

*Transcript offered below unedited*

The Lord be with you

Also with you

Let us pray. Holy and gracious God, we give you thanks that all scripture has been written for your gr- guiding of us.

Help us to be followers of your way so that every step we take may be one of love, and peace, and joy. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Amen.

Friends, welcome back to a special episode of Galatians.

Uh,

we had a bit of a trick, trick, something happen with the chapter two recording, and so I asked none other than Dana Dowling, my dad, to thank you, Dad, to come on in and do a second recording just for you.

This is bonus material.

So thank you for, t- really to you, Dad, and thank you for everybody tuning in. I appreciate it.

Looking forward.

Okay. Well, this is chapter two of Galatians.

Um, a reminder of where we were in chapter one, just to set the scene.

Uh, Paul is giving us the whole introduction both to the go-

the message of Galatian and to himself as a person. Um, Paul, as you'll remember of course, Dad, is the ... You know, in this part of his life, he's writing as a well-established missionary, but he came first to, this region of the Galatians, to, because of a, of a period where he was actually ill, and he was on a missionary journey and was able to found these churches while he was on this journey.

But before that, he had been given an apocalyptic vision years and years before. This apocalyptic vision, this unveiling, was something that really, changed his whole life.

He was, going on being a person who was just learned in the faith. He was a, as he describes himself in another letter, a, a Hebrew amongst Hebrews. He had the best religious education and had turned into a zealot for the faith, meaning that he was actually persecuting Christians.

Then he had this vision of Jesus where Jesus says, you know, "Why are you persecuting me?" Um, and from there on, he is, he is now one of the greatest missionaries, if not the greatest missionary, of the Christian message that there ever was.

Dad, when you think of that vision that Paul had, what, what comes to you in your experience with that, and how does it feel as a person of faith?

Um, you mean Paul's experience on the road to Damascus?

Exactly.

Well, I, I, it, it really is an amazing story, and as you mentioned,

because of Paul, I think we're ...

this is why we're here, actually. I mean, either, either he wrote the

majority of the New Testament or it's about him in Acts.

The vast majority of the weight of it is, is all about Paul, which indicates, you

know, how important he was to, to the Christian faith.

And again, coming from a man who was, a- as you said, Hebrew of

Hebrews. Um, he was on the road to Damascus, if you

remember, to, to look to root out and, and, and probably,

you know, bring back, maybe execute, followers of The

Way. They weren't called Christians then.

That was a derogatory Roman, name, by the way.

Um, but we know that he was probably a member of the

Sanhedrin, if you could think of the, the, the Supreme Court, if you will, of

the, the Jewish faith. Um, and we know that because at the,

the first martyr, Stephen, the stoning of Stephen,

if you I- read that, if you read that account in Acts, they hand the cloak

of, of, of Stephen to the, to the witness

Saul before he became Paul, indicating that he was, in

fact, the representative, the, the prosecutor, if you will,

of that. Um, really an, an, an amazing turnaround  
for someone that, that, that was, by far the, the  
biggest prosecutor o- of, of, of early Christianity.

Mm-hmm.

Um, and, and the whole story I think is just, is just amazing.

And, and a- as you suggest too, he, a- after, after that  
whole, episode, he goes back to

Tarsus, where he was from, a Roman city,

which, which he's a Roman citizen.

That's important to remember, and, and if you read in the Book of Acts and, in

all these letters he's writing from jail, he's doing that because he has such a,

a legal mind that he's, representing himself

in all these court cases. And it takes years for them to prosecute him,

the Romans, till finally he is brought back to

Rome, years, y- years and years later, and

as, as history or tradition has it, was also murdered or, or,

executed the same time, maybe the same day, as Peter, in Rome.

Uh, he was beheaded because he's a Roman citizen.

He wasn't crucified. Um, but the indication here is

that he had a tremendous, transformation.

It had to have been. It wasn't fake.

But that is what the early church leaders thought of him, that it was a put-on.

They're, they're ... He's trying to trick them, maybe to catch them or to root them out more, which is why it takes them years to finally, convince them that he's for real.

And, that background I think is very, very important.

Well, I couldn't agree more, e- especially in Galatians, and for chapter two today, which we'll turn to in a moment, because to understand Paul's journey is to understand why he's so emotional in this le- in this letter.

Mm-hmm.

Right? You know, he wants us to remember how, where he's come from, not because he wants us to be impressed by his bona fides here, but rather, to be convicted by how bad he sees his, his previous actions.

Right.

Um, he's passionate about it and, and it's because he's lived a life of passion.

Um, what I think is fascinating too about the, the journey he's been on, you know, Galatians is, w- we're not sure when exactly it was written, but by all accounts it was likely written later in his life. Because after that conversion moment, he, yes, as you said, goes back, goes back to Tarsus, but he also spends years and years unaccounted for in the New Testament.

Right.

Where we assume he must be ... You know, he talks about being in a, in the desert.

It's like this wilderness timeframe where he now has

to-Find out who he is outside

of all of the other identities he's, he's worn before.

And th- what he finds in this vision and what he c- is trying to convey to the

Galatians is the freedom that comes with casting off not just the

life of sin, but who, who you think you should

be, a- and, and rather letting God tell you who you should be.

