

2020-2021 Bible Study

#16

1/19/21

Review of our Last Class

- At our last meeting, we began with an overview of what was going on as they worshipped in the early house churches
- We saw that they used the Old Testament scriptures and as they arrived, the letters of Paul to these churches in their liturgy (it was not until later before copies of the Gospel arrived)
- We then went back to the end of **Acts 18** to establish Paul's movements that led to the end of his second missionary journey and the beginning of his third
- Even though it would appear that he did not address the Judaizers heresy as he passed through Galatia, he waited until he arrived at **Ephesus** before writing to those churches
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Review of our Last Class (Cont)

- We saw Paul establish his authority at the beginning of this letter as he attacked the false teachings of the Judaizers
- In this first chapter, Paul emphatically stated this gospel he had left them was the only true gospel
- He pointed out that one did not need to be circumcised or practice the laws of Moses to be saved as baptism superseded all of this
- We conclude with Paul stating that he was trying to please God rather than man (as the circumcisers were)

Galatians 2

Galatians 2

- **Galatians 2:1-2** *Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem...lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain”*
 - Most commentators believe that Paul is referring to **Acts 15** (when he returned to *Jerusalem* for the council)
 - As we saw, Paul went to *Jerusalem* on his return from *Damascus*, then to *Tarsus* and *Antioch*, on his first journey ending back in *Antioch* before he went back to *Jerusalem* for the Council
 - Those of repute where the apostles and clergy in the Church of *Jerusalem* to whom he presented the gospel he had been teaching to the Gentiles

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- It was similar to what he taught the Jews except he emphasized to the Gentiles that they did not need to be circumcised or practice Kosher (lest somehow he had been preaching in vain)
- Paul went to *Jerusalem* to check on the authenticity of his teachings as people were accusing him of teaching something different than what was taught in *Jerusalem*
- This led to the decision of the council

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- **Galatians 2:3-5** *“But even they discovered who was with me,...at the truth of the gospel might be presented to you”*
 - Once again, Father pointed out that the major theme here is about the circumcision Greek Gentiles
 - Paul’s audience here would have been the Galatian Gentile Christians

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- **Galatians 2:6-8** *“And from those who were reputed to be something...worked through me for the Gentiles”*
 - The one difference between the *Church in Jerusalem*, the *Church in Antioch*, and the *Church in Corinth* was the issue of circumcision and Kosher laws
 - Paul went to Jerusalem early on to confer with the pillars of the church (Peter, James, and the Apostles)
 - Peter, at the Council, said in his own words said “what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality” (**Acts 15:9**)
 - This means that none of the Apostles added anything to the gospel Paul had been teaching

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- The ones who modified the gospel were the Judaizers who added the requirement for circumcision and Kosher
- Here, we are introduced to the idea that Paul was sent to preach to the uncircumcised (Greek Gentiles) while Peter was to minister to the Jewish converts
- Father said that this is what this section is about (the difference between the Gentiles and the Jews), and it has nothing to do with Luther's later misunderstanding of "Faith" vs. "works"
- Luther read all of this to mean that one would be saved by what you believe versus what you do

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- **Galatians 2:9-10** *“and when he perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas, and John, who reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship,...which very thing I was eager to do”*
 - Father pointed out that the word “Gentile” here means “uncircumcised”
 - The circumcised were the Jews and Samaritans who were going to stay in *Jerusalem*, and the uncircumcised were the Gentiles (Greeks)
 - God first called the Gentiles (Cornelius and his family) through Peter, but after that incident all the rest were called by Paul

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- Paul, after all, spoke Greek as his mother tongue, while Peter spoke Aramaic and only enough Greek to get by
- Thus, Paul as well as Barnabas, a Greek speaking Cypriot, were the perfect candidates to take the message to the Gentiles
- In fact, Paul, Barnabas, Mark, and Titus were all Greek speakers

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- **Galatians 2:11** *“But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned”*
 - At this point, we have a little window into what was presented in **Acts 15 and 16** concerning the council (none of the text tell us everything that happened)
 - Here, we get the story of Peter going to *Antioch* after Paul to deliver the message of the council
 - In this section, we get an interesting story concerning how Peter was acting within a very uncomfortable situation resulting in Paul having to correct Peter for his conduct

