

## Mini Study – Galatians 2

### Justified in Christ

#### OBSERVE

READ Galatians 2:11-14 and:

- underline every reference to *CEPHAS* (including pronouns).

<sup>11</sup>But when Cephas [apostle Peter] came to Antioch, I [apostle Paul] opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. <sup>14</sup>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?”

#### DISCUSS

2:11-12 – Why did Paul oppose Cephas to his face? What was the motive behind Cephas’s actions?

READ Galatians 1:10:

<sup>10</sup>For am I [apostle Paul] now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Whose approval was Paul seeking? Who was Cephas trying to please?

2:13 – What was the result of Cephas’s actions?

2:14 – How does Paul describe Cephas’s (and fellow Jews) conduct?

2:14 – What was Cephas (and those who acted hypocritically along with him) forcing Gentiles to do before he would eat with them again?

In Galatians 2:11-14 we see Cephas acting out of fear rather than conviction. That he, like the apostle Paul, had believed in Christ alone to be justified but whose actions, motivated by the fear of man, contradicted that truth, and led fellow Jews astray along with him. That in addition to faith in Christ Gentiles must observe works of the law, such as food and purity laws, to be saved. A blatant contradiction of the Gospel that led to the public rebuke of one apostle of another and a reminder that above all the truth of the Gospel must be maintained, lived out, and whose authority trumps all other.

In Galatians 2:15-21 Paul's rebuke of Cephas continues:

## **OBSERVE**

READ Galatians 2:15-21 and:

- underline every reference to *JUSTIFIED*.
- circle every reference to *FAITH / BELIEVED*.

<sup>15</sup>We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup>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.

<sup>17</sup>But if, in our endeavour to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! <sup>18</sup>For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. <sup>19</sup>For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

**JUSTIFIED** – sinners declared by God to be righteous, whose sins He has forgiven and credited with the righteousness of Christ, His Son.

**WORKS OF THE LAW** – all the works commanded by God's Law, not just those relating to food, purity, and circumcision.

## **DISCUSS**

2:15-16 – What is the *truth of the Gospel* that Paul reminds Cephas of and which they both believe?

2:17 – What did Paul and Cephas, who sought to be justified in Christ, see themselves to be, just like Gentiles?

Does their seeking to be justified through faith in Christ, rather than by works of the law, mean that Christ promotes sin / lawlessness? What is Paul's answer?

2:18 – On the contrary, what does Paul prove himself to be if he reverts to (rebuilds) keeping the law to be justified?

2:19 – What reason does Paul give for not seeking to be justified by works of the law?

2:19 – Who do we, who have died to the law, now live to?

2:20a – When did believers die to the law? Who now lives in us?

2:20b – How do we now live in the flesh?

**UNITED WITH CHRIST** – those who through faith in Christ are spiritually united with Him, so that what He has done becomes true for them in Him – those crucified with Christ, dead to sin's power to enslave and the law's power to condemn, and those raised with Christ to live by the Spirit as new creations (Romans 6:6-7; 7:4-6; Galatians 3:10-14, 4:4-7; 6:14-15).

2:21 – What are doing if we seek to be justified by works of the law?

## **REFLECT**

**JUSTIFIED IN CHRIST.** That is the clear message of Galatians 2:11-21. The Good News that we are justified by faith in Christ alone, not by works of the law. That if we add anything to faith in Christ to be saved, we nullify God's grace to us and treat as worthless Christ's death on our behalf.

However, these verses are also a wonderful reminder that through faith in Christ we have been united with Him. And that as we continue to live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us, resting in the truth of our justification in Him, the Spirit empowers us to live lives that glorify Him.