Like, the extreme freedom in that he's convicted of, and, and won't let

the Galatians settle for anything less, which I think is powerful.

Right. Right. I mean, h- the, the genius of Paul comes out in this

letter. I mean, it's just, it's a, it's just a tour de force, as

we'll get into, into, chapters two and three especially.

Uh, just an amazing mind. Uh, we were talking, I think I mentioned to you the other

day, he writes so

impassionally but also so quickly.

He goes from point to point to point.

And I mentioned, it's, it's almost like a, a, a Jewish Robin Williams.

You know, when he gets on a subject, it, it's hard to keep up with him.

I mean, he's just ... It just comes out.

It just, you can just tell the, the, the depth of his knowledge.

And, I would hate to get into a debate with this man.

Yeah.

I tell you that. Um, I, I, I think it's also important to note that, and we'll get into this too, about his relationship with Peter, you know, how that was, really the, probably the two biggest forces at the time, you know, probably forever of the early Christian church.

And, the personality of the Paul, he was, I think he was described as a, particularly, i- irritating little man.

Yeah.

Um, and I, and I, I think that's a great thing for him because he's the kind of guy that come in the room and we know he's right, but gosh darn it, would you just be quiet, you know?

Yeah.

Uh, and then, and we'll see in this letter how he just, it just, he just makes his point and just keeps hammering and hammering and hammering and hammering.

And it's just, it's great stuff, but I, if I was the, the, the person he's writing to, I, I'd, I'd, I'd have my, my legs dangling off a dime by the when it was all done.

So true.

Yeah.

I think that's a great time to turn into chapter two because-

Right

... the interplay of personality, the journey that both these men have been on, you know, Paul and Peter, I think it just shines through in this. So let's go ahead and, what I'll do is, Dad, maybe I'll take the first section and then I'll ask you to read this, the, the next one. Does that sound good to you?

Yeah.

Great. So I'm gonna pick up, Galatians and I'm gonna take it all the way to verse So here it is, for those listening later on.

"Then after years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.

I went up because of a revelation and set before them, though privately, before those who seemed influential, the gospel that I proclaimed amongst the Gentiles in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.

But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus so that they may bring us into slavery, to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment,

so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. And from those who seemed to be influential, what they are makes no difference to me, God shows no partiality; those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me.

On the contrary, when I saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted to the gospel to the circumcised. For he worked through, for he worked through Peter for his apocalyptic message to the circumcised and his apostolic message to the circumcised and worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles.

And when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave me the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and to me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Only they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do."

Okay. First thing I hear in here is all the personality coming through.

Um, we're gonna look at that exact council that Paul's referencing here in a moment, but listen to how he ... Uh, don't you, doesn't this make you laugh, Dad, the way he does this sort of dance between calling Peter h- by

Peter's name, first of all, when he's thinking he's doing something right, and then reverting back to Cephas when he's like, "Nah, this guy didn't do it so well." W- and we'll talk about the difference of those names in a moment.

But I also love this whole, like, if they were influential, that doesn't matter to me. I, you know, they seem to be pillars, whatevs. Isn't this hysterical?

A burn.

Yeah, such a burn. It's such a burn.

Um, what do you hear the personalities coming through?

Oh, this is, again, this is classic Paul.

I mean, e- even that little, that little side thing about, well, people who are supposed to be of repute, I don't know if they are or not, but by the way, anyway, what they said to ... it didn't really amount much because I was still, I'm still right, you know, kind of a thing. But I, I, I picked up w- kind of we kind of piggyback on what you're saying there, I only picked up on the name changes. You know, I think I mentioned this when we, we actually had this, you know, the, the power of a name, biblically and, and, and s- and, and in our world is, is so powerful.

I mean, you had, you know, Paul being

Paul before he was, encountered Christ on, on the road to

Damascus was Saul.

Yep.

Um, Peter was, you know, Simon or Cephas, and it was Christ himself who said, "Y- I shall now call you Peter, the rock of which I build my church upon," when he was the first person to say to a, to, to vocalize, to, to say that he was the Messiah.

Mm-hmm.

Uh, Christ said, "Who do you say I am?" Right? When Moses was at the burning bush and he wanted to go back to the, to his, his, his people, he said, "Who should I say sent me?" And that, that, that, that's not a, a minor thing. What is your name they're saying?

In, in the ancient world, the name is power.

Uh, we have it everywhere in our society too from, you know, our, the story of Rumpelstiltskin, to, to, when we name our, our children at, at baptism. Um, it really is and, and the, the name is, is powerful. And when Paul switches back and forth between Cephas and Peter, that's not a, that, that's a subtle thing, but it's a, it's, it's a very striking thing to me. Um, when Peter's right, he's right, he's saying, but when he's wrong, boy what a bonehead he is.

That's right. And, and I think there's three things that what you're saying makes me think of that. The, the idea that these two men have had their names changed by Christ, right? You know, like, like Jesus himself, like wanting to remind them of who they really are in their best self, in their, in when they're acting as God made them to be.

So that, that makes me think of that. Two, that they have that in common.

You know, that's fascinating. Two, the idea here that when, that

Paul is very sophisticated with the name even of Jesus.

He will often say Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus.

Right.

And I always love people to, w- when they notice that to pick up on it because it's

not just a trick for Paul. He, he doesn't just use those

interchangeably. He means that when he's, when he's describing

Jesus Christ, to my mind he wants us to focus on

the humanity of c- of Jesus, that, that

cloaks his divinity if you will. You know, the ability to follow

Jesus as the person and the teacher that he was and the, and the, the

true life that Jesus led. And when he uses Christ

Jesus, I tend to see that as Paul asking us to remember

the cosmic nature of Christ, right?

The part that we wear as well, the part that's woven throughout all

creation. Um-

Right

... and, and I, I, so I think Paul is so

subtle that you even have to notice those sorts of changes with names.

Do you have-

Right

... do you feel the same way?

I do too, yeah. And I, you know, again, it's just, it's a powerful, powerful thing.

And I'll, it ... That that actually could be a great study in the Bible about what names and what the, what the power of it is.

So, you know, with um-

Abraham, Abraham-

Ab-

... Sarah, Sarai.

Yes. Uh, yeah, it just, it just, it's a really is an amazing thing.

The other thing I noticed too is the very beginning when you first started reading was after years I went up, right?

To make sure I wasn't, I wasn't missing the point here, right?

Um, again, we think,

at, at the time the, there were a lot of, most, most,

rabbi also had a, had a trade. It was, it was, it was actually considered a good thing to do that 'cause it makes you a, a common man.

You're, and you're not asking for money for people, right?

And Paul was a tentmaker in Tarsus of all things.

I mean, here's a guy, it'd be like, you know, the Supreme Court judge, you know, becoming a, a, you know, boat builder or something.

You know, it's just a very, very, interesting thing there I think that, that he did, that just shows the, the character of him.

But, but the, the time it took him to do that, and then probably the struggle with Paul was, you know, trying to, trying to get people to believe him that, that he was. I think there's part of that in there too.

But Paul I think is the kind of guy that doesn't, I think it takes him a time to kind of digest and think and, and really understand this thing before he makes a move. years, I mean, that's, that's a appreciable amount of time.

And he's, at that point he's probably not, not a young man, you know?

So it's, it's very interesting to me.

Um, and finally he goes up to them, and they finally, again, it's like sort of about, about Paul, I think he finally probably said, "Look, okay, great.

You go to the, to the uncircumcised.

We'll take the circumcised, and you know, we'll, we'll agree to disagree, and just go. Just go," you know? Um, and a- and

the other thing I noticed too, he brings Barnabas with him.

Um, and I think-

And Titus. Titus is here too, right?

It's almost like Barnabas, it, it-

Yeah

... sounds like Barnabas is a character that in, that gets Paul into the room almost.

Yeah.

Like, he's the guy everybody likes.

Right.

Son of encouragement, right?

Son of encouragement. And, and to have him with him kind of gives him some,

um-

Cred

... some, some way to get into them and to say that he's really, no, really, Paul's

a, he, he's really not a bad guy, guys.

Matter of fact, I think he's great, so why don't you listen to him for a while?

I mean, that, they, it gets him into, into the room, into the discussion.

Absolutely. Let's also draw our attention to another person here,

Titus. Um, the, he-

Oh.

... he brings ... Yeah. Poor Titus.

He brings Titus along as a Greek and as an

uncircumcised person. By this Paul is meaning, like,

this is a person who is living the way, who is walking Christ's walk, who is

a wonderful human being. C- Paul himself probably brought him into the

faith. By the way, he's uncircumcised.

How would you like to go to a big church council, everybody's talking about your

unmentionables?

Right. Right.

But he, he basically I think is brought along to be like, "You can't

tell me he's not a great Christian.

Are you seriously gonna make him be circumcised right now?" Like, I think he brings him to pu- push the point, don't you?

Tell him to his face, right, that he's not, right? Kind of a thing.

Correct.

And ex- remember back being a, being a Greek, I, when you went to the gymnasium, they, they, they exercise naked.

Every- everyone knew when you're in a bathhouse, everybody knew if you were or weren't, so there, there's no question.

And thank God, you know, he treated Titus different than Timothy because-

Yeah, poor Timothy

... he asked Timothy certain, you know, like if Timothy wanted to.

But that, you know, so thank God for Titus, you know?

But-

Sorry, Timothy

... you're right, and Paul's making a point here by bringing him, saying, "Here's, here's an example of what we're talking about.

Here's an uncircumcised guy, and he is as good as any of us, you know?

And if he's not, tell him to his face, guys.

I dare you." I mean, he's, he's a very up-front, in your face kind of a guy.

It gives a great insights into Paul's character.

Um, he doesn't, he doesn't suffer fools, easily at all, you know?

No, so there are two things I wanna highlight here, and I, I think you're really hitting the mark with them. One is in verse when we hear about the right hand of fellowship. Um, this is a very important phrase for many streams of Christianity. A lot of wh- what we consider the Brethren groups, these are people like Mennonites, and Quakers and Moravians, these ...

Their chief liturgical action for being in what's known as apostolic succession, something Paul cares a lot about, he talks a lot about being an apostle, but by that, he doesn't mean he was one of Christ's in-person disciples, but that he was grafted into the fellowship of walking alongside as, as a representative for Jesus.

He was the last person to see Christ alive.

Yes.

On the ro-

Yes.

Yeah.

Post-resurrected.

Right.

Yeah.

One untimely born, he said, which is a interesting turn of phrase too.

It's almost like ... It almost, means abortion, by the way.

Yeah.

It's like, "I'm not worthy."

Yeah.

Yeah.

It's, it's, it's ... He uses dramatic language-

Very dramatic language

... to make a point. In the idea of the right hand of fellowship, this is, this

is, in some traditions, like the Episcopal tradition, we see that

going through the liturgical action of laying on of hands.

So every ordination service includes a laying on of hands.

Some people will have, like, even flowcharts about how they count

backwards from clergy person to clergy person all the way back to Christ

himself, wouldn't you know it, and, and, to do that sort

of genealogy, if you will. In other traditions, like the Brethren tradition,

that gets conveyed by the right hand of fellowship.

And Paul uses this here, and the c- the, the

whole, a- convention that they're talking

about as an important piece. It's being used here because

this is the way that a person of superior rank in, in the

Roman military will actually kind of pull somebody up, if

you will, to a higher rank by extending their right hand to them  
and, shaking it, if you will, and pulling them up.

So Paul is taking this and appropriating it, and the apostles are as  
well, as saying that the fellowship that we are entering into is one  
now of equals rather than of higher or lower rank.

And what I think is kind of fun, just a little personal example, I shared this with  
the other class, but, now we're gonna record it.

Uh, one thing that's really beautiful is when we've, when we've entered into  
e- ecumenical dialogues between denominations, we have to account for  
these liturgical actions and the theolo- theology that they  
embody. So for example, at the Episcopal-Moravian  
Dialogue service where we became one again as  
ecumenical partners, the, the task force which I was  
on, and I was emcee for the event, really had to pay attention to, how do we make  
this moment happen? So we, we did a compromise.

The Moravians knelt in front of the Episcopal bishops, who laid their hands  
upon their head to graft them into the apostolic succession as they saw it  
liturgically. Then they all stood up, they switched spots.

The episcop- bishops knelt, and the Moravian ones s-  
extended the right hand of fellowship and, and pulled them up off the ground.

It was kind of this beautiful moment of liturgical and theological  
and ecumenical streams, gathering.

So it still has imp- import today.

Very neat.

Yeah.

Uh, and, and kind of to piggyback on that, of course, the American  
bishopric came through, Seabury, right?

Yeah.

Through the Scottish Church, and why we have the cross of St.

Andrew in our, in our, in our, in

our-

Our Episcopal shield

... the shield, yep. And, so it is.

The laying on the hands is a good, is a great tr- long, long tradition. Yeah.

Yeah, really quite beautiful.

Yeah.

And right hand of fellowship, it-

Right

... some would say, is a very long, long tradition too.

Right.

So really beautiful. Now, Dad, I don't know about you, one of the things I find

so cool about the New Testament is, one, we get to hear

all these letters and people's actual voices.

Mm-hmm.

And we have the letters, corresponding with so much of what's happening in the Book of Acts, where we get to see it from a different viewpoint and a different vantage point.

Um, Acts, is traditionally thought of as being written by the, by Luke, who wrote the Gospel of Luke or whomever is embodying that, writer's pen. And his version of this has a lot of the same details but sounds a little different, doesn't it?

Mm-hmm.

Isn't that true, how we can all, all see things from our own point of view?

So I think it'd be worthwhile for us to jump back to the Book of Acts-

Yeah

... and hear how this Jerusalem council went down.

Um, for those who are flipping with us, we're gonna jump all the way back to, chapter chapter

and we're going to be able to look at this, this Jerusalem council where Paul went to, from a different point of view.

Um, one thing to note is that, this is what we kind of consider one of the first, if not the first, church council.

Um, you know, think Vatican II of its time.

And what's really beautiful about this is, we see that

the Church to this day still tries to live into this, you might

call it, democratic mindset, where we hear people out and we, we pray

together on issues. Um, and some other things that don't change is a

lot of our councils are to deal with these kind of base

matters of human, the human body. And even sometimes

... Like, we're s- one of the, the last church councils was about w- i- in

recent memory are things like, can women be allowed to be priests?

Uh, how about homosexual marriage, right?

You know, so we're still talking about human beings and their genitalia even to

this day in church councils, knowing that it's em-

embodying much larger theological issues, but we tend to take it down

to the almost primal stuff of life.

And I don't see that as just kind of silly.

I, I see that as

we're such an embodied, faith.

You know, we see, we see ourselves as following God made em-

embodied in Jesus. And so I'm not surprised a lot of the

conversations, take it down to the body level because that's, that's really

where we're trying to go, don't you think, Dad?

It's the basics, yeah. Yeah.

It's the basics. It's the basics.

Yeah.

Okay, so, let's take a look at what happened at that

particular council here. Um, and I'm gonna make sure I have my right

citation.

Do you want me to start?

Yeah, if you would do that, that'd be great, Dad.

Where, where, where do you want me to start?

