

Galatians #4 - There's Righteousness for YOU!

- Well, the day was October 3rd, 1975 and the location was in Manila, the Philippines. Any guys guess what happened on October 3rd, 1975 in Manila, the Philippines. The Thrilla in Manila is what Muhammad Ali called it. It was what most boxing experts considered the greatest heavyweight battle in the history of the world. It was so popular that it was actually the first pay-per-view sports event in world history. And so it started everything as we know it today. Well, the fight went, it was supposed to go 15 rounds, it was a championship fight. It went 14 rounds. The early rounds Muhammad Ali, he really did win. And then in the middle rounds, Joe Frazier started attacking, getting inside and beating on his body. Muhammad Ali says that it was the closest that he ever came to death. Joe Frazier was at the end of his career, he had cataracts in one eye, and he got hit so much that the other swelled shut. So he fought the last few rounds basically blind. And they weren't sure that either man was gonna live through it, but it was ultimately called on a TKO in Muhammad Ali's favor in the 14th round. And even to this day, decades later, people are still talking about revisiting and holding that conflict is one of the great heavyweight battles in the history of the world. Why do I tell you that? Well, number one, I like boxing. But number two, as we get into it today, what you're going to see in Galatians chapter two is the heavyweight battle for all of human history, right? If you look at it, I want you to see it this way. I want you to see a guy named Peter with a robe on, and his favorite walkout music coming down, right? They're checking him, and the ringing goes, here comes the Apostle Paul, right? He's got his robe on, they're checking his mouthpiece, into the ring he goes, ding, ding, boom, they get it on. That's exactly what happens today in Galatians chapter two. So I want you to open your Bibles to Galatians 2:11. And we're gonna start with this heavyweight conflict and battle between Peter and Paul. It says, but when Cephas, that is Peter, came to Antioch. And so Peter was living up in Jerusalem. He is the apostle, he is the overseer, the leader of the God's mission to the Jewish people. Paul has got a lot of his base of operations down in a town called Antioch. He is the apostle, the missionary, the leader to the Gentiles. Those of us who are non Jewish. Antioch was a strategic important city. Because it was a port, it was a distribution portal. Information tends to go out even in our day for major urban centers, wherever there's an airport, or a port, or a university, or different means of transferring people and goods from one place to another. That becomes a good place for an evangelistically minded, missionary oriented church. Because wherever the people in goods are going, the gospel of Jesus could go. Well, knowing that Paul set up a church in Antioch, and it was a bit of a headquarters for him. And it was the first time in all of human history that believers in Jesus were actually called Christians, was it the city of Antioch. So it's an important city. Well, what happens is, Peter is coming down from Jerusalem, and he's coming to Antioch, right? And you would think right? Paul would say, hey, Peter is coming. He's our leader, he's the highest human authority associated and instituted by Jesus. Let's do a ticker tape parade, let's roll out a red carpet. Let's order some takeout, let's get a mariachi band, let's put a big sombrero on him. Let's make this fun. No, instead, I opposed him to his face. You see the conflict. Peter shows up. Hi, Paul, hi, boom. Wow, okay, well, welcome to Antioch, here we go. And just so in our day, this would be like Billy Graham getting a spoon and chasing the Pope, right? That's what's going on

in their day. This is a big conflict, okay? Because he stood condemned, right? Some of you say you can't condemn me. I can't condemn anyone. No one can condemn anyone. But we condemn ourselves through our behavior. And Peter condemned himself through his behavior. Before certain men came from James, and these are people who are an offshoot of James ministry. James is Jesus' brother. And there are people who were part of his ministry that broke off, but still used his name in an effort to build their platform. Every seminary, every Bible College, every church, every denomination, has got somebody who goes astray. They break off, they're teaching something false and wrong, but they're still appealing to their heritage for credibility. That's what's happening here. Before certain men came from James he, that is Peter was eating with the Gentiles. Friendship, relationship. But when they came he what? He drew back, and there's the word separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. We're getting into all of this. But it's fear. It's fear driven. Let me tell you this. When you make your decisions out of fear, you will never arrive at the will of God. You will never arrive at the will of God if you are driven by fear of man. Proverbs 29:25 says that fear of man is a trap or a snare. If you're afraid of somebody, their approval, their punishment, their rules, whatever the case may be, you can't see God because you have allowed that person to literally get between you and God and you no longer can see God or His will. All you see is that person and their threat. And Peter here he has fear. Some of you struggle, you don't like conflict, you don't like arguments, you don't like tension, you don't like awkwardness. I'm not saying you need to like those things, but you need to have those things, okay? Peter is unwilling to endure a certain amount of conflict for the purity of the gospel, the good news of the person and work of Jesus Christ. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically or along with him. He's the leader, so they follow him. Along with him so that even Barnabas, his name means son of encouragement. You ever met somebody with a gift of encouragement? They're always smiling. Every time they text there's a smiley, two thumbs up emoji. That's Barnabas, okay? He's the two thumbs up smiley emoji guy. And he is one of the leaders of the mission to the Gentiles. And now he's going off base. So here's what happened. God loved people, God saved people, as they put their faith in Jesus Christ a line was drawn, religious people came along and said, in addition to Jesus, you need to do some things as well. And that is abide by this additional list of rules that we have created for you. Peter crosses the line with the false teachers, and then Barnabas crosses the line with the false teachers. And then their followers are crossing the line and all siding with the false teachers. On the other side is Paul saying, this is a crisis. This is a crisis. He goes on, next slide. But when I saw their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, right? Not just man-made tradition cultural rules. I said to Cephas or Peter 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? So here's the issue. These two men, Peter and Paul, they both grew up in devoutly Jewish homes rooted in the Old Testament. They abided by all of the ceremonial laws, the dietary restrictions, all of the cultural expectations of the Jewish people. And then Jesus came to fulfill all of the Old Testament, and he lived without sin, he died for sin, he rose for our salvation, and he has paid the price, finished the work for God's people to be forgiven and reconciled to God. And God communicated to both of these men that if you were Gentile and became a Christian, you didn't also need to become Jewish, right? That Jesus was going to accept people from every culture provided they belong to him. God communicated this, we looked in Galatians one directly as a revelation to Paul. For

