**The Antioch Incident**

*Galatians 2:11-21*

**Introduction**

1. As Paul carefully worked through his argumentation against the error being faced by the churches of Galatia, he brought up an incident which occurred in Antioch where Paul had to withstand Peter to his face – **Galatians 2:11**
2. The incident served as a powerful weapon against the Judaizing error Paul was opposing, as well as confirming his authority as an apostle in ways.
3. The incident gives us insight into the great significance of the gospel, and its implications for us as those who submit to it, not only in contexts of individual living, but as the community of the body of Christ.
4. The Context in Which Paul Refers to the Incident
5. The Focus of Galatians
   1. Galatians being influenced by error – **Galatians 1:6-9**
      1. **5:7-10** – they had been persuaded to alter their path, but Paul is confident they will make corrections.
   2. Paul’s teaching (true gospel) will be unpopular to some – **Galatians 1:10** – not interested in pleasing men.
      1. **6:12-15** – not seeking to make a good showing, or find reason for boasting in anything but Christ – not seeking to avoid rejection/persecution.
   3. Specifically – **Galatians 3:5-9** – justification offered by God is extended to all (Gentiles, not just Jews), and this is possible because it is by faith – as preached to Abraham.
      1. ***“blessed with believing Abraham”*** – i.e. blessed along with Abraham who also had faith, same blessings.
6. The Previous Incident
   1. **Galatians 2:1-10** – Paul brings up a pivotal point of history in the early church which demonstrated that Gentiles don’t have to become Jews to be justified before God, and that his apostleship is valid and authoritative.
      1. Likely refers to the events of **Acts 15**.
   2. **(vv. 1-5**) – God directed him to Jerusalem to defend the gospel.
      1. **(vv. 3-5)** – there were Jews who sought to compel Gentiles to observe particular Jewish commandments according to the Law (circumcision).
      2. Paul, nor the others **(v. 2),** did not yield to them – it would contradict the very nature of the gospel.
7. **Galatians 2:11-21** – Paul alludes to another incident following that of **verses 1-10** which occurred in Antioch, involving Peter, his hypocrisy, and Paul confronting him.
   1. The matter followed the same focus – do the Gentiles need to observe Jewish customs to be justified, accepted by God as His people (**cf. Romans 3:29** – if just God of Jews then any Gentiles that belong to Him had to proselytize – not only Christians, but Jewish Christians), and recognized as belonging to God?
8. The Antioch Incident (**Galatians 2:11-21**)
9. What did Peter do?
   1. Peter was guilty – **(v. 11)** – *kataginōskō* (3x) – “as denoting accurate detection of evil in oneself (1J 3.20) or someone else (GA 2.11) condemn, declare to be wrong, judge to be guilty” (ALGNT)
      1. Perfect, passive – ***“he stood condemned” (NASB, ESV)***
      2. Not a matter of petty difference but being condemned before God.
   2. Peter changed his usual habits, thus was hypocritical – (**vv. 12-13**)
      1. (**v. 12**) – would eat with Gentiles but withdrew when Jews from James came for fear.
      2. (**v. 13**) – this led others to do the same – if Peter stood condemned in what he did, then those who followed him were led by him to the same state.
         1. ***“even Barnabas”*** – initially encouraged Gentiles and brought Paul to Antioch when they had obeyed (c**f. Acts 11:23, 25-26**), was with Paul when Gentiles were converted, not compelled to be circumcised, and God bore witness through miracles. (**cf. Acts 15:12**).
   3. Peter was not straightforward about the truth of the gospel – (**v. 14**)
      1. Not that he taught error, but that his behavior was contradictory to the truth, and therefore sent another message.
      2. *orthopodeō* – “basic mng. ‘walk straight, upright’, fig. ext. act rightly, be straightforward” (BDAG)
         1. I.e. his behavior/actions were at variance with the message of the gospel.
10. What did it mean?
    1. What significance was there with Peter’s actions of eating, and then not eating with the Gentiles? **(v. 12)**
    2. **(v. 14)** – ***“live in the manner of Gentiles”*** and ***“live as Jews”*** are unique terms found only here that are of great significance in understanding.
       1. ***“in the manner of Gentiles”*** – *ethnikōs* – “in the manner of the nations…live (w. focus on distinctive dietary practice) like the rest of the world and not like a Judean” (BDAG)
