

FPFWC Christian Development



Faith Triumphs, Law Falls

October 2023

Fall Quarter

October 14, 2023

Works and Faith

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Galatians 2:11-21

ICE BREAKER –

1. Why is it easier for Christians to live by rules and traditions than by faith?
2. How could addressing a problem in another believer provide a real opportunity for spiritual growth?

Key Verse: “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.—Galatians 2:20b

LESSON BACKGROUND

Unlike many of his letters, Paul did not address the book of Galatians to the church in a particular city. Galatia was a Roman province in the central highlands area of modern Turkey. Paul and Barnabas had evangelized this area on the first missionary journey, including the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (Acts 13–14). These cities were the recipients of the book, which was intended to be circulated among them and read to all the churches (Galatians 1:2). Galatians very likely was written several years after the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15, which took place around AD 51. Many scholars believe that Galatians 2:1–10 is Paul’s account of what happened when he attended that council. In this passage, Paul was careful to say that he did not need permission from anyone in Jerusalem to preach to the Gentiles, but he still welcomed their sanction and tacit agreement not to oppose his message. He noted that those church leaders had nothing to add to his message (2:6) and that God had ordained Paul to preach to Gentiles as Peter was chosen to preach to Jews (2:7). Not everyone was on board with this arrangement. Some Judaizers had infiltrated the churches founded by Paul. They taught the members that they were required to follow the Jewish law (Galatians 2:4). Despite the decision of the Jerusalem Council, this Judaizing had continued. The churches were confused. Was the Law of Moses still in effect? Paul’s exposition of this matter is the heart of the book of Galatians.

LESSON COMMENTARY

Jesus did not refrain from meeting and even dining with His opponents. He used these opportunities to rebuke and instruct them. On this occasion Luke recorded Jesus’ attendance at a Sabbath dinner with one of the leaders of the Pharisees (14:1), “a synagogue head (8:41) or a higher official” (Bock, Luke, 1255). More than likely, a man suffering from dropsy (14:2; “ ‘dropsy’ is literally *hydropikos*, probably edema in which various parts of the body become filled with fluid”; Stein, Luke, 386) was present for the purpose of testing Jesus. Luke notes He was under the scrutiny of the opposition—they were watching Him closely (14:1). “The term means ‘to watch lurkingly’ ” (Bock, Luke, 1256), no doubt to find some

cause to accuse Him of some infraction of their traditions. Jesus challenged His opposition with a question: “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?” (14:3; cf. 6:9; 13:16). Their silence allowed Him to proceed to heal the man. Jesus healed him with three actions: He took hold ... He healed him ... He sent him away (14:4), thus the miracle was firm, full, and final. Jesus concluded this encounter with an illustration of simple, commonsense kindness and humanitarianism (14:5) that made the unarguable (14:6) point that even Sabbath observance was subordinate to compassion.

LESSON NUGGET – Jesus destroyed the law by fulfilling it (Matthew 5:17-20). His death tore the temple veil (Luke 23:44-45) and removed the wall between Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14-18). To go back to Moses is to rebuild what Jesus tore down and say that He did not really save us when we trusted Him.

Sources: *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary*