

ASTONISHED THAT YOU ARE SO QUICKLY DESERTING HIM WHO CALLED YOU IN THE GRACE OF CHRIST AND TURNING TO A DIFFERENT GOSPEL—
NOT THAT THERE IS ANOTHER GOSPEL, BUT THAT SOME WHO PROULE YOU WOULD PERVERT THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. 8 BUT EVEN IF
WE, OR AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN, SHOULD PREACH A GOSPEL CONTRARY TO THAT WHICH YOU RECEIVED, LET HIM BE ACCURSED,
9 AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, SO NOW I SAY AGAIN, IF ANY ONE IS PREACHING TO YOU A GOSPEL CONTRARY TO THAT WHICH YOU RECEIVED, LET
HIM BE ACCURSED. 10 AM I NOW SEEKING THE FAVOR OF MEN, OR OF GOD? OR AM I TRYING TO PLEASE MEN? IF I WERE STILL PLEASING MEN, I
SHOULD NOT BE A SERVANT OF CHRIST. 11 FOR IF I HAD HAD TO LEARN THE GOSPEL BY THE WILL OF MEN, I WOULD NOT HAVE RECEIVED IT.
12 I DID NOT RECEIVE IT FROM MAN, NOR WAS I TAUGHT IT, BUT IT CAME THROUGH A REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. 13 FOR YOU

GALATIANS

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

WEEK OF 05/3/2026

WHEN GRACE IS ON THE LINE

GAL. 2:11-21

Silence (1-2 minutes)

Sit silently together as a group for a minute as a way to center your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to help you listen to and receive God's Word.

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Read: Galatians 2:11-21

Devotional

Paul is writing to the Galatians because they are being led astray by a group of Jewish believers known as the Judaizers. These men were arguing that Gentile believers could not be true Christians without become "Jewish" - observing Jewish customs and (for the men) being circumcised. They were tying salvation with adhering to "works of the law." In doing so, they also challenged Paul's apostleship, seeking to undermine Paul *and* his message. Paul was alarmed by what was happening in Galatia. So, he wrote this letter to argue against these men and their message, defending his apostleship and the truth of his Gospel message. His message came directly from the resurrected Christ Himself, and he (Paul) was confirmed as the "apostle to the Gentiles" in the same way Peter was the "apostle to the Jews." Paul's message: Stick with grace!

Speaking of Peter, this passage of Scripture recounts a situation in Antioch concerning Peter and other Jews visiting from Jerusalem. The persecution that broke out in Jerusalem had scattered the believers across the empire, exposing cities like Antioch to the Gospel. Antioch was a large, cosmopolitan city with a very diverse population that included Hebraic Jews (Jews from Israel), Hellenistic Jews (Jews from the broader Greek and Roman cultures), and Gentiles (non-Jewish people). This diverse group of believers lived and worshipped together – gathering, eating, praying and learning together under the shared identity of Jesus followers. Enter the Judaizers, who began to disrupt this community and confuse the message. This is the context of Peter's visit to Antioch.

Read Galatians 2:11-13 / When Peter arrives, he sees the unity and the joy of the gospel being lived out in real bodies around real tables, the fulfillment of God's ancient promise to

Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." Eating together wasn't casual – it was a declaration of acceptance, belonging and solidarity. Peter embraced all of it, until the arrival of "certain men from James" caused Peter to shrink back from his fellowship with the Gentile believers. He allowed the fear of men to dictate his decisions and actions.

1. How did Peter's actions affect the congregation?
2. Are there ways that you allow the "fear of man" to dictate how you live out your faith? What is one action you can take to guard against this?
3. Peter's actions divided the congregation along ethnic lines, with the Jewish believers choosing along with him to separate from their Gentile brothers and sisters. There are many parallels to this in our own culture. How does this separation damage the life and witness of the church?

Read Galatians 2:15-18 / Paul publicly confronts Peter for his hypocrisy. Peter's actions were undermining the message of grace – his actions were not lining up with the message. There was much more at stake here than Peter's poor decisions – grace, the message of the gospel was on the line. Peter was an apostle, but he was not walking in step with the truth of the gospel, and it was leading others to follow suit. And truth is superior to rank!

4. How would you summarize Paul's rebuke of Peter in this passage?
5. It is extremely easy to know the truth but not walk in it. Walking in truth is a daily decision that we make, but it is not something we can do independent of grace. What does this look like in your life?

Read Galatians 2:19-21 / What was Paul's response to Peter? To go back to the gospel – back to grace. His answer to Peter is the core message of the book of Galatians. For the Gentile believers in Galatia, this meant they did not have to live in a Jewish fashion to belong to God. No dietary law was required. They also did not have to keep the Jewish calendar or practice circumcision. To the Jewish believers, this meant they were free to observe their heritage. It was not required of them any longer, and they could not demand it of others as a requirement for salvation. The only currency in God's economy is faith in Christ – for Jews and Gentile alike.

6. What are modern examples where Christians add cultural or personal requirements to the Gospel? How can we discern the difference between personal preferences and the truth of the Gospel?
7. If right standing with God comes through Christ's perfect Torah-keeping on our behalf, what role does personal obedience play in the Christian life? Does it matter at all? Why or why not? (Passages to consider: John 15:1-8, Titus 2:11-14, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

The big idea is this: **When grace is on the line; instead of trying harder, trust deeper.** We do not gather as a community to celebrate our personal achievements, our discipline, or our worthiness. We do not gather to celebrate our national, ethnic or racial identity. None of these things give us the right to have a seat at the table. We gather to celebrate Christ. We can only bring our need to the table, and then He brings the supply and nourishment we need – righteousness, forgiveness, life. We are driven to love, serve, and give by His love, His service, His giving of Himself for our sake.

8. What is the difference between trusting deeper and trying harder? Can you think of ways in your life where you've confused the two?
9. Daily Christian life is not about self-improvement but cooperation with what Christ wants to say and do through you. How does this shift in language change how you approach your life and decision?
10. Consider what this means practically in your life: "Christianity is not just something we believe – it is someone we become."

Pray Together

"Almighty and eternal God, we thank You for your unmerited favor, which meets us new every morning. We praise You that in our weakness, your grace is sufficient. Thank You for forgiving our sins, guiding our paths, and bringing us from darkness into your light. Enable us to live in this grace, that we may bring forth fruits of the Spirit and share your love with others; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen." ¹

Share Prayer Requests (10-15 minutes)

¹ <https://bishopwfhoustonjr.medium.com/the-gift-of-grace-5a6d0fd49932>