

GRACE WITHOUT BOUNDRIES - Galatians 2:11-21

In chapter one Paul calls the church back to the “grace place.” In chapter 2:1-10 he travels to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus; there they are confronted by *legalistic* believers. Paul said. “we didn’t yield to them, *not even one hour.*” While in Jerusalem he testified to the fact that the same gospel of grace, working in the Jews, was *also* working in the Gentiles! **Now we come to verse 11-13 - Read.**

In America, there once existed something called Jim Crow Laws. **Jim Crow laws** were state and local **laws** that enforced racial segregation in the Southern United States. All were enacted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by white Democratic-dominated state legislatures after the Reconstruction period.

In God’s sovereign fashion, these laws were rendered illegal with the signing of the **Civil Rights Act by President Lyndon B. Johnson, a Democrat, on July 2, 1964 - one-hundred years after the end of the Civil War.** It goes without saying, but the signing of this document has **not** resolved the issue of *racism* in America; because laws, no matter how *sincere*, cannot change the human heart, only God can!

As believers, we are well aware of racism within the world, but what happens when *Jim Crow* visits the church?! ***“It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o’clock on Sunday morning.”*** **Martin Luther King Jr.** Racism is another form of division; it draws boundaries around the grace of God. It’s a deadly **disease**, *not limited to one people group*, but can be found in every group, *even amongst the godliest of saints within the church!* **Peter was a pillar of the Jerusalem church, filled with the Holy Spirit, the designated preacher who preached on the Day of Pentecost - 3000+ being saved!** Yet he’s found here setting boundaries around the grace of God.

What caused Peter to yield to this segregationist spirit? **FEAR!** Specifically, the fear of man (v.12) **(Proverbs 29:25) The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.** Racism is often driven by what’s acceptable to a *certain* group. In Paul’s day and even among *some* orthodox religious Jews today, there is the belief that scripture prohibits *any* contact with Gentiles.

Old Testament passages such as Leviticus 18:24-30; Deuteronomy 7:3-12; Ezra 9:11, 12 seem to support this view. But God was addressing *assimilation, adopting pagan practices, and not segregation*. Peter *believed* this extreme legalistic view of these scripture references, as well, until God showed him otherwise. **(Acts 10:28) Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean."**

Thus, not only did Peter *know better*, he was in Jerusalem when Paul testified regarding the power of the gospel among the Gentiles.

However, fear of what society thinks has a way of *erasing* our understanding of the truth. **Notice:** racism is not only a cancer to the Body of Christ (church), but it is also contagious! (v.13).

How do we confront the spirit of segregation within the church? Our text reveals two ways (v.14a); **First - Stand against it when you see it.** (v.11). Paul is not going on *hearsay*, nor is he responding to accusations by the accuser of the brethren (devil), but is an eyewitness to Peter's hypocrisy (v.14a) - Paul observed Peter was separating himself from *certain* brethren. **Separated - *aphorizo*: to mark off others by boundaries, to limit, to separate.**

Paul knew that this carnal mentality would subvert the authority of Christ and the witness of the church! **(John 17:20-21) "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."** Division *within the church* hides the message of the cross, thereby rendering our message unbelievable!

Secondly - we confront carnal divisions - **According to the gospel of truth.** (v.14) **"they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel..."** The Greek word for **Straightforward - is "orthopodeo"** - it's where we get the word **"orthopedic."** *An orthopedic doctor is dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disorders of the bones, joints, ligaments, tendons, and muscles in certain areas of the body.* Paul, *like a trained orthopedic surgeon*, skillfully uses the "scalpel of God's truth," *the word of God*, to prevent any further deformity to the body of Christ!

When our relationships within the church are not straightforward, *aligned with the word*, we become an ally with satan in deforming the church - *making our message unrecognizable!* Paul points out how Peter's actions are flawed logically, and doctrinally. **Flawed Logically** - (v.14b) Peter was OK with the Gentiles, but started acting funny when Jewish believers came around! *"Peter, you coming to the barbeque?"*

(Ephesians 2:14-16) For He Himself is our peace, who has made both 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, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. The enmity may be alive and well in the world, but to incorporate the enmity within our relationships is to call Jesus a liar!

(Ephesians 4:4-6) There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Here Peter is acting as if there are two! Peter's return to the *legalistic* (Jim Crow) laws of segregation were also - **Flawed Doctrinally** - (v.15-19). Paul points out two doctrinal truths here in accordance with the gospel, to refute Peter's behavior. **1) We are saved by grace through faith.** (v.15, 16).

(Romans 8:3-5) For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

His actions were flawed doctrinally also because; **2) Christ is not a minister of sin.** (v.17). There were those, in Paul's day, *as well as today*, who taught that *having been saved through faith in Christ we could continue sinning, because grace allowed for it!* **(Romans 6:1-3) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do**

you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

In the same way, to return to the law is a return to condemnation. Christ *did not* come to be a *minister of sin, the condemned, but the uncondemned* (*Romans 8:1*), (v.17). Paul points out in Galatians 3:23-25, the reason the law was given was to teach us two things: 1) All have sinned - *missed the mark, could not live up to God's holy standard.*

The law was *also* given to point out: 2) Mankind's desperate need for a Savior! Christ is not a minister of our *old carnal, segregationist views* (sins). Thus, to rebuild that which He died to destroy (*the works of the devil*) is counterintuitive! (v.18, 19). In Paul's rebuke he also presents a remedy to racial division within the church. He reminds Peter that the old man should be dead! (v.20).

Wherever you find racial division, *or division of any kind in the church*, it's because one or both parties are *suffering from cross-phobia. Fear of the cross, of having the flesh crucified!* (2 Corinthians 4:10-12) "... **always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.**"

CONCLUSION: (v.21) This week do not "set aside the grace of God" - **love without boundaries!** It's the way Jesus loves you! The veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom the day Jesus was crucified. It was God saying to the world, in My Son there is love without boundaries! (1 Peter 4:8, 9) **And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.**