jewish believers were continuing to keep the law. In fact, he was concerned because he said, some people have heard, Paul, that, you know, when you're out among the Gentiles, you're telling that the Jewish believers out there that they shouldn't keep the law, and well, you know, that wasn't part of our agreement, and so we need to kind of quell those concerns.

[41:50] And so, Paul's telling Peter, you know, before you were living, you know, you were eating with the Gentiles.

So he puts it in this phrase, you were like living as the Gentiles lived, because you were eating with them. So why now do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? He was saying, your behavior, what you did by separating yourselves, you are compelling these Gentiles that they ought to live as Jews. Your words didn't say such, but your actions are speaking louder than any words. Because by separating, just like we see at the school cafeteria, you know, you're communicating your superiority, your difference from these other groups.

It's interesting. He says, when he says, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? That phrase, live as Jews, is actually one word. And it's a word that we transliterate as Judaizer.

Why are you trying to Judaize these Gentiles? Now, the word Judaizer is a bad word. But he here is saying, Peter, you are Judaizing.

[43:05] You are a Judaizer. And you ought not to be. He continues on. And this is the final passage. We who are Jews by nature are not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

Even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law, no flesh shall be justified. He said, hey, you know, we're Jews naturally.

We were born as Jews. We're ethnically Jewish. We're not sinners like these Gentiles. Now, Paul makes clear in Romans that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin.

Right? The law, because you have the law or you read the law, doesn't make you righteous. The only ones that are righteous are those who actually keep the law fully. But he says, hey, even though we are biologically, ethnically Jewish, we're not sinners of these Gentiles.

We even know that a man is not justified by the works of the law. But by faith in Jesus Christ. And even we have believed in Christ Jesus. That we might be justified by faith in Christ.

[44:17] You see, the law was required for Jews. And every act of keeping the law was a righteous act. But the law never actually made someone completely righteous.

Because they didn't always keep the law. And the yearly sacrifices that the Jews made actually reminded them of this. The law was simply provisional.

It was something that God put in place for a time and for a season for a certain group of people in order to establish a covenant with them. Until there came a future time when Christ accomplished a finished atoning work on the cross.

And you know, Peter himself actually admitted to this during the Jerusalem council. If you turn, you don't have to turn there for the sake of time. But in Acts chapter 15, which describes this Jerusalem council when Paul went up to Jerusalem to kind of deal with this disagreement.

Peter tells the story of going to the house of Cornelius. He says, you know, I think this Paul is legit because God really communicated something to me in this event that happened at the house of Cornelius.

[45:31] And I told them about Jesus and when I did, the Holy Spirit came on them. That was proof, Peter said to me, that God is opening up the door of faith to the Gentiles.

And so we need to accept what Paul is doing here. And so this is what he said specifically. Now, Acts 15, 10. Now, therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples? He's talking about the Gentiles, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. So he's talking to the other leaders in Jerusalem there, the Christian leaders. Why would we want to put the law of Moses on these Gentile believers when we were not able to even bear this?

And then verse 11. But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved in the same manner as they. Now, it's interesting here that he kind of points to the future. We shall be saved in the same manner as they. He recognized that the law is not sufficient. He admitted that even the Jews could only find final, total, complete salvation through the grace of God that was through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[46:49] But I think it is interesting and important to note, and I think this causes a lot of Christians confusion, that Peter did, along with the others, continue to keep the law of Moses. Even though he acknowledged that that keeping of the law was not sufficient for salvation.

And by the way, this was the major mistake of the unbelieving Jews, those who refused to trust in Jesus Christ, to recognize him as their Messiah.

They believed that keeping the law was good enough. So they neglected to look for God's ultimate gift of salvation, and to seek after and recognize Jesus as the one that they ultimately needed. And as Paul puts it, they stumbled over the cornerstone of their salvation. They stumbled over Jesus himself. I want to finish up with this.

We talked about who moved my cheese and the difficulty of transition. This whole passage, these first really couple chapters in Galatians, along with what we see recorded in the book of Acts, really is describing this difficult transition that happened during the early part of the church.

