**BCM Bible Study – March 22-23, 2023**

**Galatians 2: Paul and those in Jerusalem**

Paul is explaining and setting the groundwork for why everything he knows is from God. It is revealed to him by God (Gal. 1:11-12). During Paul’s first visit to Jerusalem, the only apostles he met with were Peter and James. Now at the beginning of chapter 2, we are picking up with Paul’s second visit to Jerusalem.

**Read Galatians 2:1-2**

* Do you think it’s significant that Paul waited 14 years to return to Jerusalem?
  + During this 14-year time span, we see that the gospel didn’t change and nothing was added to it. Also, it is important to note that there was no difference between how Paul understood the gospel and how these other apostles (church leaders) did, despite their distance from one another.
* Why did Paul talk in secret with the leaders?
  + Paul knew he had the true gospel, so in case the leaders had incorrect teachings, he could speak with them in private regarding such matters.
  + How can you be more tactful when confronting others?
* Why is it important that they were teaching the same thing?

**Read Galatians 2:3-5**

* Why is it significant that they did NOT demand Titus be circumcised?
  + The leadership accepted a Gentile convert and the concept of grace that Jesus offers.
* Paul says that the topic of Titus not being circumcised wouldn’t have mattered except the “False Brothers” made a big deal of it.
* Why does Paul call them such a harsh name? (v4)
  + These people are contradicting the gospel that was revealed to Paul by Jesus. Paul says that these people do not like their freedom in Christ but would rather see them enslaved to Jewish law. Paul didn’t give in to this kind of taunting. He had a mission to protect what God was telling him.
  + Optional: **Read 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1**
    - Considering these verses, how do we go about respecting the well-being of each other’s consciences while also understanding our freedom in Christ?
* Verse 5 shows Paul’s effort to not compromise the Good News.
  + What does it look like for us to stand our ground?
    - **Read Galatians 6:9 and Colossians 1:11-14**. How can we derive encouragement from these verses when having to stand firm in our faith?

**Read Galatians 2:6-10**

* Why do you think Paul makes a specific point to note that their reputation made no difference to him?
* While also considering 1 Corinthians 3:4 and Revelation 2:2, how do all of these verses impact how we value church leaders/theologians/other “prominent people”?
  + The goal is not to dismiss and not respect authority, God has still given them their rightful place (Romans 13:1), however, we are not followers of these people, we are followers of Jesus.
  + “*Paul didn’t wait for someone else to make him a great Christian. He knew that it came down to a personal relationship between himself and Jesus. This isn’t to say that Paul received nothing from others or that no one else could ever bless him; but his Christian life was not built upon what other people did for him.”*
* \*\*If you have time: quickly note verses 8 &9, It’s very cool how the same God who worked through Peter, James, John, and Paul is also working through us.
* In verse 10, we see that even Paul has constructive criticism to learn from. **Read Proverbs 27:17**.
  + What makes it difficult for you to receive correction?
  + How can you better “sharpen” other people and allow yourself to be “sharpened” by others?

**Read Galatians 2:11- 21**

* Why did Paul choose to have a public confrontation with Peter instead of a private one as he did with the Gentiles?
* Focusing specifically on verse 13. There is plenty of reason for Paul to call Peter out for his hypocrisy. In Acts 11:1-18 (or just read 16-18 if you are short on time) we see that Peter is clearly without excuse for treating the Gentiles in such a way.
* Considering how Peter disregarded what he knew to be true, read Luke 9:26 and Luke 8:21. Has there been a time when you were ashamed of the gospel? Are there any ways you may implicitly dismiss or deny the gospel?
* It also might have been challenging for Paul to call Peter out. After all, Peter is a prominent disciple, and they were around a lot of other important people.
  + What can we learn from Paul and his courage to stand up for the truth no matter the circumstance?
* In what ways do we become prideful about how we practice religion? How do we overvalue trust in our practice?
* What are things God has already taught us that we slip back into?
* In reference to verse 20, am I living the kind of life where people can see Jesus?