Peter, he had a vision. It's recorded in the book of the Bible called Acts in chapter 10. God gave him a vision that there's this guy named Cornelius, who's a Gentile, but is trying to figure out who God is. And so he tells Peter, go there and tell him about Jesus. And then he's gonna get saved and be a Christian, and tell him he doesn't need to abide by all of the Jewish restrictions. And then Peter, you need to be his friend. Okay, well, this is radical for Peter, but all of this happens. And what happens now is lots, and lots, and lots, and lots of Gentiles, how many of us are Gentiles? This is us, right? This is our family history. Lots, and lots and lots of Gentiles start coming to Jesus and showing up in church. But the Gentiles do things differently than the Jews. This still happens in our day. Certain ages, generations do things differently. Certain racial groups, or cultural groups or political groups will do things differently. And when they come together the question is, how do we resolve and reconcile these differences and live together as a family? And their religious people said, it's easy. You guys just be like us and do what we tell you. And the Gentile folks said, actually getting circumcised, we talked about it, we're not really excited. We're wondering if we could reconsider that point. Because what happens in every ministry, there are people who are, what I will call single issue voters. All they care about is their thing, not the whole thing. In Galatia their single issue was circumcision. Hey, let's talk about Jesus. No, let's talk about circumcision. Let's talk about God's grace. No, let's talk about circumcision. Let's talk about anything else. No, let's talk about circumcision. The single issue voters in Antioch, their issue was dietary restrictions and diet, okay? And so they're militant about this. Hey, let's talk about Jesus. No, let's talk about the menu. No, let's talk about heaven. No, let's talk about the menu. Let's talk about the weather. No, let's talk about the menu. Some of you are single issue voters. You need to know that that's going to be a problem. And you may say, I have a good issue. But if your issue is more important than the gospel of Jesus Christ and the unity of God's people, then your issue is a problem. And this happens, we all have our our single issues, our hot buttons, the things that we care about, that matter to us. And we would even say, we think this is a good idea for everybody. And the problem is that the single issue voters have pushed their agenda above the simple, loving, faithful, grace and salvation that comes through Jesus Christ. And so what we have here is a conflict. Peter and Paul conflicting together. Some would say that perhaps Paul should have rebuked him privately. And the truth is he may have, we don't know, doesn't say that. But in addition, what Peter is doing is very, very public. And it's a very public issue. And Peter is coming to town. And so the issue comes to a boiling point and it has to be dealt with. And the issue is this, Peter is a hypocrite. Peter is a hypocrite. Because when he's with one group he behaves one way, when he's with a different group he behaves another way. How many of us, this sounds familiar. Let's just be honest, right? You're like, well, when I'm around these people I don't talk about these things. And when I'm around these people I don't talk about other things. Why?. Because I fear them, I seek their approval. I want them to like me, I don't like conflict and criticism. So when he's with the Gentiles, what does he eat? Whatever he wants. This is Peter the Jews? I'll a pork sandwich. Put some gravy on it. I'll take some pork rinds, that'd be amazing. When he's with the Jewish people he's like, yeah, pork, that's a real problem. Yeah, we shouldn't touch that. He's a hypocrite. A hypocrite is someone who literally wears a mask. It's like an actor or an actress playing a role and nobody knows who you really are. And what Peter is, when I'm with the Gentiles I pretend like I'm a gentile. When I'm with the Jews I pretend like I'm a Jew. Oh, now

the Jews and Gentiles come together, what do I do? The religious people are the nastiest, so I'll join their team so that I don't have to endure their wrath. And then I'll make all my Gentile friends submit to these religious rules and regulations. True or false, this still happens in church. Legalistic, rule based, single issue voters, if any of this is bothering you, you now know it's you. Legalistic, rule based, non relational, high control, punitive, threatening religious law people show up. They exert a lot of pressure, right? And what Paul says is, no no no no. Everybody over here on team Jesus, not on team religion. As long as God accepts them we accept them. If God doesn't give them any additional rules other than trusting in Jesus, we're not going to give them any additional rules. God sees hypocrisy in the same way that a married couple sees adultery, okay? Now, I've never done this. But imagine I was on let's say a flight, okay? And I'm sitting next to a girl and I take my wedding ring off. What am I doing? I'm communicating something. And if that person sitting next to me on the flight starts asking, well, tell me about your life. And I talk about my job and my hobbies, but not my wife and my kids. What am I doing? I'm being a hypocrite. Because I'm pretending to be someone that I'm not. I am a Christian, married husband and father. So you know what, yeah, the ring is on. What do you do? I preach the gospel with my wife. Now usually that means they don't talk to me for the rest of the flight. But the key is just to tell people who you are. Not to be rude about it, but to be honest about it. Because if everybody else is gonna have a parade, and if everybody else is gonna have a flag, and if everybody else is gonna have a hashtag, well, then let's just come out of the closet for team Jesus. That's what I'm saying, okay? And that's the problem with Peter. All right, so seven leadership lessons from this conflict. All of you are leaders in different spheres, areas and ways. Some of you are teachers, some of you are parents, some of you are ministry leaders, business leaders. Culture is what you teach and tolerate. When Paul planted the church Galatia, he taught them the grace of God. Now the legalistic-rule-based people show up. And what they're saying is, you need to tolerate our legalistic rule based religion. What's the issue? No, because culture in any organization or family, it's not just what you teach, it's what you tolerate. So let's say you've got little kids and you have a rule at your house. Hey, no cussing out your mom, and all the moms would agree. That's a great rule, all right, okay? Now you can teach that, but what if one of the kids gets to always cuss out mom? That's the culture you're going to get, okay? And so Paul taught grace and he can't tolerate law. He has taught it's all about Jesus. He can't tolerate, it's about somebody else now, who's got a clipboard. Number two, here are the two driving motifs. Galatians is surprisingly. I have been teaching God's word almost every week, verse by verse for a few decades. There's way more in Galatians than I thought. And there was a lot, that's what I thought. And what I'm seeing is that Paul is trying to establish a culture in the church, that then will establish a culture in the families that comprise the church family. And when it comes to building a culture for your family, for your business, for our ministry, really what we have here between those who are rule based and those that are grace based, you can start with law. Here's all of the rules. What that leads to is fear. If I break the rules, what happens? Wrath comes upon me. So what does that cause? Hypocrisy. People will pretend they're one thing when they're not. They don't like the conflict. If you allow this culture to set into your family, you won't know that your kids are in crisis. You won't know when they're struggling, you won't know when they need help. Because they're not going to come to someone who is going to drop a Thor hammer on their life, right? How many criminals run to

