

Galatians #7**September 8, 2024****Series: Galatians: Treasuring the Gospel of Grace****Today's Message: The Faithful Wounds of a Friend; Galatians 2:11-21**

Proverbs 27:6 bleeds with love, compassion, and concern when it says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; [who corrects out of love and concern]; But the kisses [flattery] of an enemy are deceitful [because they serve his hidden agenda]. But you can also see the flipside of love and compassion when the writer warns us of the danger hidden behind the "kisses of an enemy". The hope of the former is to bring truth to light through correction. The latter is intended to conceal the truth through flattery and intrigue.

Paul confronts Peter in Antioch. Peter had compromised his convictions and Paul confronted his friend, not with malicious intent, but with truth spoken in love. At stake was more than Peter's feelings, so Paul didn't flatter the highly respected Peter. Instead, Paul sharply corrected the wayward actions of Peter with one of the most important defenses of the doctrine of justification by faith. Had Paul not stunted Peter's serious compromise, not only would Peter suffer, but so would the cherished believers throughout Galatia and beyond.

One of the key verses in the letter to the Galatian churches is found in Galatians 5:7. Paul writes—and you can hear his bewilderment when he asks, "You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the Truth?" Obviously, Paul is connecting that to the Christians in the churches, but it clearly can be applied to Peter. But it can and needs to be applied to many of us today.

We are prone to compromise our convictions. And what is the result when we compromise our convictions? Besides the personal sense of failure by the betrayal of our faith and trust in the Truth of God, there is the sudden spread of confusion, which spreads like the blowing seeds of dandelions on a windy day. Who knows who will be affected by our compromise. Perhaps it will be your spouse and your children. Or it could be confusion in the minds of your co-workers, or employees. When you and I compromise our convictions, the damage is done to some degree and it's hard to ever win the respect of those who have been damaged.

I have compromised my convictions over the years and remember those times well. I can testify to the damage compromise can bring upon other people.

This was not the first time Peter compromised his convictions. On the night when Jesus was arrested earlier in the evening Jesus informed the disciples, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me..." Then in the course of Jesus' disclosure, Peter rises up and declares, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." Of course, you know the story, later that night while warming around a fire in the courtyard of the high priest, Peter was called out by a young servant girl along with some others nearby. Peter folded under the pressure and denied ever knowing Jesus. Then we are told, at the moment he realized that he had utterly compromised his convictions, "he went outside and wept bitterly."

Peter may have been a seasoned apostle by now when he was confronted by Paul in Antioch, but I have no doubt that this tough apostle had a tender heart that broke wide open when Paul wounded him with the truth. I don't think it is out of place to think that Peter once again, "went outside and wept bitterly."

Can you relate to Peter? Do you have such a friend like the apostle Paul who stands for truth, and yet at the very darkest moment of your life, when your compromise is found out, loves you enough to tell the truth? Do you have a friend who will boldly and lovingly wound you in order to spare you further degeneration into compromise? I pray you do. If you don't, you should ask God to send someone who loves the Truth and loves you!

Galatians 2:11-21 details Paul's confrontation of Peter. But it also underscores the doctrine of justification through faith in Jesus Christ—on this doctrine the church stands or falls! Without this doctrine being held in highest regard, the gospel is nullified, and no other doctrine matters!

Our outline: 1) Peter's compromise brings Paul's sharp rebuke (2:11-13). And 2) Paul justifies his reasons for rebuking Peter (2:14-21).

I) (2:11-13) Peter's compromise brings Paul's sharp rebuke: Compromise of truth must be confronted.

- A) (2:11) The stated facts of Paul's rebuke of Peter.
- 1) It was when Peter came to visit the church in Antioch.
 - (a) I used to think that this event happened before the Jerusalem council. But am of the mind now that it most likely happened after the council meeting.
 - (i) At the council meeting Paul spoke privately to Peter and James and John.
 - (ii) The issues were hammered out and agreed upon in private before the ruling was made public.
 - (a) Whatever initial differences they may have had were worked out privately.
 - 2) But now, Paul sees a major inconsistency in Peter's conduct.
 - (a) What Peter had so eloquently stated in the public meeting in Jerusalem, he now compromised.
 - (i) He had stated clearly that:
 - (a) The Gentiles to whom He spoke the gospel had received the Holy Spirit, the same as the Jews who had received the Holy Spirit when they believed the gospel.
 - (b) That the Gentiles hearts were purified, just like the Jews, through faith!
 1. In other words, they were **justified before God through faith in Christ!**
 - 3) So, Paul opposed him to his face because Peter was clearly in the wrong.
 - (a) Publicly as opposed to privately.
 - (i) Paul's rebuke was justified not because the foundation of the gospel was undermined.
 - (a) This was not a matter of Christian liberty, or a non-essential matter.
 1. This was a core, fundamental departure from **foundational** truth!
 - (b) Matters of Christian liberty and differences on non-essentials, in most cases, do not require public rebuke. A private expression of concern would most likely suffice.
- B) (2:12) The Reason for Paul's rebuke of Peter.
- 1) Peter separated himself from the Gentiles.
 - (a) Peter, in Christ, had been enjoying his shared freedom and liberty with the Gentile believers.
 - (i) Sharing meals with the Gentiles, from whom there had formerly been a great divide.
 - (a) Jewish traditions surrounding intermingling with Gentiles forbid such conduct.
 1. But, in Christ, at the cross, the dividing walls were torn down! (**see Eph.2:11-22**)
 - 2) In fear of the "men from James" he separated from the Gentiles.
 - (a) Fear of man caused great compromise of former strong convictions.
 - (i) The best of men are men at best! When we walk in fear instead of trust in Christ and dependence upon the Holy Spirit for strength, it is then that we are most at risk.
- C) (2:13) The dangerous effect of Peter's inconsistency and compromise.
- 1) Others were led astray, including Paul's ministry partner Barnabas!
 - (a) Can you begin to see the sweeping effect compromise of foundational truth has on others?!?
 - 2) Paul had no other recourse than to publicly rebuke Peter in front of everyone, as we will now see.

