

**Live like I mean it**  
**Don't be a Hypocrite**  
**Galatians 2:11-21 Todd Kleinhans July 14, 2019**

In this series, **“Live like I mean it,”** we are addressing issues Christians faced in the early church and that we face today.

In our text today, we find Peter acting like a hypocrite and Paul calling him out on it. So one issue we'll talk about today is something Peter was struggling with and many Christians have trouble with today – **accepting the fact that we are justified by faith alone, and not by anything else.**



Another issue Peter was having trouble with here is that he was being a people-pleaser. Peter went along with a certain group, even though they were wrong, because he didn't want to offend them.

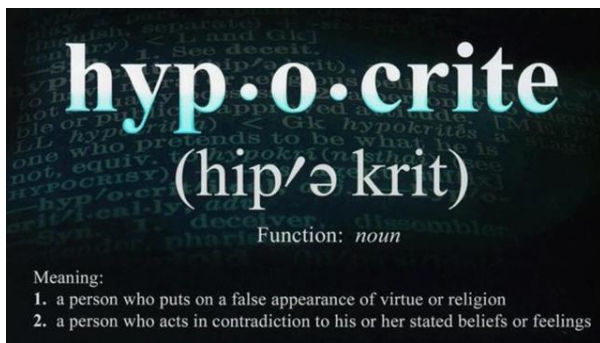
**When Peter and Paul met up in Antioch, Paul got in Peter's face, in a loving way, and let him know he was being a hypocrite.**

From all indications in scripture following this event, we see that Peter took it pretty well and the two remained friends. **So I suppose a third lesson here is that when we see another believer doing something wrong, we need to lovingly approach them about it for their own good.**

But today, we'll stick with the two main issues in the text:

- 1) Don't be a people-pleaser, going along with the crowd even when they're doing something wrong because you're afraid of offending them.**

## 2) Don't be a hypocrite, living against the truth of the gospel.



These are very real issues for Christians today. As we walk with the Lord day to day, we face many struggles. We are tempted to go along with the crowd and do things to impress people, rather than living for the Lord.

**It's easy for Christians to become discouraged by the world around us.** There are a lot of ideas out there. Different groups saying that if you call yourself a Christian, then you need to do this and this and this. Or, in order to really be saved, here's what you need to do.

**It's easy for us to get discouraged in our faith journey,** when we listen to all these other ideas, and get to a point where we question whether we are really living up to what we should be doing as Christians. We get confused and frustrated, and so our walk with the Lord comes to a standstill. We become sort of . . . neutral. Apathetic. Not going anywhere.

Today we see a good example of this. We'll look at what Peter was doing and how Paul corrected him, and we will learn something that will encourage us to stand on the truth of the gospel and live to please God, not people.

### No compromise. Let's live like we mean it!

In **Galatians 2:11-21**, the Apostle Peter was serving in the church in Jerusalem and then went to Antioch where he met up with Paul.

Prior to this, in the first ten verses of chapter 2, Paul visited the church in Jerusalem and things seemed to be going pretty well. **The other apostles accepted Paul as one of them.**

### Galatians 2:11-21

**Paul  
vs.  
Peter**

They agreed that Paul had been called to preach to the Gentiles (anyone who was not Jewish), and Peter was called to preach to the Jews.

We consider Peter and Paul as the two titans of the early church. Throughout the New Testament, these two worked tirelessly to reach people everywhere with the good news of the gospel message.

***But here beginning in verse 11, we see Paul opposing Peter. Peter is clearly doing something wrong and Paul brings it to his attention.***

***Here's what happened . . .*** there was a group at the church in Jerusalem called the circumcision group. These were false brothers, false Christians, who had a Jewish background and worked their way into the Jerusalem church with ideas that went against the gospel.

A little history here will make this clearer. Way before this, in **Genesis 17**, God made a covenant, a promise, with Abraham – that Abraham would be the father of the nation of Israel. His descendants would be known as the people of God, the Jewish people. And as a symbol of this promise God made with Abraham, God said all males were to be circumcised.