Um, chapter and that's what I'm looking at here.

I think it's verse -

You know what? I'll, I'll pause for a second and make sure I get my right...

Okay. I'll, I'll, I'll read that, and I'm reading from the New Oxford Annotated Bible, and, it's Acts

-

written, "Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders with the whole church to choose men from among them and send to Antioch with, with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barabbas and Silas leading men among the brethren with the following letter.

The brethren, both the apostles and the elders to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Sy- Sycilia, greetings. Since we have heard that some persons from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your minds although we gave them no

instructions, it has seemed good to us having come to, to one accord to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We have therefore sent Judas and Silas who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity. If you'll keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."

Thank you. Now, just to set the scene a little bit, they, these, Paul and Barnabas have come all the way up, to the apostles and the elders, about the question of whether or not they should, if converts have to be made Gentil- sorry, made, Jewish first.

Um, earlier in that chapter, I'm just gonna read a little extra to give us a little more context. It says in chapter verse one, "But some men came down from Judea and they were teaching the brothers, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and

debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question." So you can hear how this works out, right?

Like, they're telling us the scope of it all.

That-

Mm

... that people have been fighting this fight, the one that Paul is fighting, in the letter to the Galatians.

You know, do you have to give yourself back over to the, the law, or, or is it okay for somebody to come into the Christian faith as they are? And so they're like, "All right.

Paul and Barnabas have been fighting this fight. Let's bring them in.

Let's hear what they have to say," 'cause apparently their words were so powerful that they, they, they gotta hear these guys. And just to ...

And the part that you read then shows that they were persuaded, that they thought this was right. Although James does add a little color towards the end. He's like, "Also, though, just keep these sorts of laws-

There's-

... if you don't mind." Yeah.

A minor thing.

Yeah.

Right.

Farewell.

We'll talk about those things in a minute, but what are your ...

What's your impression, Dad? What are you hearing in all of this?

I, I, I hear the, you know, the, the great ongoing fight here.

Um, what I, what I see here, again, getting back into names which I think

is very important.

Yeah.

Up to this point it's always Barnabas and Paul, Barnabas and Paul, Barnabas and

Paul. If you look at, if we had gone on to,

verse it says, "But Paul and

Barnabas remained in Antioch teaching and preaching the word of the

Lord with, with many others also." This is the first

time in, in, that in a- in Acts where it changes

f- the, the names from Barnabas and Paul to Paul and Barnabas.

Yeah.

It shows that he really has come into his own at this point, and that

he, he has been anointed, if you will, to, to bring it to the, to the

uncircumcised. So it's, it's, it's a powerful thing.

A- again, it's, it's subtle, but i- in the Greek world, we

know that, hierarchy is by, by

names. It's, it's, Priscilla and Aquila, by the

way. You know, the woman, man, that she, she, she wore the pants

apparently. Priscilla and Aquila.

It's-

She had the money.

... Paul, Paul and, and Barnabas. It's, it ...

Who has the higher, rank, if you will, on that point.

So he's indicating by that subtle little thing that he does that at this point he's

come into his own. Uh, and I, and I just love how,

you know, th- there is just a few things that they have to do.

You, you can't eat something that was, that was, that wasn't strangled, or the, the

blood, this and that. And this gets into, again, which

I think we'll get into that in Galatians about-

I think we will

... can we, can we get, can we buy meat from, from the

temples, 'cause they also had butcher shops there, right?

And, and Paul goes out and says, "Look, you can do whatever you want to do. The ...

You, you're not under any law not to do that. You ...

It, it's acceptable to do that. However, if it causes someone to stumble

because you did it, don't do it. You have every right to do it,

right?" So, you know, it's, it's really just a,

a freeing, from the law, which I know we'll get into in a

moment on that too, you know, what it's-

You're right. You're so ... You ... Yeah.

Yeah.

I so agree. And even to that end, that, that switch of the ordering of the name-

Mm-hmm

... if you look back at we have, "We sent them with you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul."

And Paul. Right.

Right? Barnabas is the beloved here. So it just ...

You see-

But Barnabas.

Yeah.

That's not Paul.

No.

Our beloved. Right. Yeah. Right.

Now, let's talk about this for a minute, because one of the heartbeats of, the, the chapter to Galati- or the, the whole Book of Galatians is gonna be when we get to chapter five and we hear about the fruit of the spirit.

Right.

Um, so a little preview there. And one of the things that is I think very important about the fruit of the spirit is that not all of us are equally gifted in all of the gifts that Paul names there as the fruits, right? And this is ...

They use this to their advantage. Paul, as you said, is not necessarily a

very likable guy personality-wise. We, we know he was a good pastor.

He clearly cared for his people, and the people clearly cared for him.

But-Yeah, loves them. No question

Yeah

And, and people love them. Like read Philippians, and you, you'll ...

It's like a love lo- a love letter to a church.

But we also know that Paul was kind of short, stocky, a little bit bald from his own admission.

Yeah.

He himself talks about how he's not a great speaker, an orator. He's often better in his writings, he feels.

Um, and that he has a thorn in his side.

