

“Christian Liberty”

The Study of Galatians - Lesson #5

Galatians 2:11-21

Dr. Bruce Bickel

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Bruce: Good morning, men.

Men: Good morning.

Bruce: Always good to be with you. Don, do you want to set the tone for us? Let's go into the presence of the Lord and know that He is God. *(Music.)*

Gracious Lord, for all the things that we are not and that You are, we beg for Your forgiveness. And for all the things that we think that You do not think, we ask that You would forgive us. And for all the things that we do that are not Your ways, we ask that You would forgive us. Father, cleanse us of all unrighteousness. Make us worthy vessels to sit at Your feet, that Your Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth for Your glory. May it be so for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: And Amen. Let's continue our study in the book of Galatians. I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Galatians chapter 2. The passage for our consideration will be verses 11-21. I'm not sure how far we'll get in this. This is a marvelous passage for us to understand. So we'll take as much as we can out of it. I would probably encourage you to bring the same outline for next week because I don't think we'll finish this today. But this is the word of the Lord, coming from Galatians chapter 2, beginning at verse 11.

"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles. But when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force Gentiles to live like Jews? We are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners. Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. So we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

"But if in our endeavor to be justified in Christ we too were found to be sinners, is Christ therefore a servant of sin? Certainly not! For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose." This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

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Bruce: Amen and Amen. We began our venture into the study of the book of Galatians a couple of months ago. Let's just do a quick review of where we are, because we finished chapter 1 and this will finish chapter 2 today and next week.

The apostle Paul was appointed as an apostle for the church by direct revelation from Jesus Christ. Now that was not the normal procedure by which a man was appointed to be an apostle. And so there was a great deal of difficulty, and the church had a problem accepting him because they did not fit his authentication into the known procedure.

So the very first thing that Paul does in dealing with the group of men known as the Judaizers, who tried to bring back into the salvation process mixing grace with law as a means of salvation. They brought the law back into grace as a means of salvation. They were known as Judaizers.

So Paul in his concern for the church at Galatia deals with two things initially—his apostolic appointment by direct revelation from Christ to give him the authority to preach to them, and secondly, the content of the gospel, his second authority.

And we've seen in chapter 1 that, in defending the gospel, Paul says this: that Christ died for our sins and he lives for our sanctification. He died for our sins and He lives for our sanctification.

Secondly, he says this about the gospel. It is not of man, nor is it from man. It is not of man, meaning that man did not create it. Man did not authenticate and evaluate it, and just come up with some nice presentation known as the gospel. The first thing Paul says is that it is not of man. It is not created by man. It was given directly to him by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

So the first thing we need to understand is that he is defending not only his apostleship, but also the authority to preach the Biblical gospel, because it is not of man. And it's also not *from* man, which means that it cannot be delivered by man. Now men may preach it, and we will hear it by men giving it to our ears. But only God can take it to the heart.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: That's what he means when he says that it is not from man. It is not something that man can do to a person. We may preach the gospel. We may listen to it when we hear it preached in our ears. But only the Holy Spirit can take it and penetrate the heart through regeneration. That's what Paul means when he says that it is not of man, nor is it from man.

George Whitfield, the great Puritan pastor in the seventeenth century, once said this. "Someone may preach the gospel better than I do, but no one will preach a better gospel."

Participant: There you go.

Bruce: "Someone may preach the gospel better than I do, but no one will preach a better gospel," meaning this. The gospel can't be changed. And what we need to do is to understand what Paul was dealing with. And he was dealing with a group of people who were trying to change the content of the gospel. We are saved by grace, which we will get into in depth today and next week and in future weeks. We already know that.

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But the Judaizers were coming and saying, "You need to go back to the old practices of the Jews and become a Jew before you become a Christian." You'll see that in Acts chapter 15 verse 1. These Judaizers said, "You've got to become a Jew in order to become a Christian. And so that means you have to be circumcised."

And so the very first thing that Paul deals with is his authentication as an apostle, and secondly, the authority of the Biblical gospel. It is not of man, nor is it from man.

And so now we need to go into the situation where Cephas—Peter—has what I would call a relapse. As we saw in chapter 1, Peter had already defended the gospel and defended Paul in his presentation to the Jewish convention in Jerusalem. He defended Paul and defended the gospel content. Now something occurred in Peter's life where he has what I would call some sort of a relapse. It's not that he lost his salvation. I'm not saying that at all. All I'm saying is that there was some sort of a relapse in his attention to the gospel of Christ and living it out in obedience. So I call that Peter's relapse.

