

Galatians 2

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Tape # 8165
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Let's turn to Galatians, chapter two.

There probably should not have been a chapter break because Paul is just talking about his contact with the church in Jerusalem, affirming that he did not receive the gospel of grace that he was preaching, from man. It was direct revelation from Jesus Christ! His visits to Jerusalem were very short. There was a long time between them. So he talks about his conversion in Damascus. And then he was three years in Arabia, receiving from the Lord, the revelation directly from Jesus. This revelation of the grace of God manifested through Jesus Christ. It wasn't until he returned to Damascus and then back to Jerusalem, some three years after his conversion, before he ever returned to Jerusalem.

It brings up an interesting kind of a situation. He was sent by the high priest to Damascus to imprison those who called upon the name of the Lord. They no doubt had a timetable in which they were expecting him back with a lot of prisoners. And Paul didn't show up. For three years he just dropped out of the whole picture. Then he went up to Jerusalem and was there just a short time, talking with Peter. He did see James. But of the other of the apostles, he really didn't see any of them. They had only heard about him, the one who had persecuted the church was now preaching the faith that he once sought to destroy.

So now he is talking again, but fourteen years later. *Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.* Now in the eleventh chapter of Acts, there is a recorded visit of Paul to Jerusalem. This could be a reference to that, but most commentators believed that it is a reference to the fifteenth chapter because the events so correlate with the fifteenth chapter of the Book of Acts.

In the fifteenth chapter of the Book of Acts, Paul's ministry, his home church, was in Antioch. It was basically a Gentile church in the area of Syria, on the Mediterranean coast. Barnabas had been, more or less, the minister in Antioch.

Just to follow Paul for a moment. Paul went to Arabia for three years. He returned to Damascus. He went to Jerusalem. From Jerusalem he returned back to his home city of Tarsus, over in what is now Turkey. He returned to Tarsus. He was there for seven years. These were the silent years of Paul. We know nothing of what he was doing. He was probably making tents and just sort of waiting upon the Lord.

Barnabas went to Tarsus and looked for Paul because of the work in Antioch and because there were so many Gentile believers, he felt that Paul was really the one needed to come and to teach there in Antioch. So he found Paul. Paul returned with him to Antioch and began a ministry there.

That was Paul's home church. That is the church that sent Paul and Barnabas out on their first missionary journey. And so Paul was ministering there in the church of Antioch.

An interesting thing to me that from Paul's conversion to the beginning of his ministry was about ten years before he actually started to minister. I'm certain that those were ten years of preparation as the Lord was preparing Paul for the ministry that He had for Paul to fulfill. So fourteen years later and we don't know if the fourteen years is fourteen years after his conversion or fourteen years after his first visit, which would make seventeen years after his conversion. The commentators sort of have divided opinion on this. We'll let them divide their opinion. It really doesn't make any difference, does it? It's like so many of their arguments. It really makes no difference, just fourteen years later, Paul went up to Jerusalem again.

Now in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, as we were saying, there were certain men who came down from Jerusalem to the church in Antioch because they had heard of the ministry of this church. They had heard of how there were so many Gentiles coming to a faith in Jesus Christ. And these men who came from the church in Jerusalem, said that they had the apostolic authority to come down to the church in Antioch and to inform them that they could not really be saved unless they were circumcised and they kept the law of Moses. And so they were seeking to put the Gentile believers under the law or to make them Jews.

They believed that salvation was of the Jews. They believed that you could not be saved unless you were a Jew. So they were causing division in the church in Antioch. And so Paul gathered them together, he took

Barnabas. It doesn't say that he took Titus, but they came back to Jerusalem in order to settle this issue of what relationship the Gentile believers had to the Mosaic law, basically the customs of the Mosaic law.

So it is thought that Paul is making a reference to this event that is recorded for us in the fifteen chapter of Acts. You can also read of Paul's visit in the eleventh chapter. That could be it too, but one of the two is the reference here.

²*And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.* Paul did not want to create a big rift in the church in Jerusalem. He knew basically those in the church in Jerusalem, were still following Jewish customs and Jewish practices. Because Paul had received this glorious gospel of grace and realized that salvation is by faith through Jesus Christ and by the grace of God and not by works. He didn't want to do in Jerusalem what had been done in Antioch, the division that was created by these, what they called judaizers, those who said you had to be a Jew in order to be saved. And so to those in reputation, that is to the apostles, Paul explained the gospel that he had been preaching to the Gentiles, the glorious gospel of grace.