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- **Galatians 2:12** *“For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party”*
 - These guys from the “Circumcision Party” implied that they spoke for James (the Bishop of Jerusalem)
 - Peter was happy to sit at table with Gentile Christians who were uncircumcised and did not practice Kosher
 - But, once the Jews from Jerusalem arrived, Peter drew back, acted as if he was keeping the Kosher laws, and stopped eating with the Gentile Christians fearing what those from the Circumcision Party would say
 - We do not know for how long this went on, but at one point Paul confronts Peter over his behavior

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- **Galatians 2:13-14** *“And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely,...how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews”*
 - When Peter initially arrived, he was eating bacon, cheeseburgers, and ham sandwiches while hanging out with the guys
 - Then, upon their arrival, Peter suddenly starts supporting the Kosher laws and circumcision
 - This might have made more sense if it had happened in the Church in *Jerusalem*, but the majority of the community in *Antioch* were un-koshered, un-circumcised Gentile Christians

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- Suddenly, a small contingent shows up from *Jerusalem*, and Peter acts as if they were of a higher rank
- Paul pointed out that the distinction in this case was over circumcision and Kosher
- Paul challenged Peter by asking how can he one minute live like a Gentile, although he was a Jew, and then demand that the Gentiles live like a Jew?
- He pointed out that Peter's actions were important because he was the chief Apostle (His actions were more powerful than his words)
- Paul implied that Peter was falsifying the gospel by his actions

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- Peter was obviously not a heretic, but his actions led to a heresy by promoting the ideas of the Judaizers
- Father said this is why all Christians (especially the clergy) have to be careful not only in what they say but also in what they do

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- **Galatians 2:15-16** *“We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners,...because by works of the law shall no one be justified”*
 - Paul was saying that man was not justified by the works of the Torah, but through faith in Jesus Christ
 - Father pointed out that this was where Martin Luther got off track as he does not appear to understand the distinction that Paul was making at this point concerning “works of the law”
 - It is important for us to understand that wherever Paul speaks of “the Law” he is talking about the “Law of Moses” (Torah)
 - If you grasp this concept, his texts will make more sense to you

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- Paul states that, *“a man is not justified by works of the law (Torah) but through faith in Jesus Christ”* (This is what the council in **Acts 15** is all about)
- This is exactly what Peter had said
- It means that we will be saved by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus
- Unfortunately, Luther did not understand the concept “of the law” and he omitted it in his polemic on what you do versus what you believe (Faith versus works)

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- Father said that most Catholics do not understand this distinction either, causing many to become confused when reading the **Letter to the Galatians**
- Paul's whole point was that it did not make any difference whether or not you were circumcised and kept Kosher, only you believe in Jesus (not the works of the Law) enabled one to be justified (saved)
- No one, Paul said, was justified by the works of the Law

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- **Galatians 2:17-19** *“But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ,...For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God”*
 - Father pointed out that the word “Law” (Torah) appears many more times than the word “works”
 - Paul’s major issues deal with the difference between being saved by the Law versus being saved by Jesus
 - We need to make a note here to **Romans 6** where we see that baptism is the moment when you died to the law and have been raised with Jesus
 - Paul implies that he was “crucified with Christ,” when he was baptized
 - This will become apparent when we have completed a study of all of Paul’s letters

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- Since Paul personally catechized those in the *Galatian* churches, this was all he had to say to them to clarify this point
- This will be different when he writes to the Church in *Rome*, and thus he will give a greater emphasis on this link to Baptism in that letter
- The same clarification will be given in the letter to the *Colossians* as it also was not a church founded by Paul

Galatians 2 (Cont)

- **Galatians 2:20-21** *“I have been crucified with Christ;...for if justification went through the law, then Christ died to no purpose”*
 - Here, Paul was saying that if one could be saved by circumcision and kosher, then what was the point of Jesus having come into the world?
 - So, obviously, circumcision and kosher laws did not save a person from their sins