

**Galatians 2: 11-16; “The Hypocrisy of Peter Reproved”, Message # 9 in the series – “Christ Has Made Us Free”, A Bible Study prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall for the evening of June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and conducted at the church.**

It is good to remember the theme of this first chapter, which is, that the gospel which Paul preached was not of men, nor did he receive it from men. He received both the gospel, and his apostolic call from the risen Lord Jesus Christ Himself. One of the lines of argument being used by the Judaizers against the Apostle Paul was that Paul had not come under Peter’s authority; that is, his authority as representative of all the 12 apostles. The Judaizers were asserting that since this was so, the gospel which Paul preached was in error. They were asserting that Peter and the other Apostles were really on their side; that they believed that the works of the law were necessary to be added to the gospel if people were really going to be saved from their sins. But Paul knew that this was simply not true. Paul knew that what he needed to do was to show the churches at Galatia the truth of 2 things about Apostolic authority; 1<sup>st</sup> – The truth that there was parity among the Apostles of our Lord. 2<sup>nd</sup> - We need to understand the truth that Peter did fall into hypocrisy in his thinking and actions. This is what we want to look at this evening. May the Lord help us to have good views of Apostolic authority and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**1<sup>st</sup> – We need to understand the truth that there was parity among the Apostles of our Lord.**

If you look up the word “parity” in the dictionary you will find that it says that parity is “an equality, as in amount, status, or value”. To understand this in the context of the Biblical teaching on church authority, we should understand that there is “a functional equivalence” between the persons under consideration within the office that they hold in the Church of Jesus Christ. In this case we are speaking of Apostles. The Apostles were the foundational builders of the Church under the direct authority, Headship, and Lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was an equality of authority committed to each of the 12 Apostles of our Lord and to the Apostle Paul because they each had received a direct commission from the Lord Jesus Christ to their Apostolic office. Each of the Apostles had the same authority to teach and govern, in the Church at large, as any of the others. They should listen to each other and respect each other as equals in their office, and give and receive correction or reproof from one another when it was needed. That was what was happening in the situation that we are looking at tonight. Turn with me over to Ephesians Chapter 4, verse 11, and we will see what the mission of the Apostles was. “And He (that is Christ) Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastor and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all

come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

The Apostles, it is apparent from what we have just read, were appointed by Christ to equip the saints. That is, they were appointed to equip all believers then, by their oral and written teaching, and all believers everywhere through their canonized written word the Bible. Their ministry most especially would include the definition the true gospel and the setting forth of all of the sound doctrine which would direct and govern the way that the saints would worship and serve God, both in church and in relation to the world. It was the truth which they spoke, which they had written down, which governs all believers during all of the Church age until Christ comes back. They are the foundation stones of the great spiritual building which Christ Himself is building, the Church. All that they would say and teach would represent Christ’s will for the saints. This does not mean that they were infallible in themselves. But it means that Christ perfectly preserved His own infallible word in and through their written letters and books of the Bible which we have today. Therefore, since they were entrusted with equal authority, and Paul having seen that Peter was doing something which was hypocritical in his practice, according to the teaching of all the Apostles, decided that he must be confronted publicly about it. He did this because he knew that he had the authority from Christ to do so. He knew that he and Peter were on an equal footing in their commissioned office; that of being Apostles. Paul also knew that Peter had been entrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Turn with me over to Matthew 16, verse 17. “Jesus answered and said to Peter, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’” “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hades (or hell) shall not prevail against it.” “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” These “keys of the kingdom” were, first of all, the authority given to Peter by Christ, to specifically open up the doors to the Gentiles through his preaching of the gospel to them, so that they could then come into the Church of Jesus Christ by means of faith in the gospel. The keys also related to the defining of all matters of doctrine for the early Church, and to enact Church discipline where necessary, when unrepentant transgressors appeared in the churches. But just because Peter had been given these keys did not mean that another Apostle, even Paul, might not have to correct him in relation to his use of them. Indeed, in

this case it was apparent that it was very necessary that he do so in order to our having a straightforward gospel to preach today.

**For 2ndly, we need to understand the truth that Peter did fall into hypocrisy in his thinking and actions.**

Verse 11 says, “Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.” “And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.” The reason for this action of Peters, of not eating with the Gentiles, is stated to be hypocrisy in Peter. It was not that Peter did not know better; that Jews and Gentiles ought to be able to eat together. It was because he was feeling the social disapproval of these “certain men sent from James”. But if you will remember, Peter had already opened the door of the gospel to the Gentiles in Acts Chapter 10, verses 34-48. Turn over there with me. Here we find that God arranged for Peter to come and open the door of faith to the Gentiles in His bringing him to Cornelius the centurion. “Then Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.’ “But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.” “The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” “And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree.”

“Him God raised up on the third day, and sowed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.” “And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.” “To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.” “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.” “And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.” “For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.” “Then Peter answered, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’” “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” “Then they asked him to stay a few days.” What was the response to this when Peter returned home to Jerusalem? Chapter 11, verse 1 – “Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.” “And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision

contended with him, saying, ‘You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!’ They said this as an accusation; thinking that somehow that after Jesus Christ died and rose again, and ate with his disciples and witnesses to his resurrection, that somehow it would be wrong for Peter to eat to them? They thought it a sin for Jewish Christians to eat with the Gentile Christians; to have social fellowship with them. But they did not understand the connections between receiving Christ, and receiving all other Christians, whether they were Jew or Gentile. They did not understand that this would be hypocrisy. But look at Chapter 11, verse 17. “If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” “When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”

I have had us read this to show you that Peter most certainly did understand the implications of his going to eat with uncircumcised men that day. It was to preach to them the gospel, according to the will of God. But it was after this that he fell into this hypocrisy at Antioch when he did not go to eat with the Gentile believers for fear of what those who were sent from James would think. This was why Paul had to say to him in verse 14 of our text – “But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, ‘If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? Paul saw the issue didn’t he? He knew that Peter could play both sides of the fence, playing to the Jews who came to him from James by not inviting Gentile believers to eat with them while they were there, how could he then think that he would not have to eventually begin requiring those same Gentiles to observe the customs and ceremonies of the Mosaic law; requiring them also to keep all the works of the law in order to be justified? Peter could not have it both ways. What was the problem? Well turn to Proverbs 29: 25. “The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.” Hadn’t the Lord led Peter providentially, showing him the vision of the great sheet being lowered down from heaven, in Acts 10, before he ever met Cornelius? Hadn’t Peter seen that this sheet was filled with all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air? Hadn’t he heard a voice from heaven saying, “Arise, Peter kill and eat?” (Meaning that he should not consider Gentiles who were seeking to hear the gospel and be saved as being unclean in terms of his associating with them? Yes, he had seen all of this. But he feared the disapproval and opposition and rejection of men. You and I must remember this. Even as great a man as Peter was, he fell into this sin of hypocrisy. But let us remember as well that he was willing to be reproofed by Paul, and to receive his reproof.

In closing, let us remember that it is possible even for great leaders in the church to fall into hypocrisy, and not to be straightforward about the truth of the gospel during those times. We must remember the truth about what Christ has

come to do. He has died so that elect Jews and Gentiles can be made into one spiritual body in Himself. Turn with me over to Ephesians 2: 13. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both (that is both Jews and Gentiles) one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace." The law in all of commanded ordinances could never save one soul, or make peace between God and men, and between men and men. But what the law could not do, Christ did. Look over at Galatians 3: 26. "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you all one in Christ Jesus. Let us remember this glorious truth and not disdain fellowship with any Christian, no matter what their background. The true Christian is one who believes that they are saved by faith in Christ alone, apart from the works of the law.