Now in the fifteenth chapter, when the church counsel was called, it records there how that Paul and Barnabas, (both of them) shared with the church elders of the work that God had been doing not only in Antioch, but also in many of the Gentile churches. The miracles that were being wrought through the power of Jesus Christ were also told. And so they were sharing that these Gentile believers, not keeping the law, not under the law, yet were experiencing the power of God and the miracles from the Holy Spirit.

So Paul said, ³*But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:* Titus had never been circumcised. And they didn't compel Titus to be circumcised. You see, part of becoming a Jew was the rite of circumcision. They who said that you have to be Jew to be saved, were saying you had to be circumcised then to be saved. Paul is telling the people in Galatia, because these same kind of teachers had come to the churches in Galatia. They were seeking to put them under the bondage of the law and seeking to force them to the ritual of circumcision. And so Paul is saying, look, I went to Jerusalem. I shared the gospel that I was preaching. Now, Titus was with me. He was a Greek. And they didn't force him to be circumcised. So, it wasn't an issue with the church leaders in Jerusalem.

Paul tells us the reason for his going to Jerusalem. ⁴*And that because of false brethren unawares brought in (Who were brought in, unknowingly, to Paul.), who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage*(So Paul is talking about these who came from Jerusalem, who were bringing in this damnable doctrine that you have to be a Jew to be saved.):

⁵*To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.* So Paul said, we didn't give to them a place of subjection, not for a moment that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Paul stood his ground. He didn't bow to their supposed edict from the church in Jerusalem for a moment. He withstood them!

How grateful we are for Paul's stand in the grace of God and salvation through faith. Had Paul not made such a strong stand and declared with such clarity this glorious gospel of grace, then Christianity would have become nothing more than just a Jewish sect. But because Paul was willing to stand up for the truth, we have the glorious gospel of grace preached among the Gentiles!

⁶*But of these who seemed to be somewhat,* (You know, there is a tendency by man to sort of exalt and elevate certain men. Within the church there are those that we have a tendency to look up to and to sort of stand in awe of them. They seem to be the pillars, the spokesmen. And so Paul, referring to these who were highly revered, Peter, John, James.

He just said those who seemed to be somewhat, *(whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me* (I like that!)) *God accepteth no man's person:* God is no respecter of person. God accepts no man's person. That I love. You see, you are as important to God as anybody else!

The world may hold up the Pope or Mother Theresa as great people of God, sort of in a category and a classification above the rest of us. Not so! You, are so important to God! And God is no respecter of persons. I think we lose sight of that. We sort of think of ourselves as so insignificant, as we stand around

these others who, you know, have such great ministries and so forth, we sort of you know, the way they carry themselves. The way they, you know, they sort of stand and the way they talk, you know, ooh, you know. The guys are really big shots. But God doesn't look at it that way. God sees us all on the same plane. And God loves us all equally! And so they that seemed to be somewhat, whatever they are I don't know, but God doesn't, it doesn't matter to me. God doesn't accept a man's person.

for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: The didn't add anything to me! They didn't, you know, help me at all.

⁷*But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;* They realized that Peter is sent to the Jews. I'm sent to the Gentiles. Thus, they recognized that within the church there is the broadness. We don't have to all become little clones, but in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. Christ is all and in all! They recognized, Paul, God has called you to those who are uncircumcised or to the Gentile world. And Peter has been called, obviously to the Jews, to those of the circumcision. And so it isn't a division, it's just a recognition that this man can minister effectively to these people, where this man can effectively minister to these people.

God has always had a broadness that exceeds that of man. Somehow we feel that everyone ought to be like us. And if they are not like us, well they just are sort of inferior in our eyes, because they don't worship like we do. They don't have worship teams. They have choirs that you can't understand the words that they are singing. They have robes. They have tall hats. They have incense and they have chants and rituals and parades. So we sort of feel that we have sort of a superior spiritual relationship between because of the freedom in which we worship, not recognizing that God is in all. And that there are certain people who are attracted to and love the formality of worship. It doesn't mean that they are any less a Christian than we are. It just means that they love to worship in a different way. And we should not be guilty of judging them or assuming that we are superior because of the way we love to worship and because of the way we relate in a freer, more casual style. It doesn't make us superior, it just means that we are freer and more casual. It has nothing to do with spirituality. It is the heart that God is looking at. And it's our heart. We need to guard against this becoming judgmental because a person doesn't see it the way we see it or worship just as we worship.