police officers? I'm really struggling, I've been stealing and addicted. The last place the criminal is gonna go is to the cop. If they see you as the law, when they're a criminal, they will run from the law. But if these are your kids, or your disciples or people you love, you don't want them to live in fear of you and practice hypocrisy with you. Instead you wanna set this kind of culture, grace. Grace, what this is? This is love, this is mercy. The relationship is secure. My approval is unchanging, my affection, my devotion to you cannot be altered. There's nothing you can do to cause me to love you anymore. There's nothing you can do to cause me to love you any less. You start with approval, you start with blessing, you start with love, you start with kindness, you start with mercy. What that leads to is a culture of love. And what that leads to is a culture of repentance. You know what, I have got some things messed up. Because you love me, I'm gonna come to you, so that you'll share God's grace with me so I can change. This is what Roman says. It's the word of God that leads us to repentance. The kindness. It's the grace of God, through the love of God's people, that ultimately Paul says leads to repentance. That's a change of mind, change of heart, change of life. And see what is happening here, these religious leaders, they're bringing law fear and hypocrisy, and it gets itself into Peter. And Paul comes along and says no, no, no, no, no, no, no. That's not the culture we're setting for the church family. That's not the culture we're setting for the families. Grace, love, repentance. That's a word on. Number three, unity is godly, division is demonic. Peter and Paul, they're supposed to be rowing in the same boat each with an oar. As it is Paul's rolling forward, Peter's right rolling backward. The ship of Christianity is stuck and dead in the water. Division started in heaven when Satan and the demons decided that they were gonna stand against God. And now there would be two visions, division literally means two visions. That's why if you're married, you and your spouse you need to be one. Because Jesus says, a house that's divided falls down, doesn't stand up. And what's happening here in the church, right? They have two visions. They have the religious vision of the religious people. They have the grace vision of God. And what Paul is saying is we need to have unity. Because, let me tell you this, God doesn't bless your culture, He blesses His. And if you want God's grace to flow into your business, you want God's grace to flow into your life, you want God's grace to flow into your ministry, practice His culture, He will bless his culture. And so what he's fighting for here is unity among God's people. Because division is demonic. Number four, wolves attack shepherds to get sheep. Wolves don't get sheep because sheep don't run the wolves. So what happens is God raises up a shepherd, he calls out the, sheep come to the shepherd, and then he there is a flock, and so what does the wolf do? He attacks the shepherd so that he can take over and ravage the flock. Beware of those who are always critical. Beware of those that are always judgmental. Beware of those that are always looking with your faults instead of theirs. Beware of those who see the word of God as a binoculars to find your problem, not a mirror to see their own problem. And what is happening here is that Paul is the shepherd. He is trying to protect the sheep in Galatia. And the religious people are the wolves. Jesus had crowds, and then shepherds would come, and they would, excuse me, wolves would come to strike him as the shepherd and scatter the sheep. Here Paul is the shepherd, and wolves come, and they attack Paul in an effort to hurt the sheep. We live in a day when there's only two ways to be famous. To do something or attack someone who has, okay? And here what we're seeing is this demonic spirit of I'm going to attack those who are building the church of God and building people in the grace of God. That's not a