Now what was the reason for his relapse? Now Peter had first of all embraced the Gentiles who had come to saving faith. We saw that in previous verses in chapter 1 and chapter 2, verses 1-11, where he was eating with the Gentiles, which meant that this was a form of acceptance. He accepted them into the body of Christ because they had faith in the Person and work of Christ, and he was enjoying what we would call a love feast in fellowship with these Gentiles. And a group of Judaizers came from Judea. You can read about that in Acts chapter 15, verses 1 and 9. They came and were trying to interject into the gospel of grace the law, which said that you've got to be circumcised first in order to become a Christian. So all of a sudden, Peter removes himself from the Gentiles. He accepted the Gentiles by having fellowship with them and eating with them. That was a sign of his acceptance. All of a sudden, he got pressure from these Judaizers—the circumcision crowd, as it is referred to in the Scripture—and all of a sudden, he removes himself from them and begins to have a bit of a relapse.

The reason was that Peter went from freedom to fear. He had freedom in Christ, freedom and liberty in Christ, and he ate with the Gentiles, which meant that he accepted them. But then the opposition arrived. Turn with me to Acts chapter 15. You might want to hold your finger on that. I think Ted went through some of this last week with you, and he did a good job. Ted, thank you, sir.

Ted: You're welcome.

Bruce: Acts chapter 15. *"But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'"*

That's what they were trying to do. They were trying to bring back the ancient traditions of Judaism, mixing them with the gospel of grace and changing the content of the gospel.

Now Peter has a little bit of a relapse. And so he went from what I would call his freedom in Christ to fear of nonacceptance. It's not peer pressure; it's fear of nonacceptance. These Judaizers came from Judea. And he began to fear the nonacceptance that he had with them. So he removed himself from the fellowship of the Gentiles. So he went from what I would call freedom to fear.

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Now there is a wonderful verse in Proverbs that gives us a warning about this. Look at Proverbs 29 verse 25. *“The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.”* The fear of man lays a snare.

Now what Peter suffered was this. He felt the pressure from another group of people because of the stand that he had taken, accepting the Gentiles. And with these Judaizers, he had a fear of not being accepted. It's not the fear of pressure. It's the fear of nonacceptance. That's what kids go through. Who do they want to be accepted by?

Participant: Their peers.

Bruce: It's not peer pressure. It's the fear of nonacceptance. I will not be accepted by my group. Therefore I'm going to change. That's what Peter did. He feared the nonacceptance of that group, that they would not take a liking to him, so he removed himself from the Gentiles.

Now that's where Paul comes in and says, "Peter, there's something amiss." And so the reason was what I would call the fear of nonacceptance that Peter went through.

And what's the result of this? Well, we saw a couple of things in our passage.

First, *it destroyed the peace that he had in his fellowship with the Gentiles*, these believers. Second, we saw in our passage that *it made him a hypocrite*. He was saying one thing and living out something else. He was saying that the Gentiles are accepted in Christ because of their faith in Christ. But now he's saying, "No. These Judaizers have come along and now we need to do something else. We need to mix the law back into grace as a means of salvation." And so he became a hypocrite at that point.

And also, notice Barnabas. He confused Barnabas and led other people astray.

Now there's some insight for us here and we have to be very careful. We have to be very, very careful about the hypocrisy that we have as Christians. We say one thing and we live another way. That's exactly what Peter did. He was saying one thing about the salvation process and he lived out something differently. That causes confusion. It leads people astray. We have to be very, very careful that when we talk about the Person and work of Christ and salvation by grace that we live that out.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Not only are you saved by grace, but you are maintained by grace. We need to make sure that we do not have people understand that we are maintained by works. Works are the evidence of saving faith. They do not produce saving faith. We need to be careful that we do not have the same relapse that Peter did because of the pressure from outsiders. Do you understand how that works? When we trust man, it lays a snare. But those who put their trust in God are safe. We can learn a great applicational lesson from Peter's life.

But now, what is Paul's response to this? And this is where it gets really wonderful and very interesting. Paul was a man of great courage.

Well first of all, we need to understand Peter. Peter was a man of great emotion. He was a man who just responded at the top of a hat. Notice that he was the one who denied Jesus. He was the one who drew the sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's slave. He was very impulsive. And so here you see the impulsiveness of Peter and his relapse

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because of the pressure of the outsiders and the Judaizers who were coming so that he would be accepted by them. So he went from freedom to fear.

