

Battling Hypocrisy – Gal 2:11-14

Gal 2:11-14; Having been away for a few weeks, it's good to be back

After preaching about the election, we went to Montana and hid under a rock☺

Actually, we went to Harvest U in Chicago and had a great time with our staff

Then to Nashville to see my parents; On to Liberty University in Virginia to see our daughter; Over to Washington DC, down to N. Carolina, up to Williamsburg . . .

Back to Liberty, back to Chicago, and then home

A lot of road miles, but it was good; And I'm thankful for the time away

But there's no place like home, and no place with you

We missed you, and we thank God for you

➤ (11am only) Regarding our return trip to Chicago, I had the privilege of spending some time with the guys at the Harvest Training Center for Pastors

As did Becky with their wives

And it just so happens that they are with us this morning

So would you stand so we can recognize you

These men represent some of the fruit of our *investment* in the Fellowship – the group of churches to which we belong

And given the fact that they're going out *for the sake of the name* as 3 John says, and are *fellow workers for the truth* . . .

They're here as part of our endeavor to expose them to what God is *doing* in our Fellowship, and send them on their journey in a manner *worthy* of him

And I want you guys to know on behalf of *all* of us – we admire you, we're thankful for you, and we praise God for you

➤ I'm also thankful for the men on our staff who *preached* in my absence; Both here *and* at the West Campus; P. Garth and P. Douglas here; And P. Dean and P. Grady there I have great peace knowing that they rightly handle the Word, and love you just as I do

➤ That said, several people have asked me what I think about the election; And I struggle with that; I have mixed emotions for sure

Which is why I so appreciate what Ernie Johnson said a few days ago

If you don't recognize his name as a political pundit or preacher, that's b/c he's not He's a sportscaster with TNT

But don't let that fool you; B/c what he said while sitting with the likes of Charles Barkley and a few others, is probably the best 2 minutes you'll ever hear about this election

Take a look (**Video**) (<https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/justintaylor/2016/11/10/the-best-two-minutes-youll-hear-on-tv-all-year-about-the-presidential-election/>)

➤ Let's do that now (pray)

Lord, would you use this election to draw people to yourself? And direct them to your Word? And get them into a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, Christ-exalting church?

Would you give us the sensitivity to discern hurt and fear in people, and the wisdom to minister to them?

Would you remind us via your Word and your Spirit and your people, that you are

firmly in control? And bolster our faith accordingly?

And God, would you save and sanctify President-elect Trump? Would you do a work of grace in him, to mold and shape his presidency in a way that glorifies you?

We know you can, and trust that you will

➤ Alright; With all *that* in mind, I'm eager to get back to our study of Galatians (**Intro**) Where so far, we've talked about the Gospel and what it is; We've talked about sticking to it; And we've talked about all the reasons we can trust it

All from Paul's testimony; Never doubt the power of your *testimony* – the retelling of God's work of grace in your life; It's not just a story, and it's not just for you It's instructive, it's powerful, and it's meant to be shared

And the end of Paul's testimony, at least to *this* point in his life, is found in v11-14; That's where we're at; So follow along with me, and let's see what God has for us

➤ [11] *But when Cephas came to Antioch* . . .

Cephas being another name for the Apostle Peter (**map**), while *Antioch* is the location of one of the first *churches* in early Christianity; 350 miles *north* of Jerusalem

And the word *but* indicates, that what follows is contrary to what just happened

Referring to the like-minded agreement among Peter, James, John, and Paul, regarding the gospel, the Law, and the Gentiles

Remember the situation? Paul visited them while delivering a gift from the church in Antioch to the church in Jerusalem; To help relieve their famine

And during that visit, he met with Peter, James, and John to confer with them about the *gospel* he had been preaching to the Gentiles

To make sure he *had not run in vain* (Gal 2:2); To make sure he was *getting* it right, and *applying* it right; And they all agreed that he was

And, that neither Jew *nor* Gentile had to keep the Old Testament Law

That's what they confirmed; That the Law no longer applies in its particulars and penalties, to those under the New Covenant

The *principles* still apply, as a pattern for godly living, but not the details/consequences Those who received the gospel, embracing Jesus as Lord, were free; And still are; Free from the Law's constraints; That's what they decided*****

➤ *But when Cephas* [v11] *came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned* [guilty]. [12] *For before certain men came from James* [the leader of the church in Jerusalem, the mother ship], *he* [Peter] *was eating with the Gentiles* [those who *weren't* Jews; which under the Law was a no-no b/c they were spiritually unclean, and it defiled you]; *but when they came* [the men from Jerusalem; most likely Jews themselves] *he drew back and separated himself* [from the Gentiles], *fearing the circumcision party*.

