

The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians

The Corrosive Nature of Christian Hypocrisy

Galatians 2:11-14

Judaizers: Some Jewish Christian converts, most likely from the Pharisees, who taught that justification with God was achieved by obedience to the Law (cf. Gal. 3:1).

Justification: To be justified before God means that He has rendered a verdict declaring that the individual is righteous because all of His legal requirements for righteousness have been achieved by Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). An immediate result of justification is that the individual has a relationship of peace with God (Rom. 5:1).

1. **A Bold Opposition** (v.11)

Peter, John and James had previously interviewed Paul and found nothing at all lacking with his proclamation of the gospel (vs.1-5) or with his calling as an apostle of Christ (v.7-9). However, Peter's actions in Antioch were cause for a bold, public, and direct confrontation (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1ff; 1 Tim 5:19-20).

2. **A Cowardly Retreat** (v.12)

Peter had regressed into a pattern of segregation from the gentiles after having pioneered their full integration into the church (Acts 10:1ff). Peter had defended table fellowship with gentiles as fellow Christians before the attacks of those who wanted to maintain the traditional ceremonial laws (Acts 11:1-3). For some reason, along with a fear of the Judaizers (cf. Lk. 13:2-5), Peter was able to rationalize his intentional and noticeable separation from the gentile Christians.

3. **A Larger Hypocrisy** (v.13)

The Judaizers problem was heretical in that they taught that obedience to the law was necessary for justification (Gal. 2:16). Peter's problem was not that he believed the heresy, but that his actions validated the teaching of the Judaizers. The contagious nature of this easy hypocrisy captured even Barnabas. Peter preached justification by faith for for any, including gentiles, who believe, but he was acting as if the gentiles were still unclean and in need of reform in order to be justified (cf. Acts 11:1-3).

4. **A Fundamental Desertion** (v.14)

Peter's activity clouded the truth of the gospel that people are justified by faith and not by works. By exclusively associating with those who taught justification by works, he was not being clear with anyone about the truth of the gospel. His actions aided the heretics, misled the church leaders, and confused the faithful.