[48:12] You know, Peter, ultimately, even though he was confronted here by Paul, you might think, well, they probably never spoke again, or they probably hated each other after that. But you would be wrong.

In fact, Peter himself writes in the letter, his letter, his second letter, 2 Peter 3.15, he says this, and consider that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation, as all so our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you.

He called Paul his beloved brother. Even though they had this conflict, he recognized Paul had something to teach him. In fact, he continues on, as also in all of his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand.

Peter says, you know, Paul's taught us things that's even difficult for me to understand. This has been a challenge. But regardless, in fact, he says this, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, talking about the words of Paul, as they do also the rest of the scripture.

Paul recognizes that what Paul is teaching, what Paul's writing, is actually scripture scripture that ought to be recognized as from God. But it's difficult for him.

[49:31] It's hard for him to understand. In Romans chapter 11, Paul describes this transition in quite a bit of detail. And he says this, he says, there's this transition that happened in which Israel fell.

But he says, this is Romans 11, 11, I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Well, certainly not. But through their fall to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. God had a prophetic plan for Israel that included a kingdom that they would be restored to, and they rejected their Messiah. And so God, instead of bringing the Gentiles to him through Israel, went actually directly to the Gentiles with a message of grace without the works of the law.

Boy, was that confusing to the Jewish people. But God put their Jewish program and their future kingdom on hold for a while. He says later in Romans 11, when the time of the Gentiles is complete, the Jewish nation will be grafted back in to their covenant and their promises, and they will receive their kingdom.

That's something that's going to be happening in the future. But for now, God's focus, God's plan is on this new group of people. focused on the Gentiles, but including Jew and Gentile.

[50:54] And it's difficult because this isn't something that just happened in a moment where it's switched from one thing to another. In fact, Paul says to the Corinthians, he's talking about the law and how the law was represented through Moses, and he says it was represented in this way as far as glory.

He said, when Moses came down from the mountain, his face was shining. But, and it took a while, and over time, his face started to shine less and less. The glory was passing away.

And he says, it's the same thing now. The glory of the law is passing away. It didn't happen in a moment, but this law that was such a big part of the Jewish nation was passing away over this transitionary time.

And it became a challenge for the people. Later on, I'm going to, well, let me finish up with this.

In Romans chapter 4, Paul talks about Abraham, the importance of Abraham, and how all of us, Jew or Gentile, we get blessing through Abraham. But remember, Abraham was declared righteous before he was given circumcision.

[52:10] But then later, he was given circumcision. Well, why? If he was already righteous before, without circumcision, why the circumcision? Why add in works of the law? Well, here's what Paul

says. It says this, Romans 4, and I'm just going to skip ahead to verse 11.

That he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised. That righteousness might be imputed to them also.

And also the father of circumcision to those who are not only of circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised. You see, God had two groups of people.

The Jewish nation with their covenants, and then he raised up another group of people, the body of Christ, without the law. That was confusing to many.

But both would receive blessings, the blessings of being declared as God's people. We are in that second group. We have no obligation to keep the law of Moses. We believe only, without any works, without any religious rituals.

[53:17] We believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and we are justified. We are made righteous. We are made part of God's family. And this is Paul's message to the Galatians.

If you bring in the law, you're going to ruin the whole thing. And later on, we'll see in Galatians 5 and 6, he gets into why it's so important. Why liberty from the law is so important to living the Christian life.

He says, stand fast in that liberty that you were given through the blood of Christ. And there's a life in the Spirit, and there's fruit of the Spirit that we can enjoy if we do stand fast in that liberty.

And so, this is important to Paul. It should be important to us. But it can be difficult to understand.

We ought not to mix the old system with the new. We ought to separate them so that we can live lives of liberty, standing fast in liberty, which God has given to us.

Let's end in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for your word. These things were difficult for the men back then to understand, and can be challenging even for us today to understand this transition that happened.

[54:27] Help us, as we read your word, to understand more clearly each and every day what that transition is or was, and how we ought to stand today.

Not on keeping the law, but standing on our position in Christ. That we are righteous in Christ, and that we can live each and every day with that confidence that we have been given because of our position in Christ.

And we thank you for all these things. In Jesus' name, amen.