***Just as the symbol of the old covenant God made with Abraham was circumcision, we live under a new covenant.*** The old covenant is the Old Testament of the Bible, but the new covenant we are living in now, the New Testament in the Bible, is that Jesus came and became our sacrifice for sin, once for all. And the symbol for Christians in this new covenant is baptism.

**Old Testament Covenant** – God made with Abraham. Jewish people.  
Covenant symbol = Circumcision.

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**New Testament Covenant** – God made through Christ. Christians.  
Covenant symbol = Baptism.

Now fast forward to **Galatians 2**. This circumcision group had worked its way into the church in Jerusalem saying that in order for Christians to really be saved, they had to be circumcised, according to the old Jewish custom.

*They were taking something from the old covenant God made with Abraham, and making it a requirement for the new covenant. When it wasn't!*

We are saved by faith alone, not by works. We are not saved by doing good things, by serving others, by cooking hot dogs or walking in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade.

*We are saved through faith alone.*

**Ephesians 2:8-10**

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is a gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

*It's not the work we do, but the work that Christ has already done in his death, burial and resurrection that saves us!*

These false brothers in the Jerusalem church were saying that all the non-Jewish men there had to be circumcised in order to be saved.

Peter's mistake here, is that he was afraid of these guys.

*Galatians 2:11-12 (Paul writing) When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. 12Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.*

In **Acts chapter 10**, God gave Peter a vision showing him that all those things the Jews were not allowed to eat under the old covenant, were now ok to eat. This began to break down the separation that existed between believing Jews and god-fearing Gentiles.

And Peter began to sit down with Gentile believers and eat with them, whatever they were having, because it was now allowed.

But when these false brothers showed up, Peter began to separate himself from the Gentiles, out of fear. He was intimidated by these guys. He was playing favorites. He was wrong. And Paul opposed him.

But it wasn't only Peter, others followed his bad example.

***Galatians 2:13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.***

***The big problem here, and Paul saw it and addressed it, was that this was going against the gospel.*** Peter came to the point, and he brought others along with him, that they were adding things to the gospel that were not there.

They were saying that we are not saved by faith alone, as the gospel teaches, but we must also add this act of circumcision in order to be saved.

***Adding to the gospel is dangerous!*** We are not saved by memorizing a certain number of Bible verses. We are not saved by attending a certain number of church functions or attending a certain class. We are saved by faith in Jesus alone!

Jesus did all the work. We must believe in him. That is our requirement for salvation.

In verses 15 and 16, Paul gets to the heart of the matter.

***Galatians 2:15, 16 “We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’ 16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.”***

**GOSPEL** – Good news of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection for the salvation of ALL!

**EVANGELISM** – Sharing the Good News of the GOSPEL with others.

The gospel is very simple. It does not require a PhD in Theology to understand.

A six-year-old child can understand the basic teaching of the gospel.

But to get it in your head is one thing, to get it in the bloodstream, where you live on the basis of justification by faith, is so hard. Even the apostle Peter was caving into this false teaching.

When we share the gospel with other people, it's called evangelism. Years ago, a method of evangelism began called **Evangelism Explosion**.

**In this method of sharing the gospel, a Christian would ask two questions. It was a very simple method, but it made people think.**

**The first question is this:** "Have you come to the place in your thinking where you know for sure than when you die, you're going to go to heaven?"

The genius of this plan of evangelism was that it began by asking a question that people felt comfortable answering "no" to.

People were not only willing to say "I'm not sure that I'm going to go to heaven," but they were also suspicious of people who were sure that they were going to go to heaven.

So the first one an easy question, not very threatening.

**Second question:** "If you were to die tonight, and you stood before God, and God said to you, 'Why should I let you into heaven?' what would you say?"

Do you know that over the years, 90% of people who were asked this question, what do you think they said? Many of these are people who went to church.

90% answered with some kind of works righteousness.

*"Well, Lord, I tried to live a good life. I tried not to harm anybody. I never committed a felony. So, God, I think, to the best of my ability, I did what you wanted me to do. I'm basically a good person. So, that's why I think you should let me into heaven."*



***Most people think there's got to be more to the gospel than there actually is.***

Most people think that, "Well, I can't be justified by faith alone, there has to be something more I should do. It can't be that easy."