So they recognized, Peter, God has called you to the circumcision. Paul, God has called you to the uncircumcised. And there was that acknowledgement and recognition.

⁸*(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision,* Paul acknowledges God worked through Peter's life in a marvelous way. You read the Book of Acts and you read the miracles and the power of God that was upon Peter's life. So Paul was recognizing that God worked effectually through him to those Jews, to those that were circumcised.

And the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) Paul has an obvious powerful ministry among the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit is working through Paul, miracles and wonders and signs through Paul's life as he ministers to the Gentiles. It is the same God using Peter to reach the circumcision, using Paul to reach the uncircumcised.

⁹*And when James, Cephas* (which is another name for Peter. Paul calls him Cephas every once in a while. Jesus is the One who renamed him as Peter, but Cephas was his given name.), *and John, who seemed to be pillars,* (These guys seemed to be the leaders. And this James is not James, the brother of John, but it was James the brother of Jesus. James the brother of John had already been martyred.)

So when James, and Peter and John, who seemed to be the pillars, *perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.* There was that acknowledgement, God bless you guys. Shake hands. You go to the circumcision. We'll go to the heathen, you know. We recognize we have different ministries, different callings and we will obey the call of God where he sends us.

¹⁰*Only they would that we should remember the poor* (Don't forget the church in Jerusalem, the church that had suffered tremendously, financially and were in financial straits. So shake hands, God bless you

guys. And don't forget the poor.);

So Paul said, *the same which I also was forward to do*. Paul was always sending money to the church in Jerusalem to help them because of the tremendous persecution of the church there in Jerusalem.

¹¹*But when Peter was come to Antioch*, (Now this is a visit to Antioch.) *I withstood him to the face*, (Now, you see they were putting Paul down. They were saying that Paul is not really an apostle. He is inferior. Peter, James and John, they are apostles. Paul is inferior, you know. They were putting Paul down. The false teachers were putting Paul down, not Peter James and John. They respected him. They gave him the right hand of fellowship and respected his call. But these false teachers who had come in and were troubling the people, telling them that faith in Jesus was not sufficient. They had to keep the law and they had to become Jews.

So when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face *because he was to be blamed*. Now Paul tells us of this encounter with Peter, this difference that came up. It's sort of, of course, smacks against the thought that Peter was the first Pope. And the divine infallibility of you know, Peter and his works and so forth.

When he was come to Antioch, Paul said, I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed. ¹²*For before that certain came from James*, (from Jerusalem) *he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision*. Now following the Jewish custom, it was not lawful for a Jew to eat with a Gentile. You remember, when Peter went to the Gentiles in the tenth chapter of Acts, he was hesitant. But the Lord said to Peter, don't call that unclean which I have cleansed. So Peter went to the house of Cornelius. They invited Peter to come in.

I'm sure that when Peter went inside, he was just having a fit. He had never been in a Gentile house in his life because a good Jew would never enter into a Gentile home. And so he probably took a big gulp and maybe thought that lightning would strike him when he came through the door. He said you know how it isn't lawful for me, a Jew, to come into the house of a Gentile. I mean that's the way he introduces the message he's going to give to them. It's not lawful for me to be here.

It was even worse for a Jew to eat with a Gentile because in their custom and in their mindset, to eat with a person was tantamount to becoming one with that person. And no good Jew would want to become one with an uncircumcised Gentile. And so they would shun eating with a Gentile because eating, in their style of eating, it was the common flat bread. It was the sauces and the breaking off of the loaf and dipping into the sauces. It was just a sharing of germs and everything else as you ate. And the sharing of the same food, means that I'm being nourished by the food, you're being nourished by the food. We're becoming one because this bread is becoming part of me. It's being assimilated becomes a part of my body. It's becoming a part of your body. So mystically, we are becoming one.

Before these fellows came down from the church in Jerusalem, Peter was eating with the Gentiles, which was perfectly right and proper. With the Lord there is neither Jew nor Gentile. When these fellows came down from the church in Jerusalem, Peter was afraid. And so he separated and did not eat with the Gentiles, but started eating separately with just the Jews.

¹³*And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation*. Barnabas, this companion of Paul, he separated and stopped eating with the Gentiles! So Paul, withstood him to the face. Peter, that's hypocritical. That's wrong!

