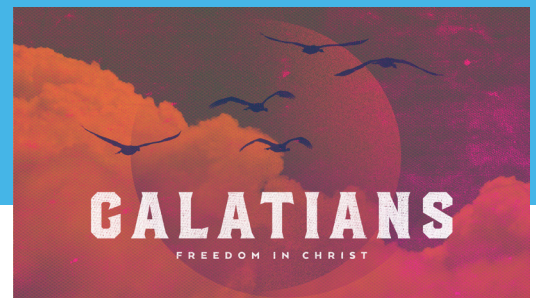


Discussion Questions

March 22, 2026



Galatians 2:11-14 - Straight Doctrine, Crooked Feet

In Galatians 2:11-14, the Apostle Paul recounts one of the most intense moments in the early church, the day he publicly confronted Peter. Peter had been freely eating with Gentile believers for weeks, living out the gospel of grace at the same table. But when conservative Jewish men arrived from Jerusalem, Peter withdrew out of fear. The rest of the Jewish Christians followed, and even Barnabas was swept away in the current of hypocrisy. Paul saw that Peter's "empty chair" at the Gentile table wasn't just rude, it was a functional denial of the gospel. By refusing to eat with the Gentiles, Peter was communicating that faith in Christ wasn't enough to make them part of God's family. Paul said Peter had straight doctrine but crooked feet. The sermon challenged us to examine where our own behavior contradicts what we say we believe, and reminded us that the same grace that restored Peter is available to us, and that the Holy Spirit is forming us into the kind of people who walk straighter over time.

1. Think back to middle school or high school. Can you share a story of a time you changed your behavior, your clothes, or your interests just to fit in with a specific group? What was the "cool kids table" for you? Are there any areas you still feel that same pressure as an adult?
2. Read Galatians 2:11-14 aloud together.
Before this moment in Antioch, God gave Peter a supernatural vision and sent him to eat with a Gentile centurion named Cornelius (Acts 10). Peter even successfully defended this action to the Jerusalem church. Why do you think the "fear of man" in verse 12 was strong enough to override a direct, supernatural vision from God? What does this teach us about our own vulnerabilities?
3. In verse 13, Paul notes that the other Jewish believers acted hypocritically, "so that even Barnabas was carried away." The Greek word is passive, it happened to Barnabas. He didn't choose it; he was swept along by a current. How have you seen this dynamic play out, where one person or leader's subtle compromise creates a current that pulls others off course? Why is our private or subtle compromise never actually private?
4. Peter didn't issue a new theological statement. He just stopped showing up to the Gentile table. Why did the sermon call this "empty chair" a theological sledgehammer? What was Peter functionally communicating about the gospel by refusing to break bread with them?
5. The Internal Audit: Paul said Peter had straight doctrine but crooked feet, he was zigzagging depending on who was watching. Are there any areas in your life where your behavior under pressure fails to match the grace you say you believe? And what would it look like to bring that area to the Holy Spirit rather than just trying harder on your own?

6. The Empty Chair: Is there a person or group of people not in your “tribe” who you have quietly avoided, written off, or made to feel “less than”? What is one practical way you can fill the empty chair and show up for them this week?

7. The sermon asked: “Are there tables we have set up at Northview, unspoken divisions we have accepted, that communicate to certain people that they don’t fully belong?” As a group, can you honestly name any of those tables? What would it take to dismantle them?

Closing Prayer

Martin Luther wrote about this passage: “If Peter fell, I, too, may fall; if he stood up again, so can I.” Take time to pray together. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any “crooked feet” in our lives, not for the sake of guilt, but as an invitation to walk straight. Thank God for the grace that catches us when we fall, and for the Spirit who is forming us into the kind of people who walk straighter over time. Ask for the courage to fill the empty chairs in your lives this week.

Galatians 2:11–14 (NLT)

But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?"

Peter's sin was letting fear quietly rearrange his behavior while his stated theology stayed perfectly intact

Galatians 2:5 (NLT)

We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

Galatians 2:14 (NLT)

When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel...

Galatians 2:11 (NIV)

When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

Galatians 2:12a (NIV)

For before certain men came from James, he [Peter] used to eat with the Gentiles.

Acts 10:28 (NLT)

God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean.

Galatians 2:12 (NIV)

But when they arrived, [Peter] began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.

Galatians 2:14 (NIV)

When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all...

Orthopodousin = Straight-Footed

Peter had straight doctrine but crooked feet

Galatians 2:14 (NIV)

You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?

Galatians 2:13 (NIV)

The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

Acts 11:24 (NLT)

...a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith...

Galatians 2:13 (NASB)

...even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

1. Where in my life does my behavior contradict the gospel I say I believe?

2. Where have I left an empty chair?

Martin Luther, Commentary on Galatians

For it is a great comfort for us to hear that even such great saints sin... Such errors and sins of the saints are set forth in order that those who are troubled and desperate may find comfort... If Peter fell, I, too, may fall; if he stood up again, so can I.