

Journey Through the New Testament

2 Corinthians 11 – Galatians 2

Series: An Apostle's Epistles
"The Message to the Galatians"
8-18-19

Introduction

In this week's reading, 2 Corinthians closed with final concerns and warnings from Paul to the believers at Corinth. The book of Galatians began with Paul's astonished disappointment in the believers. They were being led astray by "false brothers" who preached a skewed version of the gospel. Paul reacted with great concern for the truth of the gospel and wrote boldly to set them straight. Authorities from Jerusalem had come preaching circumcision (Gal 5:2) and Jewish customs (2:14) among the Gentile believers. This message was contrary to the revelation of the gospel that Paul had received and preached to them. The new believers in the Galatian church had fallen prey to incorrect teaching.

Opening Prayer

O God, lead us into deeper faith and insight, trusting in Christ only for our justification. Guide us with your loving Spirit that we may walk in truth and freedom. Amen.

Faith vs Law

Bible Study Galatians 1:6-7, 11-16 (CEB)

What?

1. In Paul's letter, he went straight to the heart of the matter. What had happened to the believers in Galatia? (v. 6-7)
2. What was the source of Paul's gospel? (v. 12)
3. What point was Paul making by reviewing his story?

Read Galatians 2:15-21, 3:3, 11, 26-29

In these verses, Paul was setting forth a foundational message (theology) of the gospel of Christ.

1. What was Paul saying about justification (being acquitted, exonerated, being made guiltless) for the Jews? For the Gentiles?

2. The “old” Jewish authorities were reintroducing the system of rules and regulations from the Jewish law. What would have happened to the gospel message if the Galatian church had continued in this error?
3. Why was clarification of this issue so important both then and now? (v. 20-21)
4. How can the old system of law, dos and don'ts, help our faith? How can it skew our understanding of how we are justified?

So What?

1. What sources do you turn to for faith development and spiritual understanding?
2. How do you know what sources to trust?
3. Have you ever gotten into a debate over denominational doctrine or other religious beliefs?
4. What makes these conversations difficult?
5. Have you had an experience of moving away from information you were taught earlier or changing your faith understanding as you had other influences and learning? Give examples.

Now What?

1. What is your understanding of the gospel message and the Christian faith? Do you know the basics? Are you confused? Starting from square one? Seeking to learn more? Well-schooled and still learning?
2. What is helping you to gain knowledge and further your understanding of Christian faith and beliefs?
3. What obstacles keep you from drawing closer to Christ?

Closing

Grace isn't a little prayer you chant before receiving a meal.

It's a way to live. The law tells me how crooked I am.

Grace comes along and straightens me out.

Dwight L. Moody