Men, we have to be very careful of that. We have to be careful that we don't go from freedom in Christ, the liberty that we have in Christ, to fear of what people are going to think or what people are going to say. That may require some courage on our part, to be careful of not having a personal relapse ourselves.

So Paul comes along and he takes on Peter, and he begins to deal with several issues. And this particular passage of Scripture and the rest of this letter deals with the liberty that we have in Christ. From this portion on, from verse 11 of this chapter all the way to the end of the book, the whole theme becomes liberty in Christ. And as I look at this passage, men, I think there are five insights that we can gain. Paul's response to Peter deals with five doctrinal issues that are critical for us as the result of Peter's separation from the Gentiles. There are five issues for us to take a look at. And we need to ask ourselves, "Do I fall into any of these things?"

First of all, this. First of all, I think the thing that Peter violated was *the unity of the church*, the Church with a capital c, the universal church—not the local church, but the unity of the big Church, the universal Church.

If you look at Galatians 3 verse 28, God's people are one people. We are one people. There are no racial differences. Now granted, there are unique differences between men and women and their responsibilities. But there is no racial difference between believers in Christ. And one thing that Peter did first of all was that he violated the whole concept of the universal body of Christ, because we are all one in Christ.

Look at Acts chapter 15 verse 9. This is what Peter said previously. Look at verse 8. *"And God who knows the heart bore witness to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us. And He made no distinction between us and them, having transformed their hearts by faith."*

Now Peter had already said that there's no difference. And all of a sudden, he's acting out that there is a difference because of the pressure that he felt from the Judaizers. So the first thing that I see that I think Peter violated was the whole concept of the universal body of Christ. He was distinguishing one brother from another brother. We are part of the body of Christ, the universal church.

Go to Ephesians chapter 1, please, to help us understand why we have one body in Christ. Just listen to this wonderful description of the body of Christ.

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace as He has blessed us in the Beloved."

What a wonderful passage to describe the universal body of Christ! I had a wonderful reminder of this as I was preparing this message today. Yesterday I got a call from my

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friend Tin in Vietnam. He has come across a way to call me on the phone without costing him anything. *(Laughter.)*

Participant: Collect! *(Laughter.)*

Bruce: I'll check my phone bill. It might be collect. *(Laughter.)* But he has called me about three times this week. And he said, "I can talk to you now free." And so we've been talking.

It's a wonderful reminder that we are members of the body of Christ.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: It's not just us here in the Barn.

Participant: That's right.

Bruce: We're members of a large body, the universal body of Christ. And it's just a wonderful reminder that he's a brother in Christ. And why is it that he's a brother in Christ? It's because we all have the same heavenly Father. It's all because of what we've just read in Ephesians chapter 1, verses 1-6. He has predestined us to be adopted as sons! That means that we have the same heavenly Father. And the unifying issue that we have with all believers worldwide is the fact that you and I have the same heavenly Father!

One of the nice little gestures that Tin mentioned on the phone yesterday—and I don't mean to embarrass Don!—but he said, "My wife wants to talk to you to hear your voice." And so in very broken English she was telling me how I'm in her heart. And they get up early and they pray for the Brave Men. Get this now! Every morning at 5 a.m. in Vietnam, he and his wife get up and pray for the Brave Men of Friday.

Participant: Beautiful! Wow! Amen!

Bruce: And she said, "I just pray for the Brave Men." And his wife said this in very broken English. "I remember the blind man who played the piano. He was so nice. Tell him hello." So Don, I bring you greetings from the church in Vietnam. Men, we're members of something bigger than ourselves.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: It's the universal body of Christ.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: And may it be so that we understand that when we are praying for ourselves, we are praying for the body of Christ. And that means this: that you and I have no right to offer any prayer that could damage the universal body of Christ. We have no right to offer any prayer that would damage anybody in the body of Christ. We're part of a universal context because we've been adopted because of His predestination to be adopted as sons in Christ Jesus.

So the very first thing that I think that Peter violated in his relapse was the unity of the church. We see that in verse 14 of chapter 2.

Secondly, in his relapse, I think he violated the understanding of *justification by faith alone*—verses 15 and 16. Now this is probably the very first mention of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. If this is the very first book that Paul wrote, the book of Galatians, which we think it is, then it's the very first message of justification by faith alone, which contains a great deal of effort in the rest of all of the Scriptures.