II) (2:14-21) Paul's justifies his reasons for rebuking Peter: A stand for truth at all costs!

- A) (2:14) Paul's question of rebuke to Peter.
- 1) Paul calls Peter out for his compromise.
 - (a) His and the Jew's actions were grossly out of line with the gospel!
 - (b) "You live like a Gentile"—in freedom! Enjoying the liberty you have in Christ.

- (i) Remember Acts 10? Peter's vision. Then when he went to the house of Cornelius, he concluded that "God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean."
 - (a) This is consistent with Jesus' declaration in Mark 7:19 that all foods are clean.
 - (c) Peter pulled away, literally, siding with the Judaizers, and imposing *their customs* on them.
- B) (2:15-21) Paul's explanation of his doctrinal position.
 - 1) (2:15-18) The insufficiency of the law revealed.
 - (a) (15-16) What the Jews had discovered about justification.
 - (i) The *very serious Jews*, who were Christians, had discovered that people cannot be justified by observing the law, but only by faith in Jesus Christ.
 - (a) They knew that observing the law could in no way replace the perfect work of Jesus Christ in whom God demonstrated his righteousness and through Whom God counted righteous those who have faith in Him.
 - 1. God demonstrated His righteousness by making Christ suffer the penalty of sin.
 - a. Death on the cross. On the cross Christ bore our sins and suffered for them.
 - b. He was the propitiation for sin, and He was our substitute in righteousness.
 - c. But "God made Him, who knew no sin, to [judicially] be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we would become the righteousness of God [that is, we would be made acceptable to Him and placed in a right relationship with Him by His gracious lovingkindness.] –Amplified Bible
 - (b) (17) Paul rejects as false a conclusion arising from Peter's compromise.
 - (i) The false conclusion was that this doctrine of justification by faith will lead people of faith in Christ to live however they want, without the moral restraint demanded by law.
 - (ii) Paul reminds them if we sin, it is not the fault of our Lord, but of the person who sins.
 - (iii) We have to remember that a person who is justified by faith is now connected with Christ living in them. We are new creations. Paul will expound on this in 2:19-21.
 - (c) (18) The danger and despair resulting from a return to works of law for righteousness.
 - (i) The only thing that results from "rebuilding broken down fences" is condemnation!
 - (a) And in the following verses Paul explains why.
- 2) (2:19-21) The Christian's new life in Christ.
 - (a) (19) The effect of the law of works led to new life.
 - (i) The works of law could not provide new life, but only condemnation as a law breaker.
 - (a) "...whoever...stumbles at just one point [of the law] is guilty of breaking it all."
 - (b) Paul is supporting James 2:10 here by making the point not to "rebuild the fence" that God in Christ broke down on the cross through His death! (**Eph. 2:14-15**)
 - 1. Because as he said in 2:16, "by observing the law no one will be justified."
 - (ii) "Through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God."
 - (a) In other words, Paul says that the law, which is good, did what it does: It kills.
 - 1. When he died to the law two things happened.
 - a. First, the law no longer could make demands upon him—he died to it.
 - b. Second, when He was justified through faith, he now is alive to God.
 - i. As we will see later (Gal. 4), the law served to direct us to Christ.
 - (b) (20) The nature of the new life in Christ.
 - (i) This is Paul's philosophy of life: In Christ we are no longer alive, at least not in our own strength or effort to produce righteousness! No! Christ now LIVES in me!
 - (a) When Christ died, we died with Him. Now He lives, we live in Him and He in us!
 - (b) The morality of the Christian comes from Christ who loves me, having given Himself for me, now living in me and through me by faith—a faith anchored on Him alone!
- (c) (21) The grace of God is nullified if a righteousness from law can be attained through law.
 - (i) A sober statement to Peter. If righteousness comes through law, Christ died for nothing!