ministry, that's demonic. Number five for leaders, stuff rolls uphill, not downhill. How many of you are parents and you've noticed this? If your kids don't take care of something, who does? You do. I tell your kids, hey, take out the trash and feed the dog. And then they go to school, and they didn't take out the trash or feed the dog. So the dog got into the trash and ate the trash. Like now it's on me, stuff rolls up hill. The local leadership in Galatia, I told this to, you know, our staff Bible study this week, they get an F. Because where is the local leadership? Paul is in a different location. He tells us, he's in Antioch, he sends the letter to the churches in Galatia. What that means is he's in a different city. It's good, it's important, it's vital for a local church or ministry to have non local leadership to serve as the backstop, right? When I played baseball I was a catcher. So my job was if the balls in the dirt, right? Tuck the chin, eat it, blocked the ball. But occasionally what happens is, the ball gets by me. Well, when the ball gets by me, thankfully there's a backstop, right? Paul here is serving as the backstop. But the problem is that the local leadership, they have lost this issue, or maybe even the local leadership had sided with the religious people. This is a crisis. This is a crisis. This is a total crisis. And so it rolls all the way uphill to the Apostle Paul. Number six, leaders make decisions for their followers. I think it's in Luke 6:40. Jesus says that students become like their teachers. What this means is, if you're a parent that doesn't go to church, your kids aren't going to church. It means if you're a spouse that's not praying for your family, then your family's probably not praying for your family. That ultimately here, Peter is leading people and they are following him. He's now got Barnabas on board. It's Peter and Barnabas. These are big, big, big deals. And they're going the wrong direction, and Paul sees a parade Everybody walking away from the grace of God to religious rules and regulations. And Paul pulls to the fire arm and says, this is a crisis, we don't leave the grace of God. And then number seven, pain is the price of leadership. Why did Peter cave? Why did he fold? It says he was afraid. And what was he afraid of? Well, the bible says that fear has to do with punishment. Oh, this will cost me. And let me say, for those of you who are older you care about your capital. What do I mean by that? Your money, your investments, your income. You younger people you care about your social capital. Your friends, your followers, your likes, people thinking that you're a decent person and not speaking negatively of you or criticizing you, especially publicly. And what happens here is that Peter is unwilling to pay a price of pain. He knows he'll endure wrath, and scorn, and judgment, and negative social media, and some bad press, and it's gonna be a real dumpster fire for him for a while. But what he says is, I don't do pain. If you don't do pain, you don't do Jesus, okay? Paul, however, he endures pain. That's the difference. Now how many of the story of Peter? And this is getting to be a little bit of a trend for him. Remember, he denied and separated from Christ when Christ went to the cross. And then Christ reinstated him, and here he separates himself from, and he disassociate himself from Christians. Because he's unwilling on both occasions to endure any measure of pain. Let me tell you this, the degree of your impact as a leader is inextricably connected to the level of pain you are willing to tolerate to achieve an objective or outcome. I'll read to you Paul, here's what Paul says. Second Corinthians, 11. Five times I received the 40 lashes minus ones, three times I was beaten with rods. How many of you have to one time beaten with rods and be like, I feel like I did my lifetime supply, beaten with rods. How many of you your job ain't that bad? That's what I'm saying. If you show up tomorrow, and they lash you and beat you with rods, you have a New Testament job. Once I was stoned, not this, this, okay? It was different,

not the Rocky Mountain High. Three times I was shipwrecked, can you imagine being shipwrecked? How much PTSD does this guy have? I'm on a boat, it crashes, I gotta swim for my life. And then the Lord is like, get on the next boat. You're like, okay Lord, three times shipwrecked. Three times shipwrecked. A night and a day I was adrift at sea. That's unbelievable. On frequent journeys, journeys in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles. Danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers. Let me tell you, you're not paranoid if it's happening, okay? It's all happening for him. He said, every day in my life, the terror alert was at red every day. In toil and hardship, though through many a sleepless night, hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposures, sleeping outside, and apart from other things, there is daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Paul said, everything I went through was horrible. But the worst was, I love these people so much, that I was burden for them all the time. That's a pastor's heart. That's a pastor's heart And what Paul is saying is, I'm willing to endure pain for these people, not bring pain to these people. Peter is going to bring pain to the people. Paul is going to endure pain for the people. As a leader you've got to decide, am I gonna pay the price of pain, or will I push that on to my followers and people? There is a price to be paid to be a founder. There's a price to be paid to be a senior leader. There is a price to be paid to set and protect a culture. That's for leaders. Six lessons for all Christians from this conflict. Your behavior can change your beliefs. God's grace is free. You don't need to be Jewish. And then he starts hanging out with his Jewish friends again. And what he starts to do is change his beliefs. If you live in rebellion, if you live in hypocrisy, if you live in excuse making, rather than sin repenting, eventually your beliefs will change your behavior. Almost everybody I've ever met, that tells me this, they say I'm a Christian, I'm just not sure this is the divine word of God. My question is, who are you sleeping with? That's always my question. Let's just leapfrog to the finish line. It's a moral problem, not a mental problem. Where in the Greek I was studying the word fornication, and no you aren't. You weren't, you weren't. You were having mojito and breaking commandments. That's what you were doing. So don't try and find Greek words to justify your rebellion, okay? Almost all the time, your behavior can change your beliefs. And so when your behavior and your beliefs collide, which is supposed to emerge victorious? Your beliefs. But if you let your behaviors rule over your beliefs, eventually you're changing your beliefs. I've seen this all the time. I've met really nice, sweet girls who were single and so, you know, I don't believe that a Christian should, you know, get romantically involved with a non-Christian. Then they meet a boy, is he a Christian? Well, nobody, he believes in God. James says, demons believe in God, don't date them. And okay, well, where are you? I don't know. And then after a while that we're getting married. Where you get married? Well, you know, we've been together a lot. Well, what about your beliefs? Well, I'm not sure I believe that anymore. Because your behavior has changed your beliefs rather than allowing your beliefs to change your behavior. That's what Peter's doing. That's hypocrisy. Christ displaces all other allegiances. If you were to walk up to Peter before he met Jesus, he would have started with, I'm Jewish, right? Here's my question, what would you start with? I'm American, I'm a veteran, I'm male, I'm female. I'm black, I'm white, I'm Republican, I'm Democrat. I'm conservative, I'm liberal, I'm adorable, pray for me. How would you start? And yeah, what Paul is saying here is, hey, it's not Gentile Christian and Jewish Christian. It's one big new family, Christian. Same