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In fact, if you look at Job chapter 9 verse 2,—perhaps the oldest book in the Bible—he asks this question. *“But how can a man be right before God?”* How can a man be justified before God? That was the ancient question. And the answer to that is found in Habakkuk 2:4. *“The just shall live by faith”* is God's answer. That was the question in ancient days. And the answer in ancient days was that the just shall live by faith, justification by faith alone. And I think that Peter began to have a relapse as he was basically beginning to say that you must add law to grace as a means of salvation, violating the whole concept of justification by faith alone.

It's interesting that three New Testament books explain it this way. Would somebody read 1:17 of Romans. I'm going to have you read these verses because I want you to be able to know them and find them yourself. Would somebody read Romans chapter 1, verse 17?

Participant: *“For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”*

Bruce: Okay. How about Galatians chapter 3, verse 11?

Participant: *“Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for ‘the righteous shall live by faith.’”*

Bruce: And how about Hebrews 10:38?

Participant: *“But My righteous one shall live by faith. And if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”*

Bruce: Now do you begin to see the consistency of all the Scripture? It's this—justification by faith alone. And this is the first incidence where it appears in Scripture, in the book of Galatians. And Paul will deal with that in the rest of these books that we're going to study. But you begin to see the importance of it now in all the other aspects of the Biblical revelation.

Now what do we mean by justification? We've talked about this before. But it's basically this. Justification is an act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous in Christ Jesus. There are two things we need to understand. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. Imputation means that it's credited to us. You and I get credit for the sinless perfection and sinless obedience of Christ. It is imputed to us. It's the doctrine of imputation. We are credited with that. That's how God looks at us. He declares you sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient. He doesn't say that you are. He says, “This is how I view you.” He declares you to be sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient because of the righteousness of Christ.

Secondly, it's also that not only is Christ's righteousness imputed to us. He has also implanted it to us. It's imparted to us by the working of the Holy Spirit.

Let's go to Romans chapter 6. Not only is it imputed to us—credited to us,—but it's also imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, which means this. You are now able to live in the righteousness of Christ Jesus. It's not your own righteousness. It's an alien righteousness, a righteousness outside of yourself. You are now able to live in that righteousness because it has now been imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. Let's go to Romans chapter 6, please. Would somebody read Romans chapter 6, verses 1-11, please? Romans 6:1-11.

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Participant: *"What shall we say, then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.*

"Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

Bruce: Do you see, men? In the act of justification, God not only declares you as righteous, but He imparts the righteousness of Christ to you so that you can live in it. That doesn't mean that you and I are sinlessly perfect. Nor does it mean that we have perfect obedience. But it says this. You now have the will to be willing to be obedient.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: You have the will to be willing because the Holy Spirit imparts the righteousness of Christ to you, and you're no longer a slave of sin but a slave to righteousness. Romans 6:1-11 is a marvelous passage to help us understand the implications of the Holy Spirit imparting the righteousness of Christ to us.

Two words—imputed to us and imparted to us by the work of the Holy Spirit. We now have the willingness to be willing to be obedient. You could not do that before! Now you can, because you've been set free from this life of sin. You've become a slave of righteousness, not a slave of sin.

Now notice this: that justification is not a process. It is an instant and immediate transaction between the believing sinner and God. It is not a process. In justification God does not make the sinner righteous. But he declares that the sinner is not guilty.

Now let's understand this for a moment. He doesn't make you righteous, because we still have our sinfulness. But we get credit for Christ's righteousness, and that's how God views us. And in doing that, He views you as not being guilty anymore. You're no longer guilty, for He declares you as sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient because of the work of Christ on the cross. You are now viewed by God as totally different. And now you have the freedom and the will to be willing to act differently, because now you can live in Christ and in His righteousness. It's His righteousness that now motivates us, not our own. In justification God declares us as not guilty.

Justification therefore does lead to a changed life, because you realize that you're no longer guilty! What's our response to no longer being guilty?

Participant: Thank You, right?

Bruce: Thank You! Gratitude! We have the gratitude attitude that says, "Lord, You don't view me as guilty anymore of all those things I used to do! I'm not guilty anymore!"

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Do you understand the freedom you have in Christ in that? That doesn't give you a license to live your life the way you want. It gives you the motivation to want to be obedient and to glorify God because you are no longer viewed as guilty.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: You're no longer viewed as guilty.

