

Galatians 2:11-21

Overcoming Legalism and Hypocrisy

Message by Pastor Clay, The Naz

Week 3 - October 5th, 2025

[Link to Sunday Service](#)

Summary

This week we continue our series on Galatians, focusing on how Christians tend to drift from the simplicity of the Gospel into performance-based faith. Performance-based faith leads to either *legalism* (trying to earn God's favor through good works) or *hypocrisy* (acting differently around different people). Our *justification* comes solely through faith in Christ's work on the cross, not through our own efforts. Using the example of Peter's hypocrisy in Galatians 2, where he withdrew from eating with Gentiles when Jewish leaders arrived, we can see how fear of others can lead us to deny through our behavior what we claim to believe.

At its core, salvation is "Jesus plus nothing equals everything." Our righteousness is like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), and we cannot earn God's favor through our works. Instead, when we trust in Christ, God declares us not guilty and adopts us into His family. Pastor Clay ends the message with three practical steps:

- (1) *Surrender* our lives to Jesus,
- (2) *Evaluate* where we're out of step with the Gospel, and
- (3) *Invite* others into our lives who can help sharpen our faith.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather to discuss Your Word today, we ask that You open our hearts and minds to the truth of Your Gospel. Help us to recognize where we might be drifting into performance-based faith rather than resting in Your finished work. Lord, we invite Your Holy Spirit to guide our conversation today, revealing to each of us what You want us to learn and apply to our lives. May we leave this discussion with a deeper understanding of Your justifying grace and the freedom it brings. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker (Optional)

What's something foolish that you've done because you were afraid of what someone else might think of you?

Key Verses

- Isaiah 64:6
- Galatians 1:3-4, 11; 2:14-21
- Acts 10:15, 34-35
- Romans 8:1; 12:9
- Proverbs 27:17; 29:23

Questions

1. How would you explain the concept of *justification* to someone who has never heard it before?
2. *Legalism* is described as "working in your own power, according to your own rules to earn God's favor." How might this show up in modern Christian life?
3. Pastor Clay shared his personal struggle with people-pleasing. How does the fear of others' opinions affect your own walk with Christ?
4. In Galatians 2:11-13, Paul writes how he confronted Peter "to his face" about his hypocrisy. Have you ever had someone lovingly confront you about inconsistencies in your faith? How did you respond?
5. A segmented Christian life is one where we compartmentalize our faith. What areas of your life do you find most difficult to integrate with your Christian identity?
6. How does understanding that you are "clothed in the righteousness of Christ" change how you approach your relationship with God? (Isaiah 61:10; Romans 13:14)
7. Who are the people in your life that have permission to tell you when you're "out of step with the Gospel"? If you don't have anyone, what steps could you take to build those relationships?

Life Application

This week, take time to reflect on the phrase "God was pleased to reveal his Son in me" from Galatians 1:16. Choose one area of your life (work, family, friendships, etc.) and ask yourself how Christ is being revealed through you in that context. Then, identify one specific action you can take to more intentionally reflect Christ's character in that area. Additionally, consider asking a trusted Christian friend this question: "How do you see Christ revealed in and through me?" Be open to their feedback as an opportunity for growth in your walk with Jesus.