And w- scholars are kind of ... We're not sure which that means, if it's a physical thorn, and, and-

Mm-hmm

... by that we mean, some sort of ailment, or if he has a, a personality thorn in his side, let's say.

We don't know. We just know that he's argumentative and oftentimes travels with somebody like Barnabas on his missionary, endeavors because Jesus said to go two by two, but also because Barnabas is super likable. We know this, right? A- again, his, his name means son of encouragement.

Right.

He's like everybody's cheerleader. Barnabas, hey. You know?

And so like Paul is wisely married here with

Barnabas, metaphorically speaking, to help the word

go further. And you have to think, Paul has the humility

enough to know that, to, to be, to work with other people.

Not ... Sometimes they fight. It's ... We, we know it from Acts.

Mm-hmm.

But he has the humility enough to know that he won't ...

His great mind alone isn't quite enough without also needing

some other charisma of personality, let's say. Beautiful.

We, we should think that way as Christians.

Right. Mm-hmm.

So, when we, we think about this council, we think about the good work that

they have done. Um, let's flip back now to Galatians

and, and finish up the chapter, with hearing what

Paul feels about how this landed. Um, and then we'll, we'll

read the last part which leads us into chapter three.

So, is it my turn to read or is it your turn to read? I think it's mine, right?

Okay.

Okay, chapter two. This is chapter two, verse and I'm

gonna just take us up to Chapter two, verse

through

"But when Cephas", notice, "when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. For before, before certain men came before, came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

When I saw what their conduct was and it, how it 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?'" Okay.

Mm-hmm.

Let's unpack this, this, this scene here.

There's a dinner party. It feels like Paul wasn't invited, so first of all, you know.

I, I heard about it, though.

I heard about it-

Yeah

... and let me tell you what I heard.

Pro-

Sorry, what were you saying?

And probably through Barnabas.

Oh, yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah. I'm sure they're like, "I'm sorry.

Did you say you went to a party last night?

Where, where was my invitation?"

Right.

Awkward. So, at this dinner party,

Paul desi- declines to eat a certain

sort of meat here in a way that, that, symbolizes that he's

still living under the law to appease these, the

uncircumcision party as Paul calls them here, right?

The people who are trying to get people to be circumcised

first. And so Paul walks right on up to him and

tells him to his face what he thinks about this, and it becomes, I'm sure, a

little bit of a scene.

You know? And, and I just gotta think, here's, here's

Peter, w- one of Jesus's so right there, he already has

stature, the rock, right, on which Pa- Jesus is gonna build his

church.

Mm.

And pr- probably kind of a likable dude.

He's an every man. You know? He's a fisherman.

He does not have the education that, that Paul has.

And so we're-

He's the kind of guy, kind of guy you want to have a beer with.

Yeah.

Yeah.

He's the kind of guy you want to have a beer with, you know?

And here comes this genius but kind of a guy, you

know? This dude. Comes up to and just in his face.

It must have been quite the scene. What do you hear in it? I think it's hysterical.

Uh, he said, "I condemn. He was condemned and I told him to his face." You know?

Again, Paul, Paul does not mix words.

He doesn't suffer fools g- easily.

And again, remember Peter was the one who had the vision of the blanket coming

this, coming down from heaven with the different, food stuffs there that

you could eat now, and he perceived that.

God showed that there is no, difference

between Jew and Gentile. And, and he went into the centurion's

house and, and baptized the whole family, you know? Just ... Which again, was ...

I- is amazing when you think about it.

And yet, and yet here we are, you know, doing the same thing that, that he ... That's not ... I think that's maybe what Paul is really referring to, condemn to, you know, that he should condemn.

'Cause Peter's the one who was, who really had the, the direction, from Christ to, to bring the gospel to the all the world, to the Gentiles. And he just, fumbled the ball. And then, and Paul was the one who picked it up and, and, and ran with it luckily. Uh, and I, I think another thing that with Paul, I think what took him so long, another reason besides, him really thinking about it and, and, and trying to kind of break through through the, the clique if you will, is, I, I, I think he felt a little, uh ... He wanted Peter to come into his own, you know, to really, to, to claim what he was supposed to be doing and to give him time to do it.

And when he finally realized it's been years, Pete, it ain't gonna happen. We're, we're gonna r- I'm, I'm gonna have a talk about this. Do you want it or not? You know? 'Cause, 'cause if not, I'm gonna do it.

And I think that's-All, all this tension is, is just, is just wrapped up in this, in this, one little episode here, I think Yeah. And it... And there's lessons for us personally too.

I, I think oftentimes when we are being the, the Peter of the story, um... And Jennifer, these were men of vision, as you said.

Mm-hmm

Both of them have had apostolic or, apostolic and apocalyptic visions that have revealed to them, like, all of this, this huge gospel. We too are people of vision.

We have been given the gift of, of knowing Christ, and when we fall short, it's not typically because we're doing something majorly, obviously bad. You know, like, thou shalt not murder, that sort of thing. It's really more in the place where how Peter stumbles and these little things here and there.

Right

The capitulation bec- or the, the peer pressure, or, you know, giving into to not wanting... Not standing up and saying something when somebody says something bad because you just don't, you don't want to get into it- ... or you don't want them to think. Right? You know?