I read another Puritan quote the other day. It said this. "Oftentimes we as believers crucify ourselves between the two crosses of the regrets of yesterday and the fears of tomorrow." Those are the two crosses in which we find ourselves—the regrets of yesterday and the fears of tomorrow. You see, men, when you're declared not guilty, the past is what?

Participant: Gone.

Bruce: Gone! No longer are you guilty of all the things that you did. You've been justified by Christ because He imputes His righteousness to you. He views you now as being wrapped in the robes of righteousness—Christ's righteousness, not ours. It's not my righteousness that pleases God. It's Christ's righteousness that pleases God. And now, the righteous live by—

Participant: Faith.

Bruce: Faith!

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Faith—faith in that promise of the immediate, instantaneous work of God declaring you and me righteous in Christ Jesus by imputing His righteousness to us.

Justification is not simply forgiveness. It's different from pardon, because you could be forgiven and go out and sin again, and then you would be what?

Participant: Guilty.

Bruce: Guilty. But He says, that you're not guilty because of the sacrifice of Christ! We could go out and sin again and be guilty. But He says that you're no longer guilty. It's different from forgiveness. Yes, we are forgiven for our sins. *"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,"* if we confess them, *"and He cleanses us from all unrighteousness."* So it's different from being forgiven.

And it is different from being pardoned. A pardoned criminal still has a record. But a justified sinner has sins no longer remembered. Men, do you understand that?

Look at Psalm 32, verses 1 and 2. Would somebody read Psalm 32:1-2? And would somebody read Romans chapter 4:1-8? A pardoned criminal still has a record. But a justified sinner has sins no longer remembered against him. Would somebody find Psalms? It's in the Old Testament. *(Laughter.)*

Participant: *"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit."*

Bruce: Blessed is the man in whom God finds no iniquity! And why is that? Because you've been—

Participant: Forgiven.

Bruce: Forgiven! You've been pardoned. You've been justified by faith alone. You're justified because of the Person and work of Christ. And how about Romans chapter 4?

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Participant: *"What then shall we say that Abraham, our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Now to him who works the wages are not counted as grace, but as debt. But to him who does not work, but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.'"*

Bruce: Men, do you understand what that means, that you're no longer guilty? Notice this. God justifies sinners, not good people. And why is it that good people are not justified? Because they don't admit their—

Participant: Guilt.

Bruce: Guilt. They don't admit their sin. That's why people are not justified. That's why they resist it so much. The reason that most people and most sinners are not justified is because they do not even admit that they're sinners. Those are the only kinds of people that Jesus saves. Let's go to Luke chapter 18.

Participant: *"And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint, saying, 'There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city. She came to Him, saying, 'Avenge me of my adversary.' And he would not for a while. And afterward he said within himself, 'Though I fear not God, nor regard men, yet because this woman troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"*

"And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which crieth night and day unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall find faith on the earth?'"

"And He spake this parable unto some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men. They are extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'"

"Yet the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'"

"And they brought unto Him also infants, that He would touch them. But when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto Him and said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.'"

Transcriber's Note: King James Version.

Bruce: That's great. Thank you. One of the greatest prayers that we could ever say is this. Lord, have mercy on me, the sinner.

Participant: Amen.

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Bruce: You see, the only kinds of people who are justified are the people who recognize their sinfulness. And the reason people resist the whole idea of justification by faith alone is because they think they can want to earn it.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: They think that it's involved in works. It's something that they can do. You see, the law says, "Do." Grace says, "Done."

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: The law says, "Do." Grace says, "Done." And Paul is taking on Peter because he's saying, "Peter, you're confusing the issue. People are justified by faith alone, not by the works of the law." The works of the law can't do that, because if that were the case, justification would be a process. Justification is an instantaneous and immediate declaration where God says that you are righteous in Christ. It's a one-time act, where God declares you not guilty!

Now men, that ought to change the way we live! You see, the real issue in Scripture is this. What am I going to do about what I just learned? Learning does not stop at knowledge.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Learning leads to living. Paul was taking on Peter and saying, "Peter, you're living wrongly, because you're mixing the means of salvation with law and grace." Yes, Tom?

Tom: I think that what's interesting, too, is that God doesn't do all this and then leave us alone, but He gives us through grace the power to do these changes."

Bruce: That's where we have the impartation of the Holy Spirit in justification. He imparts that to us. He imputes it to us and imparts it to us so that now we have the willingness to be willing. Now you have a motivation to do it! You didn't have that beforehand.

