

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 3RD, 2024 // GALATIANS

TESTED (GALATIANS 2:1-5) AFTER 14 YEARS

Some believe this visit corresponds with Acts 15, while others believe Acts 11 is a better fit. What's important is that Paul has been discipled by Barnabas, discipling Titus, and sharing the gospel with the Gentiles for over a decade.

ASSOCIATES

Barnabas was a well-known figure in the early church, bringing credibility to Paul's purpose. Titus was a Greek convert—a Gentile—and would be Paul's evidence in his case for "grace alone."

- **Disciples making disciples is more than friendship; it's action for Christ.**

CALLED

The church leaders didn't call Paul to return to Jerusalem to give an account of his ministry or get their approval. God called him to bring unity to the mission of the church.

- **Following Christ means that we can have confidence in sharing His message.**

RUNNING IN VAIN

It may seem that Paul was afraid he had been sharing the wrong message. The opposite is true. Paul was concerned that the Jerusalem church may have been teaching a legalistic gospel.

- **The Gospel of Grace was challenged in the first century, and the battle continues today.**

THE ISSUE

"False brothers" had infiltrated the church and tried to force Gentile converts to be circumcised. Paul recognized that they were in the church but teaching heresy. Their goal was to control new Believers.

- **The freedom of every Believer was in the balance, so Paul took a stand.**

THE TRUTH

Paul knew that Jesus had completely paid the price for sin and that Believers couldn't "do" something to become more worthy. He didn't allow lies to weaken the truth of the gospel.

- **Titus was different, but he had the same Savior as Paul and the other Believers in Jerusalem.**

PASSING THE TEST

Paul refused to allow others to corrupt the truth of the Gospel of Grace. He stood his ground, not just for Titus but for every Believer.

- **The modern church is still distracted by man-made requirements and judgmentalism. Will we stand for the truth of the gospel?**

AFFIRMED (GALATIANS 2:6-10)

IMPORTANT PEOPLE

Paul reveals that James, Peter, and John were important in the church but what they were didn't increase God's love for them.

- **We worry too much about what others think about us. We need to be more concerned about what they think about Jesus.**

RECOGNIZED

The leaders did not try to amend, edit, change, or alter Paul's gospel. They accepted it as it was and gave the "right hand of fellowship."

- **The gospel is more important than our traditions and opinions. Will we let the gospel change us, or will we try to change the gospel?**

REACH EVERYONE

The "pillars" and Paul agreed that the gospel was for everyone and that God had uniquely equipped them to go. Part of that equipping was the ability to help those in physical need.

- **Caring for those in need reveals the authenticity of the message we proclaim. Are we making the effort?**

CHALLENGED (GALATIANS 2:11-21)

STILL A PROBLEM

The theological question of salvation for the Gentiles had been settled in Jerusalem, but the practical question of fellowship would be addressed in Antioch. This city was a multicultural melting pot with a diverse population of Christ-followers who received the name "Christians."

TABLE FELLOWSHIP

Mealtimes were sacred to the Jews, and sitting with Gentiles was forbidden. God gave Peter a vision in Acts 10, and he understood equality in Christ. He was free to fellowship with all believers, whatever their background or race.

HYPOCRISY

Peter allowed himself to be influenced by immature Christian peer pressure. And his lack of courage to stand eventually led Barnabas into the same sin of hypocrisy.

- **Even great leaders can fall into sin. Will we have the courage to stand for the simple gospel?**

PAUL'S RESPONSE TO PETER'S SHAME

Paul had gone to Jerusalem and met privately with the leaders; not this time. Paul addresses Peter in front of everyone. Peter's actions were in contradiction to his belief and in contradiction with the gospel.

- **We believe in Jesus. We talk Jesus. Are we living for Jesus?**

FREE GRACE

Paul understood that his skirmish with Peter was nothing less than a battle for the gospel of free grace. On the surface, the issue was unity between Jews and Gentiles at the table. But beneath the surface lurked the deeper issue of what God requires for salvation.

JUSTIFIED

The gospel proclaims that through His death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, Jesus has done everything God requires for our salvation. There is nothing else we need to do to gain forgiveness for sins, enjoy fellowship with God, or have the hope of eternal life except trust in Christ alone. This is the gospel of free grace, and anyone who believes it is a Christian.

DYING TO LIVE

As he rebukes Peter, Paul uses his own life as an example. He had seen Jesus and realized that his works could not save him. He would no longer depend on (live for) the law; he would depend on (live for) Christ. The old Paul was dead, and his new life would be lived in faith, not fear.

GRACE

- God has brought us this far.
- **By His grace, we have lived our lives and experienced all that makes us who we are right now.**
- **Realizing His work in us and through us, we should be willing to respond to His call to live for Him.**

STAND

- As we follow Christ, there will be tests.
- **Because we know our sins, we will want to look better and appear more deserving of His grace.**
- **Standing for righteousness doesn't mean proclaiming ours. It means humbly, confidently, depending on His.**

LIVING

- Christ died for something someone.
- **Christ loved us and gave Himself for us.**
- **We live our lives looking for someone to love us like this. He's here, resurrected, alive, and wanting to live in us. Will we LIVE for God, FOLLOWING Christ by faith? If we haven't died to the law and our pride, we may never truly live.**