Right.

And so there's a, there's a lesson for us here.

Um, Paul may need to learn a little bit of, compassion.

And Peter may need a little bit of backbone, right? Like both- ... both things we have to remember in the walk with God.

I want to highlight a word that Paul uses here in verse

"But when I saw that their conduct was not in step

with the truth." The, the word-

Mm-hmm

... he uses there is orthodoxy. Um, think of...

Or prody, you might say. Like, think of podiatrist. Not in step.

So-

Mm-hmm

... right step. Um, we think of this word in orthodoxy, right thinking, orthopraxy, right practice, but this is, the right feet, if you will, to walk straight in line with the truth of the gospel. I really think this is important for us because Paul is obviously a man who is of chief orthodoxy. He has right thought and right practice. We know that he's a man of vision and prayer, but he doesn't stop there.

I think often modern Christianity likes to be like an exercise of the head, or we just go to church, and we think that's enough. We have to be walking the walk.

We have to be actually doing the hands and feet of Christ in the world. And Paul says it's really all three.

It's not enough just to think right or to pray right.

You also have to act correctly, and, and I think that's a really major point he's trying to make here.

It- it's what the intent of the law is, which we'll get into that in, in thr-  
in chapter three, I believe. But yeah.

And a little bit right now. Let's, let's hit it.

Yeah.

It, this is the last part of chapter two, so Dad, if  
you'll read, verse, and just finish up the  
chapter.

Okay.

All right. Starting at verse "We ourselves, who are  
Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who  
knows that a man is not justified by works of the law, but through  
faith in Jesus Christ, even we 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  
shall no one be justified. But if in our endeavor to be  
justified in Christ we ourselves were found to be sinners,  
is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly  
not. But if I build up again those things which I tore  
down, then I prove myself a transgressor.  
For I, through the law, died to the law that I might live to  
God. I have, I have been crucified with  
Christ. It is no longer I who live, but

Christ who lives in me. In 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. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose."

Mm.

Pretty powerful stuff.

It's really powerful stuff.

Yeah.

And, and, and, and honestly, like, the summation of the entire letter.

Like, if you don't have time to read all of Galatians, it's only six chapters.

You have time. But if you don't, just read this part-

Mm-hmm

... 'cause it's the summation. I, I think we have to pay attention to

three words in particular, and, and

remember that this verse would be unintelligible apart from the

passion and resurrection, right?

Right.

The, the, the... He is saying that as a, um...

All that he's saying here is that all of this is possible because we are

grafted in to the death and resurrection of Jesus, thus we have

put all of this on. Those three words I want to highlight for us are

grace, justification, and faith.

Grace, justification, and faith.

Um, g- by grace, Paul is not merely talking

about God's kindly dispo- disposition of, for us, right?

It's not just like, oh, God likes us, so he's given us grace.

Rather, grace is embodied in God's powerful

and costly action-

Mm-hmm

... of salvation through the world, for the world, through, through the death of

Jesus. By that, he means he sees the world as

being, taken over by sin. Like, it's like an enemy

invasion. And so the, the grace that God is offering us here

is one that, costs God something, and thus

we can't treat it as something cheap.

Bonhoeffer will use this part to really talk about the importance

of, costly grace and owning it, rather than just treating

it as cheap, just because we've gotten used to the idea of God's

grace. Before I unpack j- justification and faith, do you want to say anything

about grace from your, your vantage point, Dad?

Yeah. It's, it's, it really is the... Thank you, Martin Luther, you know?

It is, it is this, the very, the very act.

He's saying if, if you want to live by the law, good luck. You know, we tried it.

The Pharisees w- were great at it, but even they, even they needed Yom Kippur every year, right?

Yep.

Uh, a- and which I, little of aside, I always thought that was kind of very interesting when they tie the rope around the high priest.

In case he dies on the altar, they gotta ... 'cause they can't go in there.

They gotta pull him out, right?

That's right.

And this is no longer. We're not living under the law.

If, if you want to have that, you go right ahead.

But-By saying that, that you have to be

circumcised, that you can't eat certain types of, of meats or

shellfish, you know, however small you're saying I, that we have to live

by, how small of a piece of that law is still in effect, you're saying that,

that it- it's all the law, right? And if you wanna go

that route, Christ died for nothing then, right?

'Cause, 'cause, 'cause Christ did say, "I didn't come to, to, to do away with

the law. I, I came to fulfill it." Right? And that's what that is.

It's the grace, it's the blood sacrifice, if you will, you know, the,

the, the atonement, for all our sins.

And if, and if you don't, if you don't think that that's enough or

sufficient, then, then, then you're in trouble.

Yeah. You're so right. And, and the, the beauty of this particular passage with this,

with this insistence on it, is that Paul isn't saying it's as though the law was bad. He's saying it's incomplete.

You know, it's like-

Mm-hmm

... why, why would you live in a way where you have to keep chasing the, the right answer over and over and over again?

Yeah.

So grace tells us that, that that work has been done.

The, the account, if you will, has been settled.

But justification is also another word that he uses a lot here, and that I think it, it, it, it goes right into the heart of it.

Um, but we, we throw that word around a lot, so let's talk about how Paul is using it.