So Paul said, ¹⁴*But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel*, You see, the truth of the gospel is that God is made of one. We are all as one in the eyes of God.

So Paul said, *I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* Now, if you being a Jew, you live after the manner of the Gentiles. Peter had forsaken much of the tradition, especially the Sabbath Day because Jesus was constantly being accused of violating the Sabbath Day. And so Paul said, why are you trying to force the Gentiles to live as Jews or the Gentiles to become Jews?

¹⁵*We who are Jews by nature* (That is by birth. We were born as a Jew.), *and not sinners of the Gentiles*,

¹⁶*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have*

believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. This is the basic message to the Galatian church and he is sharing how that he shared with Peter, this message. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law.

There is something that is almost inherent in man, to seek to be worthy of salvation. To try to atone for our sins by counterbalancing them with good works.

Maybe I said something cruel and mean about you and I feel bad. I feel guilty. I judged you wrongly. I said something to someone else that put you in a bad light. And so I feel guilty about it. So I send you a dozen roses. You wonder why in the world would the pastor send me a dozen roses? Well, I'm trying to sort of make up for some bad things that I've done. Now if ever you get roses from me, I know you'll be suspicious. But somehow, we seek by good works to counterbalance the evil or the sin or the bad works that we have done.

Now it is interesting that this has become the whole basis for the Jewish justification today. The Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, which is coming up on us very soon, used to be the day for the national atonement for sin. That day when the high priest, himself, would offer the sacrifice, that day when he would go into the Holy of Holies to intercede for the nation, that one day out of the year. The day when the goat was killed as the sin offering and the other goat released, that whole ceremony of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Now, today, when they celebrate the Day of Atonement there will be no sacrifice for sin. But instead the Day of Atonement, has become the day of reflection. They will sit in meditation, reflecting on the past year and on the bad things that they did, the people that they cheated or whatever, those that they took advantage of. They will also think of the good, charitable things that they did, the money they donated to the temple or the money they donated to the Red Cross. They will seek in their minds in the reflection over the years of the bad things and the good things. They sort of put them on the scale. These were bad things that I did. These were good things that I did. And hoping that in the balancing of the good against the bad, that the good will outweigh the bad. Thus, they will feel that they have atoned by these good things that they did, their generous works and their philanthropic works and so forth. They feel that as long as they overbalance the evil that I've done, I will be accepted by God.

Now there is no Biblical basis for that whatsoever. In fact, the Bible says (Hebrews 9:22) that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission for sin. Their Bible says (Isaiah 64:6) that our righteousness is as filthy rags in the eyes of God. Yet, this is exactly what they are offering, though their prophet said, that their works, their righteousness is as filthy rags in the eyes of God.

So in reality their Day of Atonement is meaningless, today, because they are seeking to be justified by the works of the law. But by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

So Paul is declaring now the gospel that he preaches. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ. He is our sacrifice! He is the complete sacrifice! We do not come to God without a sacrifice! Jesus sacrificed Himself! He took our sins upon Himself! He died in our place, even as in the Old Testament, the sins were put on the head of the lamb. And the lamb died in their place. So Jesus, the Lamb of God, has taken away our sins! He is our sacrifice, not a necessity for continuing sacrifices, day after day, year after year, but once and for all, he sacrificed for the forgiveness of sin. So by our faith in Jesus Christ, we are justified of all of the sins that we've ever committed! So Paul is expounding now this glorious gospel of grace! We are justified by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. You could keep the whole law and yet if you violated in one point you were guilty of all. You cannot be justified by the law even if you did keep it completely.

⁷*But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.* Perish the thought! In other words, being justified by Christ, if I am as a Gentile, that is, I'm not keeping the ordinances, I'm not circumcised and so forth. Does that mean that Christ is the minister of sin? Paul said, oh, come on! Perish, that's foolishness, perish the thought!

¹⁸*For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.* ¹⁹*For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.* So, the law made nothing righteous. Paul said the law is

good if you use it lawfully, but to try to attain by the law a righteous standing before God, is folly. It just doesn't happen. The law made nothing perfect. God has provided justification, that is, the total and complete exoneration of your guilt. But He has provided that through your faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for you. And all the keeping of the law cannot add to the righteousness. We stand in Jesus alone! We're trusting in Him fully for our righteous standing before God. And so if I through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God, the law actually condemned me to death. I violated the law. I am guilty. The law pronounces death. So I through the law am dead, but really it's that I might live unto God through Christ.