The *circumcision party* was the label Paul gave to those who *believed* in Jesus, but thought they still had to keep the OT Law to be saved; Or be in God's graces

And they're called such, b/c *circumcision* as we talked about a few weeks back, was *the* litmus test when it came to *keeping* the Law; And being *known* as a law-keeper

So fearing what they thought or what they would do, Peter *separated* himself from those who *weren't* circumcised; Even though they were believers just like he was

[13] And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him [there's the word], so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy [even Paul's dedicated and faithful partner in ministry was adversely affected; even he was hypocritical]. [14] But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

How can you expect *them* to live, in a way you don't even live? And won't It's hypocritical; Hypocrisy at its worst

Hypocrisy: pretending to be someone you're not, or believe something you don't

We might call it two-faced in our day; Or double-dealing

Saying or doing different things to different people, in order to gain their approval;
Instead of speaking or behaving consistently and honestly; That's the issue
And as such, it's sin; Hypocrisy is sin

And just in case that's not intuitive to you, or you're at risk of rationalizing it, look at what Paul says in v11; Peter *stood condemned* he says
Which means he was *guilty* in God's eyes, and subject to discipline
Making the offense a sin; Something Paul saw plain as day; And we should too

If you're going to battle hypocrisy, whether in others or yourself, you have to . . .

See it for what it is

Otherwise you'll minimize it, rationalize it, ignore it, and lose the battle altogether
4 aspects here; See it first of all as **sinful**, and 2nd as . . .

Unbiblical – contrary to God's Word

V14 – I saw [Paul says] that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel
It didn't line up with the good news of Jesus, and the ethic by which he wants us to live
Which makes it unbiblical through and through

3rd, it's **contradictory**; It doesn't make sense

V14b – "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

It's a contradiction; Something to which Peter was apparently oblivious, or blinded

Which is *often* the case when we're in the middle of hypocrisy; We can't see the forest for the trees; And need somebody to draw us a picture
Which is yet one more reason to live in *community*; In regular fellowship with one another; Like in a Discipleship Group
So that others can help us see what we can't; Or won't

➤ And then last, hypocrisy is **damaging**

It's sinful, unbiblical, contradictory, and damaging; V13a again

The rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with [Peter]

Showing that hypocrisy is not only damaging to yourself, but to those around you;

Causing *them* to stumble right along with you

And therefore *subjecting* them to the same *condemnation*, the same guilt (**Summary**)

All of which makes it imperative that we see it for what it is, and call a spade a spade
Otherwise we'll minimize it, rationalize it, ignore it, and lose the battle altogether

➤ 2nd . . .

Confront it when it shows

If you're going to battle hypocrisy God's way, you need to confront it when it rears its ugly head

V11 – When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face

That's about as confrontational as it gets; One apostle to another

Which goes to show that nobody is above such things; Nobody is above sin in their life, and nobody is above being confronted for it

And Paul was explicit, wasn't he? He didn't beat around the bush, he didn't put his kid gloves on, he didn't ask questions . . .

And he didn't somehow *massage* the situation; So Peter could save face

He said it like it was, and confronted it when it showed

➤ When it *showed*

Not when he *thought* there might be something there

Not when he inferred something that wasn't implied

Not when he supposedly *discerned* something in his spirit

And certainly not when he heard an unconfirmed "word from the Lord"

Rather, Paul confronted it when it *showed*; When it was painfully obvious

And therein lies the difference between judging someone's motives, which is sinful on *your* part, and judging their actions; Which is sinful on theirs

Or to say it another way, confronting someone b/c you think you know the motives of their heart, is wrong

But confronting them b/c their actions in and of *themselves* are wrong, is right

And that's exactly what Paul did with Peter; And what Jesus did with the Pharisees (Mt 23); And what we should do as well

Not that it has to be *public* every time; And not that we should go around *looking* for infractions; But when we see it, we need to confront it