father, same big brother named Jesus. Whatever allegiances, whatever identities you have prior to meeting Christ, you have a now completely new identity. You belong to God. Number three, there are no perfect Christians. How many of you that's encouraging? So, okay, people are as like, Christians are not perfect. Yeah, we know, that's why Jesus died. It was a big deal. So what happens is this, is Peter a mature Christian? Technically he is, okay? I know the evidence won't hold up in court but just entertain me here. He walked with Jesus for years. He studied with Jesus for years. In the list of disciples he's always listed first because he's the leader. He writes books of the Bible, First and Second Peter. And he's still a work in progress and a hot mess minus the hot. That's Peter, right? How many of you, you're mature Christians, but not in every area? You're mature Christians, but still have some fear of man issues? You're mature Christians, but there's still some works that need to happen in your soul, because there are some things that need to change? That's encouraging, right? This is why we love Peter. It's not like Peter got it wrong, and then he got it right. It's Peter got it wrong, and then he got it right. Now he got it wrong again. Welcome to the Christian walk. Two steps forward, one step back, cha, cha, cha, walk with Jesus, amen? That's Peter, okay? We cannot reject people that God accepts. God says I accept the gentiles, and the Jewish people said, we don't. If God has accepted somebody, you know what, if somebody is forgiven by God, saved by God, filled with the spirit, belongs to Jesus, they're in. They're in. Now some of you be like, but I don't like those people. They don't like you either. So let's just all be miserable together. Welcome to a family, okay? Welcome to a family. God is a father making a family. We tend to think of salvation as just an individual thing, personal relationship. Let me tell you this, your personal relationship also involves the rest of the family. So we've got five kids, and I wouldn't let my kids decide, we're gonna break into teams against each other. Because my job as a father is to have one family. It's not gonna be boys versus girls, or tall versus short, or those with Grace's pleasant disposition versus my offspring. It's not going to be that way. We're one family, amen? God's father, and He's trying to build a family. And factions in a family are crisis. And then lastly, grace is for relationship with God and others. As Christians, the Jews and the Gentiles, how do they have relationship with God? By grace? Then there need to be means of grace and share that grace with each other. The reason that their relationships are broken is they're not grace based. They receive God's grace and they don't serve as a means of grace. God wants you not to just be a recipient of grace, but a means of grace. God gives you a grace, you give them grace. God forgives you, you forgive them. God loves you, you love them, right? God endures with you, you endure with them. Grace is necessary for human relationships. There is no healthy church, there is no healthy family, there is no healthy ministry that doesn't exist in an atmosphere of grace I told you this a while ago. When God creates things He creates environments for them to live in. So birds do great in the air, they don't do great underwater. Fish do great underwater, they don't do great in the air. God's people do great in grace, they don't do well in law. And that's the problem, that's the crisis, that's the conflict, that's the drama in Galatians. So what's the answer? Thank you for asking, next slide. Galatians 2:15 through 16, its justification by faith. In the Greek text, which this is the original language of the New Testament, this is one sentence, okay? So Paul basically takes six years of Bible college and seminary and he's like, I can do that in a tweet. That's what he does. It's unbelievable, okay? We ourselves are Jews by birth. He says I'm Jewish, I was real devout Jewish. I was circumcised on the right day from the right

tribe, went to the right schools. What he says is insofar as obeying all those religious rules I was flawless, I was faultless. I was the Michael Jordan of the "Hebrew Behavior Academy." That's what he's saying. And not what, Gentile sinners. You what that is? That's a pejorative slang word. We give nicknames to two kinds of people. People we really like and people we really don't like, amen? That's quiet, very, very quiet. You're like, oh, that's true, you know. My mortal enemy, I have a name for them, and my best friend I have a different name for them. What these religious people called the Gentiles, the naughty nickname when they weren't in the room, the Gentile sinners. You know what that is? That's identity shaping. If you're a Christian let me tell you this, sin may explain some of your behavior, but it doesn't explain any of your identity, okay? And your behavior can change once God changes your identity, okay? Yeah, we what, know, that a person is not justified by the works of the law. We know this. But through faith in Jesus Christ. So the point is always we have separated from God, somebody needs to do something. Works of the law is I'll do something. Faith in Jesus Christ is he already did everything, right? It's about what Jesus does, not about what you do that makes you right with the God in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law. Because by works of the law, how many people are gonna get justified? Zero. Good people go to hell, forgiving people go to heaven. So the issue is justification justified. It's such a massive theme. It appears this word eight times in Galatians, multiple times here, 15 times in Romans. And it comes from the legal realm. A judge is holding a case, rendering a verdict, to be declared justified is to be declared the opposite of condemned. That you are now free to go, right? Free to go. You're justified, you are declared righteous. This declaration of righteousness is not something that you do over time. It's something that God said at the cross of Jesus in an instant. Here's the issue. Heaven is what kind of place? It's perfect. God is what kind of being? Perfect. We are not perfect. We're sinful, we're unholy, were rebellious. How can imperfect, sinful people dwell forever in the presence of a holy God in a righteous place? How can we be declared made righteous in the sight of God? Well, there are basically in human history, two different alternatives that have been posited. One he calls works of the law. Works of the law is whatever you do to make yourself acceptable in the sight of God. And this happens among the rebellious and the religious differently. For those who are rebellious, some actually have made this crazy argument. God made people, I am the way I am. God must like me the way I am. Well, no, something called the fall happen, and you're not the way you were designed to be. People will be like, God made me this way, God made me this gender, God made me this orientation. God made, no He didn't. Sin corruption in the fall did. So some people say, well, God made me. He must be okay. Other people, they will say, you know what, I'm a good person. I'm sure God's not looking for perfect people. He's looking for awesome people. Thankfully I'm awesome. Okay, how many of you, let me just tell you this. You'll chuckle. This was me before I met Jesus, right? Grace came to me, my wife, and she's like, oh, what do you think about Jesus? Yeah, he's great for people who need him. You know, just like hospitals are good for sick people, physical therapy is good for broken people, Jesus is good for sinful people. I don't really need him, because I'm a good person, right? At the time I hadn't drank any alcohol, done any drugs, smoke any cigarettes, punched anyone that didn't deserve it. I was a good person, okay? And some people think that way. I'm a good person, God, you know, I'm sure He's fine with me, and then we say this crazy thing. That anyone who dies, we say, they died and went to a better

