

Galatians 2:14-16
Paul's Authentic Apostleship part 3

Introduction: This is the first part of the content of what Paul said to Peter as he publicly rebuked him at Antioch of Syria. We will see the strong contrast between 2 phrases, each used 3 times: works of the Law and faith in Christ. We also see an emphasis on the concept of justification (3 x in 2:16). Last time we looked at how Paul addressed Peter. This time we look at the actual content of what he said.

Sadly, too many people share President Dwight Eisenhower's attitude toward faith: America "is founded in a deeply felt religious faith—and I don't care what it is." (Ryken)

Paul makes an assumption—2:14b "*If* [1st class condition; assumed true for sake of the argument] **you** (emphatic), *being* [pres. act. ptc. ὑπάρχω] *a Jew, live* [pres. act. ind. ζάω] *like a Gentile* (Gentilely; the word Gentile used as an adverb) *and not a Jew* (Jewishly; the word Jew used as an adverb),

- 1) Peter had been living Gentilely, until his fear of man overwhelmed him.
- 2) Peter's hypocritical actions were saying, in essence, "To be acceptable to me, you Gentiles must become like these Jews."

Paul asks a question—2:14c "*why are you forcing* [pres. act. ind. ἀναγκάζω] *the Gentiles to live like Jews* [pres. act. inf. ἰουδαίζω] (i.e. to adopt Jewish customs; the word Jew used as a verb)?"

- Earlier Peter had not forced Titus to be circumcised like the false brothers had attempted to do (cf. 2:3-5); but now he was temporarily acting like them. The influence of his hypocritical example became a unintentional force.
- Cf. Esther 8:17 where the same verb [ἰουδαίζω] is used

Paul reminds Peter of sound theology—2:15-16

- This must continue Paul's words to Peter because the Galatians were primarily Gentiles.
- 1) Who are Paul and Peter?—2:15 ¹⁵ "*We are Jews by nature* [φύσει] *and not sinners* (from a Jewish perspective) *from among the Gentiles*,
 - a) In essence he says, "We may be respectable Jewish sinners and not outrageous Gentile sinners, but we are all still sinners before a holy God" (cf. Romans 3:9)
 - 2) What have Paul and Peter done personally?—2:16b *and we* (emphatic) *have* ① *trusted* [aor. act. ind. πιστεύω] *in* [εἰς] *Christ Jesus*, (speaking **personally**, an individual commitment to Christ)
 - a) Basic knowledge for trusting in Christ?—2:16a ¹⁶ *knowing* [pf. act. ptc. εἰδῶ] (i.e. yet we know, speaking **generally**) *that* [ὅτι] *a person* ...
 - i) Negatively— *is not declared righteous* [pres. pass. ind. δικαιόω] (i.e. to be acceptable to God) *by* [ἐκ] *the* ① *works of the law*

- (1) The Law was not impotent; we are—Romans 8:3
- ii) Positively—*but* [ἐάν μή] *through* [διὰ] *the* ② *faith of Jesus Christ*,
(1) Faith that originates with Christ and produces faith in Christ
- b) Why did they trust? *so that* [ἵνα] *we might be declared righteous* [aor. pass. subj. δικαιόω] (i.e. to be acceptable to God) ... (How?)
- i) Positively—*by* [ἐκ] ③ *faith of Christ*,
(1) Faith that originates with Christ and produces faith in Christ
- ii) Negatively—*and not by* [ἐκ] ② *works of the Law*;
(1) Why? *for* [διότι] *by* [ἐκ] *the* ③ *works of the Law no flesh* (speaking **universally**) *will be declared righteous* [fut. pass. ind. δικαιόω].” (i.e. to be acceptable to God)
(2) Refers to Psalm 143:2.
(3) What was true for Peter and Paul is true for everyone, especially for every Gentile. How absurd it would be for a man like Peter to compel Gentiles to keep the very law he had stopped trusting for his own salvation! (Ryken)
- c) Positively:
- i) Justification is *objective*, not subjective; it is *legal*, not emotional; it is what *God says* about me, not how I feel before God; it is *external*, not internal.
- ii) It is not merely a matter of negatively “not guilty” (as though we are neutral), but a matter of being declared positively righteous because we are united with Christ.
- a) Negatively:
- i) Justification is not the infusion of grace through the 7 sacraments of Roman Catholicism.
- ii) Justification is not the same as sanctification. Don’t confuse the two.
- b) Justification: (see Gromacki)
- i) Its SOURCE is God—Romans 3:26; 8:30
- ii) Its ESSENCE is Grace—Romans 3:24
- iii) Its MEANS is faith—Romans 5:1
- iv) Its GROUND is the blood of Christ—Romans 5:9
- v) Its POSITION is in Christ—1st Corinthians 6:11
- vi) Its DIVINE agent is the Holy Spirit—1st Corinthians 6:11
- vii) Its EVIDENCE is works—James 2:21, 24
- Paul appears to have no desire to humiliate Peter, nor to build up a following for himself, nor to enhance his own reputation at Peter’s expense. His motive seems to be to correct a serious error that has caused many believers to stumble with Peter. Paul can tolerate nothing that threatens the integrity of the Gospel. (MacArthur)
 - How did Peter ultimately respond to this public rebuke? Read 2nd Peter 3:15 where Paul is referred to as a beloved brother.

Take-home truth: becoming a Christian, therefore, means admitting that you cannot be saved right the good things that you do. There is no way to be made right with God except through faith in Christ.

Faith justifies (declare us to be acceptable to God), not because it brings about good works, because it is the means of receiving God's grace. Yet it is not genuine unless it motivates good works.