Mm-hmm.

He is using it as, an identity marker here in a legal way. You mentioned Paul's legal mind.

We see it at work here. In the ancient court system, to be justified meant that the court found you, in favor of you.

Mm-hmm.

But it's not like our normal kind of defense system.

Um, it was really all down to what the judge thought.

And if you were justified, it would be how you lived according to the law, essentially. Like, did you live according to the law or not?

Um, and what would end up happening is, is the judge didn't decide that you were just... You weren't. You weren't justified, as it were, and you were guilty just by what the judge said. So it didn't really matter how good you were.

Even if you followed the law, they, how you, how they interpreted the law really mattered. It, it's, it is a lot like today.

But what Paul is trying to say here is that God, through

Jesus, it- sets Jesus both on judgment seat and in

our seat, right? In, in the, the place of, of, the person who did or did

not ju- be justified by the law. Thank God for that,

because if we were sitting in that seat

and there was something other than a truly just judge, we would never make it.

We would have no choice but to admit that we would never be

justified. We're only justified because God wants us to be justified.

Right.

It, and, and that then leads us to faith.

And when C- when he's using faith,

again, it's not just, a stand-in for whether or not we think this

is all great. It's, it's actually saying, we are receiving  
God's gift for us in such a fashion that we know it is just that,  
gift. Um, and we have faith in Jesus's  
faith. Like, it's actually the fact that Jesus has given  
himself fully into this that we can trust this, that we, we don't have  
to think about this anymore. It just is the truth.  
And because we're baptized into that, we have faith in that goodness.

Any thoughts on, on any of that?

Yeah. Well, it's like that, the old joke where I've, I've had a  
dream, and I've died, and I've gone to heaven.

I'm in front of the, the, St. Peter's gate, and I can't really see who's in  
front of me, but I just hear Peter say, "Well, Mother Teresa, you could have done  
more. Next."

Yeah.

You know? If, if you're living by the law, by, by justification of your own works,  
I mean, you're, you're really that's it. You're, you're gonna be out there. Yeah.

It's, it's, it's true.

Yeah.

We can't live good enough lives on our own.

And it, and in some ways, it, Paul is trying to even ask us to leave the  
category of good and bad behind.

Mm-hmm.

It's like, it, all that matters, Evelyn

Underhood, wrote this, and I think it's so true. Underhill wrote this.

The only interesting thing is God.

That's what she wrote.

Mm-hmm.

And that's, that's what Paul is trying to say here.

The only interesting thing in this anymore is not whether or not you're a good boy

or a bad boy. It's that God loves you, that g- that, that, the

faith and the justification, the grace, has already been done,

so what are you gonna do about it? What are you gonna think about?

And, and th- think of who's saying this. You know, again, I ...

Paul and his, his background, I mean, he spent, you know, years

and years and years studying at the, the, the, the foot of the greatest,

rabbis in, in the history of the Jewish faith.

He was, probably a member of the Sanhedrin, and he, he was, he was a super,

super Hebrew. And to say these things coming from him is just

astounding. It, it must be, it must be true. It must be.

He must have some, uh... It, it's just more proof of the, the, the, the

transformation that Paul had.

Yeah. And this is why I think it's so important we spend so much time with the

personhood of Paul at the beginning of the session today, because,

a vision is given to somebody in particular, right?

You know, like, e- each one will then, we will spend the rest of our lives, as Paul clearly has, trying to, understand the interpretation of that vision.

Right.

And I, and I wanna warn us, it's not just for somebody on the top-of-the-hill-side-side getting some sort of vision.

We're talking about the very thing that God has laid on your heart.

And you spend your lifetime, if you're doing it right, figuring out what it is that God has given you to proclaim to the world.

Sorry, Dad, were you about to say something?

It, it, probably a straight line. All, all the, the Mount

Rushmore of, of faith, you know, from, Abraham to Moses to, to

David, they were very complicated

people. And, and, time and time again, like Peter,

they, they, they took two steps forward and one step back.

Um, and, and these are the heroes of the faith, you know?

And, thank God for, you know, for the grace of God, 'cause man,

I'm, I'm really below them, you know? Um.

Yeah. You know, you raise a good point.

The, the, this justification Paul is saying is not just

something that has happened in the past, or, or rather, sorry, it's

not just something that's apocalyptic in that there is a, a vision for the

future. He draws the line through the entirety-

Mm-hmm

... of salvation history, really pulling us back here to the kind of eschatological work God is doing, the telos, if you will.

Right.

That God will act justly to vindicate God's covenant people, which is now all of us, not just by circumcision, right?

Covenant is opened wide open. Um, and he, you know, he's drawing on Isaiah through through, chapter verses through here, where, it is declared that God will justify his people, right?

Right.

So Paul knows his scripture inside and out, and he knows exactly what he's pulling on here, what chord-

Right

... he's pulling on. Yeah. Well, that seems like a really good place to end, 'cause it'll lead us right into chapter three.

The recording for that is also up, so, you c- if you've, you're like, "Can't get enough of this," just go ahead and, and click, y- into that past recording. Dad, I'm really grateful you were willing to do this with me today.

Oh.

Thank you so much.

Yep.