place. That's justification by death. How are you declared righteous in the sight of God? Stop breathing. No, it takes more than that. It takes Jesus' death, not your death to get you in righteousness before God. So that's rebellious people. Religious people come along and they're like, we got to get serious, we got to do some stuff. Okay, let's get a committee, get some hats. So this looks very official. Somebody's got a clipboard. What are our holiness code? What's our rules? We do this, we don't do that, we do this, we don't do that. We do this, we don't do that. And then maybe God will look down and He'll grade on a curve. And He'll say those kids tried their best. They took the test, they got the answers right, I'm going to pass them and graduate them into the kingdom. And this can be speaking in tongues, being baptized having the right confession of faith. This can be going on a mission trip, this can be getting down on a prayer mat three times a day. This can be reincarnating to pay back your karmic debt to God, this can be wearing special underwear. I mean, I'm not making any of this up, and I don't have special underwear on. But at the end of the day people come up with all kinds of crazy works of the law rules. How many of you grew up in religious based homes? Don't raise your hand if you're here with your mom. But there were just some crazy rules that had nothing to do with God. But you were told that this was God's will. They started reading the Bible. You're like, no, it's not. It's not in there. You're making up rules, because you're religious, you're legalistic, your rule based, you're punitive, you're high control. That's not how this works. And I'll tell you what works with the law leads to. It leads to one of two things. Arrogance and pride, or devastation and hopelessness. If you're in a high performance based, rule based, record keeping, law consuming environment, and you do a good job, what do you think? I'm really doing a good job. Who thought that? Paul, until he met Jesus. Some of you are proud and haughty, and judgmental, and faultfinding, nitpicking. Every time the grace of God is preached the religious people bristle. It's like water with cats, right? And it's like, okay? Put grace on people, 'cause here's what religious people say. That's not fair. I'll tell you what, heaven ain't fair. It's generous. Hell is fair. If you want fair, go to hell, it's fair. You know, like I don't want to go to hell, okay, then you don't want fair, amen? I mean, I'm not kindling, and that ain't fair. But that's awesome. And that's Jesus. Religious spirit, works of the law. It either leads to haughty pride, or just hopeless despair. Because let's say you've got all these rules, and the rules about the rules, and they had rules. Their word for law was Torah. In the Old Testament derivatives there have appeared 600 times in the first five books of the Old Testament, the books of the law, there were 613 laws. They Hebrew kids are growing up going, Oh my gosh, I gotta remember the 613 laws. Can you imagine how big the fridge was? You're like here's your chorchy. Oh my gosh, it's 613. And every day the kids are like, oh, circumcise, get a lamb. No pork, okay? What it leads to, am I having fun? I don't mean to wake you up. I'm just trying to entertain myself. I appreciate you participating. All right, what happens when you get one? You get depressed. Like, this is like going to college. And they're like, alright, we're giving the final. We have to graze As and Fs. What do you got to do to get an A? Don't miss any question. What do you do to get an F? Miss one. How many questions are there? A 1000. How many of you are like, I'm not taking that test. Because I'm never gonna pass that test. This is works of the law. It leads to a lot of people being hopeless. And so you know what happens. This is what's crazy. In a law based environment people are rebellious or they're religious. The religious people are like, there are rules and we have kept them and we are better than you, and our spiritual gift is judging. And our ministry is

