Lesson 3: Justified by Faith in Christ

Galatians 2:11-21 (ESV)

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

12 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.

13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

14 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 the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;

16 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.

17 But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

18 For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.

20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

21 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

1) Paul rebukes Peter in Antioch

Paul confronts Peter because of Peter's behavior which was a denial of the implications and freedom of the gospel.

1. Read Galatians 2:12-14
2. Peter participated in fellowship with Gentile believers until Jews from Jerusalem arrived. He was affirming the doctrine verbally while his behavior said otherwise.

3. His behavior was not in step with the truth of the Gospel. Peter was worried about "what other people would think" which is horrible way to live.
4. Paul confronts him to his face.

2) Justification by faith alone

This passage introduces one of the central theological themes of Galatians, that justification comes by faith alone.

1. Read Galatians 2:15-16
2. The Jews believed that they were the chosen people of God and that by keeping the Law they would be justified, includes things such as circumcision, dietary practices, and Sabbath observance.
3. The word in verse 16 "justify" comes from the Greek word **dikaioō** which means to render righteous, to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous before God.
4. Paul says that a person is justified by "faith in Christ" meaning what Jesus did for us.

3) Dying to the Law and crucified with Christ

Dying to the Law means being crucified with Christ. It requires that Christ lives in us.

1. Read Galatians 2:17-21
2. Paul says that he died "through the law" because he could not save himself by the law. It is Christ-righteousness instead of Self-righteousness.
3. He calls it "crucified with Christ" which means dying to the world and living for God.
4. This salvation gives us the freedom so "Christ who lives in me" living by faith seeking and doing God's will.

4) Teachings for us today

1. Paul reminds us that we should live in step with the truth of the Gospel. Do not worry "what other people would think" but live your life for God.
2. Justification and salvation is by faith alone, in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
3. We must be "crucified with Christ" in order for us to seek and serve God.
4. It is by faith in what Jesus Christ did and not what we did to earn God's favor and salvation.