Men, just ponder this! You're not guilty! Do you understand that and the significance of that, it is going to radically change your life. All of the things that I've done in my past and all the things that I will do in my future, and all the things that I do in my present life, as good as they are, they are all still tainted. We're still tainted. Yet God says, "Bruce, I look at you this way. You're justified. You're not guilty anymore."

You don't need to be motivated by guilt. You see, guilt is not a motivation for God to do anything. The world is going to come along and say, "Bruce, you didn't do this. You didn't give to this group. You didn't do this enough. You haven't done that enough." Let me remind you of this, men. God never uses guilt as a means of motivating us to do anything spiritual. He never uses guilt. And why is that? Because you are not guilty!

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: If you're not guilty, how can He use guilt as a motivation? He doesn't! He uses gratitude, the realization that I'm no longer guilty. Justification is an immediate and sudden act, where God declares you as righteous in Christ. And by doing that, He says, "Men, you are no longer guilty."

Participant: Amen.

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Let's talk about changing our lives, men. That issue was taken on by Paul when he said, "Peter, you're confusing the issue." The issue is that righteous people live by faith, not by works of the law.

So you've seen so far, I believe, that Peter, in his relapse, violated the whole concept of the universal church, and secondly justification by faith alone. So bring these next week and we'll continue the other things. You'll notice freedom from the law. We'll need to spend time on that. The content of the gospel will be the other issue. And then the fifth issue that I see in this particular issue that I see in this particular passage that is part of Peter's relapse would be the grace of God.

Now when we talk about the law, we need to understand this. Paul was referring to the law as a means of gaining salvation. The law is important for us. Christ did not come to abolish the law. He came to fulfill it. We fulfill the law of Christ, the law of God, because we have the righteousness of Christ. The law is very important to us and we obey it. But now you have the reason to obey the law. The law is not a means of salvation. It's a means of the demonstration of your salvation. It's the means of the revelation of the fact that you've been regenerated, because God has implanted in you and imparted to you the righteousness of Christ, as well as imputing His credit to your account. Yes, Don?

Don: Bruce, I wanted to ask you something. Going back to your first point about damaging the universal church,--

Bruce: Yes, please?

Don: Obviously, we don't have the same situation that Peter had. I don't think so, anyway—Jew versus Gentile.

Bruce: Correct.

Don: But would we be guilty? For example, what are some ways that we might be tempted to damage the unity of the body of Christ? For example, if we see a brother who is not a part of our particular church or denomination, and we treat him with less dignity or something?

Bruce: Yes, that's an illustration. I think that forming cliques in the local church is disregarding the universal church concept. There can be no cliques in the church. We naturally have a desire to gravitate to those people whose personalities we find more attractive. We understand that. That's part of our human nature. At the same time, we need to be very, very careful that we don't form cliques and say, "Because you're not in this denomination or that denomination, we can't have fellowship with you," and so forth. We have to be careful of those things.

I remember several years ago that a friend of mine was up in front of a Presbyterian church council. And I was brought in as one of the witnesses for his defense. And as I was presenting this defense of my friend, one of the men raised his hand and said, "We can't listen to him because he's a Baptist." (*Sighs and laughter.*)

Participant: What's wrong with that? (*Laughter.*)

Bruce: It was in a Reformed setting, and the gentleman said, "Why are we listening to him, because he's a Reformed Baptist?" Now that's an example of the denial of the body of Christ. That's what I'm saying, Don. That's an extreme example. We need to be very

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careful that we don't have cliques in the local church. Don't form cliques. It's the body of Christ.

Remember, you've got somebody at five o'clock every morning in Vietnam, who is on his knees praying for The Brave Men of Friday Morning. That's part of the wonderful universal body of Christ that we have.

Participant: Praise God!

Bruce: Well men, bring your notes next week and we'll continue this examination of Galatians chapter 2, verses 11-21. Let's pray.

Father, this is such a rich passage, such a glorious passage to help us understand not only the universal doctrine of the church, that we have been predestined to be adopted as sons according to your good will and pleasure, for your glory, but secondly, Father, this marvelous doctrine of justification by faith alone, that You have imputed to us not only the righteousness of Christ, but that You impart that righteousness to us so that we now have the willingness to be willing to obey the law for Jesus' sake. Father, help us understand that we are no longer guilty in Your eyes, and therefore that the motivation should be one of gratitude. May it be so for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said, "Amen!"