Why do we have such a hard time accepting God's free gift of salvation? We feel like we have to add to it. Is it the way we were raised? Human nature? We have trouble accepting something for nothing . . . But it's not for nothing.

The work has been done. It is the hardest and greatest work that has ever been done.

***Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God in the flesh, left the grand glory and beauty and perfection of heaven and came to earth to live among those he created. Dirty, sinful people. He loved us. He taught us. He healed us. He saw us in all our wicked sinful living.***

***And he willingly suffered and died for us. And he rose from the dead on the third day. This is the great work that he did on our behalf.***

***The work is done! He did the work and said, "Here, I did this for you!"***

***That's love! That's the free gift of salvation!***

That is the gospel, and we must add nothing to it.

***We are saved by believing in Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ. Faith alone.***

And so all this struggling Peter went through because he was afraid of these false brothers was wrong. They said the Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to be saved, and that's wrong. And Paul confronted him on it.

Paul wrote later in ***Galatians 5:6***, and this sums it all up but also raises another question, he said, ***"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."***

All we need to be saved is faith in Jesus, but with faith, come works.

How does faith express itself? Through love.

How do we love others? With words only, or in action?

***James 2:17 Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.***

We can talk about our faith all day long, ***but what are we actually doing?***

***James 2:18 Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.***

This is not a contradiction.

**We are saved by faith alone, but our faith is never alone—it is always bearing fruit.**

Salvation is not the end, it is the beginning!  
It is the beginning of a lifetime of loving others  
the way Christ loves us.

**We are saved by  
faith alone, but  
our faith is never  
alone—it is always  
bearing fruit.**

When we believe and give our life to Christ, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. God's helper, his counselor, his guide, living in us until Christ returns. The Holy Spirit in us is God's promise that he is coming again.

And by the Spirit of God living in us and working in us, we produce fruit in our Christian life. Not for our own glory, but for the Glory of God!

***Galatians 5:22-23 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.***

***It's time to start living like we mean it!***



***If you say you are saved*** and you talk about your faith, but you are not producing good fruit for the Kingdom of God, then your faith is dead.

***If you are living for yourself***, chasing after your own passions and desires—then you are not filled with the Holy Spirit, you are full of yourself.



***Galatians 5:24-26 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.***

***We are not saved by good works, but when we are saved, the Spirit produces good fruit out of us. Good works.***

Then why are so many Christians doing so many bad things?  
Why are churches filled with conceited people who refuse to let go of sinful habits?

The road to life is narrow and difficult. The road to destruction is wide and easy. The wide road is filled with church people. Why is that?

The only answer I have is: “people are people.”

Christianity is a difficult journey. If you find it easy, something’s wrong.

We are not justified by works, but following the narrow path takes a lot of work. The world around us is filled with shiny sparkly things that seek to take our attention away from Christ.

***He must be our first priority.***

When you find yourself distracted by the world, when you feel your faith slipping, when you are tempted to do something selfish because of your sinful nature . . .

***If you feel like Peter***, a disciple of Jesus, a leader in the early church, and you’re maybe worried about what people will think. Don’t want to offend anyone. Turning into a hypocrite because he was afraid of a certain group.

When you find yourself sitting in church every week but not really doing anything useful for the Lord in your life, lulled into this kind of apathetic neutral zone where you'd rather just do nothing instead of doing anything good for the Kingdom of God, something that might require a little effort or hard work on your part . . . the word of God can be very encouraging.

***Memorize this verse and say it out loud whenever you feel discouraged:***

***Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”***

***As Christians, we are not our own. We live for Christ. We work for him. We serve, we love, we . . . ACT. It takes work.***

Spend time with other believers, pray and encourage each other. Actively take steps to grow closer to the Lord. These are things we need to DO. **Christianity is not something we can live out from a recliner in our living room. When your faith grows, the works will follow.**

Change your priorities. Read, study, pray, serve, love.

***Live like you mean it!***