condemnation. You're very welcome, okay? And then what happens is the rebellious people say, you're no fun, you're law based. You're no good at all. You're terrible people. Plus you're a bunch of hypocrites. And they rebel. How many of you who have raised these two kids, okay? If they're sitting with you raise their hands right now, okay? In a law based, rule based environment, you get religious people and rebellious people. Religious people who think they nailed it, rebellious people who know they never can. So they don't even try. How many of you have gone from rebellious to religious? You're like, I was very rebellious and then I became very religious. Or how many of you are very religious and then you became really rebellious? This is the fight in Galatians. The Jewish people are the religious people, works with the law people. They're looking at the Gentile sinners say, they're just rebellious. There is another way. And it is not works in the law. Paul calls it faith in Christ. Faith in Christ. It's not about what they do or what they don't do. It's about what he's done. That Jesus Christ has lived the perfect life, not you. That Jesus Christ has paid the ultimate price on the cross, not you. That Jesus Christ endured the wrath of God so that you don't have to. And that Jesus Christ rose to conquer death, forgive sin and declare people righteous in the sight of God, not by our works, but by his works. And he says it on the cross, it is finished. What he's saying is, you're welcome, I did your job. Now what we do we trust in him by faith. And when Paul here talks about through faith in Christ, the commentators will debate. Does this mean the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, or our faith in Jesus Christ? I would say, yes. Our faith is in one who was, is faithful. Let me just tell you this. You can have faith in someone, and if they're not faithful, your faith doesn't matter. Some of you have been in marriages, dating relationships, business relationships. You had faith in someone, but they were not faithful. Let me tell you this, Jesus is faithful, and our faith is in the one who is always faithful. That's where Paul says elsewhere, even when we are faithless, he is still faithful. So he leads with his faithfulness, and we draft behind him trusting in him by faith. Now this is such a massive issue. We had another rumble over it. It was called the Protestant Reformation. There were some who were teaching that you are justified by faith in Christ, plus baptism, plus works, plus penance, plus saints, plus purgatory, plus paying money indulgences. And Protestantism came up, because people started reading the Bible. And the Holy Spirit started liberating them from religion. Man-made, devastating, law-based religion. This would include men like Martin Luther. And he understood the grace of God. And it led to a conflict in the church as it did in the days of Peter and Paul. And so we believe that justification is by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Jesus Christ alone, right? It's just Jesus, it's only Jesus, it's solely Jesus, it's totally Jesus. That's what he's saying here. No one is justified by works of the law, but by faith in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. John Calvin, a great protestant reformer said that this is the principle of the whole doctrine of salvation, and the foundation of all, what I will call true religion. Martin Luther, the great reformer said the justification is the issue on which the church stands or falls. Martin Luther found so much of his inspiration from Galatians, but especially this text. And he says the epistle to the Galatians is my epistle, I betrothed it to myself, it is my wife. It's like I loved it so much, I married it. That's how you're a nerd. Marry a book. Others call it the battle cry, the Reformation and the Christian Declaration of Independence. This is awesome. I'll tell you a story, Jesus tells the story. Two guys go into the temple, you know the story. They go into the temple, which is the church in that day. And the one man, he's religious. What does he pray? Out loud. God thank you that I'm better than these

other guys. The other guys are like, what? How did we get his prayer, right? How many of you your prayers are about other people and their problems? See, this is, I'm just gonna pound you like a nail because I love you. I'm just telling you this is gonna go, right? So how many of us were like, God help them and fix them, change them, and thank you Lord, I'm not a shipwreck like them? And guys are like, what, I disagree, I fully, they're praying the same thing for you. You guys should call each other and share notes, you both got work to do. So this guy prays, thank you God that I'm good and righteous, and obey the law, and I'm a good person, I do the right things. And thank you that I'm not bad like other people, okay? There's another guy in the temple over here and this guy is praying. That guy's religious, this guy's rebellious. He's made a mess of his life and everybody knows it. What it says is, he can't look up. You know why? Because that's pride. He's broken, he's humble. He just looks down and here's his prayer. Do you know his prayer? Lord have mercy on me, I'm a sinner. Lord have mercy on me, I'm a sinner. Here's what Jesus said. Those two guys left the temple. And Jesus uses this word. Which man was justified in the sight of God? That guy. That guy. I'm sure that made the religious guy really mad, right? Coming out, oh, let me stamp your passport. Thanks for coming. Damned, what? I'm the religious guy. Oh, saved, he's the rebellious guy. He showed up hungover. He just flew in from Vegas. He's still wearing the Mardi Gras beads. He got a neck tattoo. Yeah, but he repented, so he got forgiven. That's not fair. Oh, you on fair? You're on fire, there you go, now we're fair. Hey, religious people, your religion is a sin. That's the point. Because religious people are like, we're not like those sinners. No, no, no, you're a different kind of sinner. Your religious sinner, not a rebellious sinner. What Paul wants the whole church to say is, we're all sinners, we all need a savior. Jesus is faithful, let's trust him, and love each other, by the grace of God like a family. Like a family. Last slide, maybe, God works for you, in you and through you. This is my summary of what it means to understand the grace of God. The grace of God is something done for you, something done in you and something done through you, okay? Because sometimes people are like, why don't believe in productivity, or effort or results? I just believe in grace, and no, no grace does things. I'll tell you this, grace has changed the world. So it's powerful. Here's how Paul says it. But if in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ than a servant of sin? Here what he's saying was, I was obeying all the rules, and then I met Jesus, and I don't worry about those rules anymore. Did Jesus caused me to sin? No, Jesus doesn't lead people into sin. Certainly not, for if I rebuild what I tore down. Paul was building this religion that he met Jesus, and now he's knocking down that religion. And the religious leaders are taking the ruins and trying to rebuild what God was trying to tear down. Some of you this is your life. You're trying to build something that God is trying to tear down. God keeps knocking it down and you keep stacking it up. That's what Paul is saying that Peter is doing. For if I rebuild what I tore down, I proved myself to be a transgressor, for through the law, I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been, here's the Christian tattoo verse, right here. There's at least one person here right now that has this tattoo. I have been what, crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. Next slide. And the life I now live in the flesh in my body, 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 righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for nothing. What Paul is saying is, if good people go to heaven, then why did Jesus have to die? That seems like a total waste of the worst possible evil