For ²⁰*I am crucified with Christ*: The law has no power over me.

Let's say that in a moment of desperation, pressed by bills that I could not pay, in desperation I go to the bank with a baseball cap turned backwards, with dark glasses. And I give a note to the teller that says, fill this bag with hundred dollar bills or I'll shoot you. And I rob that bank. But in trying to escape one of the tellers presses a silent alarm. As I went out, I found the police outside with drawn guns. I throw down the bag of money. I raise my hands and I surrender to the officers. I taken to jail and I'm booked. And I am tried and I am found guilty. I was caught red-handed. So the judge says, five to twenty years in the state prison. And so as they are sending me to the state prison, the bus that I am in is hit by a train. I am killed. Are they going to take my carcass up to San Quentin and put it in a cell for five years, because that's the sentence of the court for my crime? Death ends the guilty sentence. That's the end of the matter. Death has finished it. The old life, I'm guilty. I violated the law, but now I'm crucified with Christ, therefore the penalties are negated! The law has no more power or say so over me because I've crucified with Christ and thus I'm released from the law that had condemned me to death!

So I am crucified with Christ: *nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*: Paul said (Col. 3:4) and when Christ who is our life shall appear. Let us not be a part time Christian, but a full time one. A part time servant of Jesus Christ, no, a full time servant of Jesus Christ.

and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. So I have been justified, not by the deeds of the law, not by the works of the law. They could not justify me, but I've been justified through my faith in Jesus Christ, and by being crucified with Christ, I'm free from the law and any old or any penalty that it may have excised against me, I am free because I'm dead. Dead to the law. Dead to the old life! Dead to the flesh.

²¹*I do not frustrate* (Paul said) *the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain*. A tremendously powerful statement, one that you need to really meditate on! If I could I be righteous by keeping the law, then Christ didn't need to die. His death is in vain.

In the garden, Jesus prayed, Father, if it is possible let this cup pass from me. He was talking about His death. If justification is possible without my dying for sin, if justification is possible by the law, by keeping the law, if a person could be justified by obedience to a set of rules, then Christ would not need to die. But the fact that justification before God, full exoneration of my guilt and sin, is only possible through Jesus bearing my sin and dying in my place, thus Jesus' death is not in vain, but through His death, He has brought to me justification unto eternal life.

Now it is faith in Jesus Christ and that is sufficient. It isn't an admixture. That was one of the issues in the early church. They were try to mix faith in Jesus Christ and the keeping of the law.

Whenever a person comes to me and is trying to share their particular belief, my question to them is on what do you base your hope for eternal life? Because, that is the bottom line. That's the important issue. On what do you base your hope for eternal life? And the answer, quite often, my faith in Jesus Christ and continued membership in the Mormon Church. Or my faith in Jesus Christ and my continued works, the going of door to door. Now, the moment you say, "and", you are in error! You cannot become righteous after you have believed in Jesus Christ. You cannot become then righteous by works. Works cannot make you righteous, even the best of works.

All of the works of Mother Theresa did not make her righteous. Righteousness can only come through faith in Jesus Christ. Now my faith in Jesus Christ will be manifested in the fruit of my life, the kinds of things that Mother Theresa did are evidences or fruit of a relationship. But they are not that which saves.

They are not that which makes a person righteous. For if righteousness could come by the law, then Christ died in vain.

Paul is going to carry this subject and expound upon it as we go through Galatians. It is a tremendous Book to set us free from any endeavors of our flesh to be accepted or to be made righteous before God. We will realize that Jesus Christ is our only hope. Our righteousness is in Him, through Him and by Him and it is complete! There is nothing that you can add to it! You are complete in Him! The glorious truth that will set you free!

Father, we thank You for that wonderful work of Jesus Christ in our behalf. Who took upon Himself our guilt, our sins, who died in our place, bearing our sins in His own body, that we through faith in Him might be justified from every wrong thing that we have ever done, fully exonerated, forgiven. That we stand before You in Him, in the righteousness which is of Christ through faith. Lord, what a blessing, what a privilege to realize that You look upon us as fully righteous because You see us in Christ. What a blessed privilege. Lord, bring us into a complete understanding and full appreciation of all that Jesus Christ has done in our behalf. In His name we pray. Amen.