



2016: Week 16

Sunday, April 17th 2016

*"The Gospel:
A Line in the Sand"*

Galatians 2:4–5

"⁴But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. ⁵But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you" (NASB).

As we studied Galatians 2:1–10 on Sunday, we are reminded of Paul's passionate defense of the Gospel. Paul wasn't pulling any punches in his defense for the truth, clarity, and exclusivity of the Gospel message. Forgiveness of sins and peace with God is only made possible by God's grace. It must be received through faith, and it is only accomplished through Jesus' shed blood at the cross. Jesus paid the debt we owed, and when He uttered the words, "It is finished!" on the cross, how can we think that His work was anything but *finished*?

1. READ 1 Corinthians 15:1–4

"¹Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ²by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..." (NASB).

- According to these verses (that Paul also wrote to the church in Corinth), *what is the Gospel?*
- How might it be possible for a person to know *facts about the Gospel* without ever placing faith in God and the saving power of the Gospel? Why is this so tragic?

2. READ Galatians 2:1–10

From the time of Abraham up to the first century, circumcision was a physical distinction of Jewish males demonstrating their obedience to the Lord and His requirements for living within the covenant community. Before the time of Jesus, one could never claim to be a faithful follower of Yahweh (the LORD) while rejecting His direct command to be circumcised (if a male). Through God's revelation in the New Testament, we learn that God no longer expects His followers to observe such practices like circumcision, safeguarding the Sabbath, or distinguishing between "clean" and "unclean" foods. At this time, however, the message of the Gospel was being combined with these markers of Judaism, so that a person could become easily confused as to God's expectations for His people. Paul recognized this danger as it provided confusion not only in regards to how a person thought God wanted His people to live, but also how a person thought God wanted them to be saved.

- What was Paul's purpose in bringing Titus, an uncircumcised Greek believer, before the circumcised Jewish believers in Jerusalem? Did Titus feel that he needed to be circumcised? Why not?
- As Paul will further expound in *Galatians*, a person is either saved by trusting in what Jesus did or by trusting in something else. Even in our own Christian circles, folks can get confused about the basics of the Gospel. What are actions today that people think they need to do to "get saved" in addition to what Jesus accomplished at the cross? Why do people think they need to add to the cross?
- How does the Bible say a person can be sure of their salvation? Is there any ambiguity?

FAMILY PRAYER: Ask the Lord to continually affirm the truth of the Gospel in your life. Ask the Lord to remove any ambiguity regarding His love for you and His expectations of you. Thank Him for the *finished* work of Christ.