done to the best possible person in the history of the universe. If you can save yourself, if you can make yourself righteous and right in the sight of God, then you are saying that Jesus died for nothing. And what Paul is teaching here, I wanna summarize it. God works for you, in you and through you. God works for you. This is what the Bible here is calling your justification. This is awesome. I need you to know this and believe this. That Jesus Christ did something for you on the cross. He died in your place for your sins, paying your penalty, reconciling your relationship to God. All of that work is completed, all of that work is finished. That is not something done by you. That is something done for you, amen? And that's what Paul says. He says, I was crucified with Christ. When Jesus hung there, my old life, my old identity, my old behaviors, my old allegiances, they were crucified with him. And then he says that God, through His grace does a work in you. This is the doctrine of what is called regeneration. You're not just forgiven and declared righteous, you're also made new. You get a new heart, a new nature, you're a new creation, you have new power, you have new desires. I always like to say, it's not about what we have to do, it's about what we get to do. Because that's what we want to do, amen? it's about a life of freedom and joy, and the grace of God. And God does something in you to change you. You're not perfect, but you're new and in a perfection process. He says, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. God did the work for you on the cross, He does work in you, Christ in you. That's the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And then God does things, not only for you, in you, through you. This is awesome. This is the whole of the Christian life. This is all of Christian leadership. This is the totality of Christian parenting, being a means of God's grace. How do I bring God's grace to this person? How do I bring God's grace to this circumstance? How do I bring God's grace to this pain, or problem, this need or loss, this fear, whatever the situation or burden might be, how can I bring God's grace? And I've told you, you run out of money, you run out of time, but you'll never run out of grace. It's an inexhaustible power source that God gives to his children through the Holy Spirit. And so Paul talks about God working through you. He says, the life I now live, the life I now live, which is different than the life that I used to live. You rebellious folks, let me tell you this. God's grace doesn't just forgive you, it also changes you. Paul doesn't say, Jesus died so I could be forgiven and continue to live my old lifestyle. He says, now the life I now live, which is different than the life I used to live. Who can testify, this is your story? You're not perfect, but your new. Jesus did something for you, he's done something in you, he's doing some things through you, amen? Wow, I'm excited, okay? All right, let me close with a story. And by close I don't mean end. So Jesus tells another story. I'll bring the band up, now let's throw a party. Let's take communion, okay? Jesus tells the story. It's one of the most famous parables in the history of the world. The parable is a little story to teach a big idea. It's the parable of the prodigal son, okay? Here's the parable of the prodigal son. They got a really great generous, grace centered dad. He's got two boys, one is religious, the other is rebellious. One is like the Jewish people, the other is like the Gentile sinners. Galatians is in many ways a theological explanation to the parable that Jesus taught. Now what happens is the rebellious brother realizes I don't wanna live by rules, I don't want to have self control. What he says is, dad I wish you were dead, because then I could get the inheritance. I don't want a relationship with you, all I want is resources from you. Brokenhearted father hands him his inheritance. That young boy, young man runs away from home, What does he do? He blows every dime. I mean, this kid's smoking meth, he's rebelling,

he's drunk, he's high, he's in the strip club. That's all of what it says. It's bad. His believing dad is devastated. He gets news and reports. Oh, gosh, that's what my son is doing? Eventually, what does the rebellious son do? He runs out of money. And he realizes, my dad loves me. Maybe if I go home my dad will give me a job. What he knows is this, he can go home because there's grace at home. He can go home because there's grace at home. If there wasn't grace at home you'll never go home. If there's only law at home you'll never go home. He goes home because he knows there's grace at home. And he shows up, and it says that the father is peering out the window. So excited to see the son. He's been waiting for him for days. He sees the son, what does he do? He runs to meet a son, in that culture men don't run, right? I'll tell you right now, if the building is on fire, I'm walking out. You reach a certain age you're like, I'm not running. Men didn't run. He couldn't wait another second, he couldn't wait another moment. He couldn't wait another instance to be with his son, and forgive him, and to embrace him, and to declare him righteous, and to love him, and to give grace to him. And what he says is, my son has come home. What he doesn't say is, son let's talk about all you did while you were away. My son is home. We have a relationship. The grace that I have for him will change him. Here, put a ring on him, get him a shower. The kid smells like honey bucket at a county fair. Put a new robe on him, dressing him up. We're gonna kill an animal, we're gonna have a party. That's grace. What's the religious brother do? He's offended by the grace. Religious people are offended by grace. I love you, I'm your pastor. I'm yelling not because I'm angry, but because I'm concerned. If this series frustrates you, annoys you, bothers you, it's because grace is a problem for you. The religious older brother, he's like, he did everything wrong. He broke all the rules. Then what the brother says is, I have lived a good life. I'm a good person, I kept all the rules. I was up early every morning, I stayed late every night. I tried my hardest I did my best. And now you're just gonna throw him a party. What he's saying is, I'm better than him. The father begs the religious son, please come to the party. And it says that the religious son refuses to even enter the household, because that's an environment of grace. All of human history, all of church history, all of biblical history is a battle between the rebellious younger brother and the religious older brother. It plays itself out in Galatians with the Judaizers, and the Galatian sinners. The key to Jesus parable is, you don't have to choose, am I going to be the rebellious or the religious. You can be the redeemed, because in addition to the two boys in the story, there's the son of God who is telling the story. And the answer to their problems is Jesus. And the point is this, that Jesus saves rebellious people from sin, and he saves religious people from their own rules, and their hardness of heart, and they're judgmental. It's okay, let's just be honest. How many of you are more rebellious? You're not gonna raise your hand, so don't even pretend. But how many of you are more rebellious. How many of you are more religious? Here's what I want us to do now. Let's get in the Father's house. Let's throw a party. Let's celebrate the grace of God. There's hope for all you rebellious people. There's hope for all you religious people. There's hope for all people, if their faith is in the one who is faithful, and His name is,

- Jesus

- Jesus Christ, all right. So stand up, we're gonna sing, we're going to celebrate. We're gonna take communion, we're gonna enjoy the grace of God. We're gonna share the grace of God.

God as we come to worship, we invite your grace into this place. God we confess all of us, we tend toward religion or rebellion, toward unrighteousness or self righteousness. And Lord God, we all need Jesus. And we need to be under the Father's love. We need to be under the justification of the son. We need to be living by the power and presence of the spirit. And we need to be sharing the grace of God, because God that is the full life, that is the free life, that is the good life. That is the Christian life and we invite it now in Jesus good name, amen.