Lovingly and graciously, but truthfully and firmly

➤ I read a book last year titled **In The Garden Of Beasts**, where Erik Larson described the hypocrisy of the Nazi's in the years leading up to WWII

For years, they went out of their way to portray themselves as pillars of virtue, proponents of freedom, and champions of peace

But behind the scenes, and behind the shine – they were preparing for war, inciting hate, murdering their opponents, and rounding up Jews

It was hypocritical to the core

And though the American ambassador *warned* the world, including our own government, we ignored it; We turned a blind eye

Largely b/c we didn't want to get our hands dirty, and offend such a lucrative trading partner; Which as you well know, ended up costing us *far* more than money*****

It's a perfect example of what can happen, if we fail to confront hypocrisy when it shows;

Whether on a national scale, or a personal one; In boardrooms, or living rooms

Some of the worst abuses of history have occurred, b/c people looked the other way

And some of the worst failures of *men* have occurred, b/c nobody confronted them
Confront it when it shows; For their good, *and* yours

3rd, on the other side of the table, we need to . . .

Admit it when it's true

If we're going to battle hypocrisy with any kind of success, we need to admit when we are the hypocrites

It's not *explicit* in this passage, but it's *certainly* implied by Peter's life

Including the fact that he went on to preach freedom in Christ, in the midst of the very people he was afraid of

And then was a major player in the Jerusalem Council that formally ruled on this issue, and put it to rest

And then wrote parts of the Bible under the influence of the Holy Spirit

Like **1 Pet 2:1**, where he says to put *away* all hypocrisy

And **1 Peter 1:14-15** where he says – *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance* [like his], [15] *but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct*

And then bookend's it in **1 Pet 5:5-6** where he says . . .

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” [6] *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you*

Clearly, he took Paul's rebuke to heart, and admitted his error; His hypocrisy
Otherwise, everything he wrote and did thereafter, would have been *incredibly* hypocritical; Telling *us* to do something that *he* didn't
He *admitted* his hypocrisy, and we should too*****

➤ All of which is easier said than done, isn't it?

We don't *like* to be told we're wrong; And we *certainly* don't want to be exposed
But that's often the path toward righteousness, and repentance, and holiness

And notice, that just like nobody's above sin and being confronted for it, no one's excluded from *grace* and being restored by it
There's mercy, there's love, and there's redemption
But to receive it, we have to admit it

And then last, and better yet . . .

Stop it before it starts

See it for what it is, confront it when it shows, admit it when it's true, and stop it before it starts

Hypocrisy is *rarely* a “first cause” sin

Rarely is somebody hypocritical out of the blue

Most of the time something causes it; Like fear – the root issue in Peter's case

V12 – *Before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.*

Peter was afraid of what they might think; What they might think of *him*

And afraid of what they might *do*; And what he might *lose* if it got back to the church in Jerusalem; That he was consorting with “unclean” people
He feared man

➤ And there's no getting around the fact that we tend to do the same

Like when we make our kids behave extra good at *church*, b/c we're afraid of what people might *think*, if they act like they do at home; It's fear of man

Or how about when you clean up your language the minute you walk in the door

Or smile while you're here, but frown on the way home

Or treat your wife like dirt, but everybody else like queens

Why? B/c we're more concerned about what man thinks, than what God thinks

➤ It's something *I* was convicted of when I first started trading in the pits at the Chicago Board of Trade

I would laugh at the dirty jokes throughout the week, to be a part of the crowd and make a good living . . .

And then decry such things on the weekend, to be a part of the church and make a good impression; B/c I feared what people thought, and what I could lose

And if the Lord hadn't convicted me, it would have led to all-out hypocrisy

➤ If that's you, better to stop it before it starts

Better, to repent while you can

Better, to trust the Lord – to protect you, and provide for you, and bless you when living for him is different than the crowd

And better, to *fear* the Lord (**Summary**); The Lord; Trembling at his holiness, and honoring his commands

That's the *only way* to conquer your fear of man, and stop the hypocrisy before it starts
Fear him, and trust him

Prayer – Father, open our eyes; First to ourselves, and then to others; And give us the courage to fight the good fight

We worship you; And give now of our tithes and offerings, For your glory and our joy

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