       2. ***“live as Jews”*** *– Ioudaizō* – “live as one bound by Mosaic ordinances or traditions, live in Judean or Jewish fashion” (BDAG)
       3. The distinction is not moral – **5:13-14, 16-18** – ***“you are not under law”*** – not in a broad sense, but specifically those things pertaining to the law of Moses that he has been addressing.
          1. I.e. if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law of Moses to be required to observe things like circumcision.
       4. “w. focus on distinctive dietary practice” (BDAG) – **cf. Acts 10:10-15**
          1. Peter was taught that distinguishing practices between Jews and Gentiles were no longer legitimate in regards to standing with God.
          2. Evidently, Peter had begun to eat what was previously unclean, or at least associate with others while they did so – (**vv. 12, 14**).
       5. His withdrawal ***“compel[ed] Gentiles to live as Jews”*** (**v. 14**) – i.e. his actions sent a message that part of right standing with God required Jewish distinction.
          1. At variance with the gospel – **cf. Romans 3:28-29** – ***“works of the law”*** especially in reference to distinct Jewish ordinances like dietary restrictions and circumcision.
    3. The implication of Peter’s actions was that in order to be just before God, not only did you have to be faithful in Christ, but also in being a Jew – (**vv. 16-17)** – ***“found sinners”*** by disobeying dietary restrictions or circumcision law if that is viewed as irrelevant by turning to Christ.
11. What was Paul’s correction?
    1. **Paul’s correction of Peter did NOT include the notion that it was inconsistent of Peter to imply keeping commandments or pattern was necessary to be just before God when the gospel said it was by faith.**
    2. Paul pointed out that he and Peter recognized that being a Jew (bearing those identifying markers by Jewish custom) was not a part of justification – (**vv. 15-16)**
       1. ***“Jews by nature”*** – *physei* (“a mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature,” THAYER; according to custom) *ioudaioi* (adj, Jewish)
       2. ***“sinners of the Gentiles”*** – i.e. sin that is particularly in contrast to being ***“Jews by nature.”***
          1. **(v. 17**) – found sinners by turning away from the customs of the Old Law.
          2. I.e. in the distinct sense of not being circumcised and eating what is unclean according to the Law.
          3. I.e. not in the moral sense of the word, but regarding nationalistic ritual markers.
       3. **(v. 16)** – knowing that justification has nothing to do with being identified as a Jew by these works (circumcision, dietary restrictions, etc.), we turned to Jesus in faith to be justified. (**cf. Philippians 3:4-7** – counted it all loss)
    3. Such actions imply that Christ is a minister of sin, when in reality you are sinning by binding requirements that Christ does not bind – (**vv. 17-21**)
       1. (**v. 19)** – forgiveness, and thus being justified, righteous, and bearing fruit to God was only possible in Christ, not by being under the law’s dominion.
          1. ***“live to God”*** – not simply have life (be justified) before God, but live life in service to God – bear fruit to God (**cf. Romans 7:4**).
       2. **(v. 20**) – my identity is no longer being Jewish, belonging to the Law of Moses, bearing Jewish markers according to the law – it is letting Christ live in me, or living according to Christ’s law by faith **(cf. 5:18; 6:2**).
          1. I.e. Peter’s actions did not exhibit an erring attitude of needing to maintain careful obedience – this is what Paul’s words in **verse 20** indicate – faithfulness to Christ is my life now.
          2. Peter’s actions exhibited the erring attitude that in order to be right to God you had to maintain Jewish distinction from the rest of the world – something people boasted in (**6:12).**
       3. (**v. 21)** – binding these things binds everything else and takes us away from Christ where atonement is provided (**cf. 5:3-4**).
12. Applications
13. Courage to Confront a Comrade
    1. ***“But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.” (v. 11, NASB)***
    2. This was not about being right or even proving a point. This was about saving souls.
       1. Peter ***“stood condemned”*** – he needed to be rescued – ***“And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire” (Jude 22-23, NASB***) – **6:1-2** – Paul practiced what he preached.
       2. **(vv. 13-14**) – others followed suit and stood condemned.
          1. (**v. 14**) – ***“before them all”*** – this was public because the sin was public, and hade widespread implications!
          2. It wasn’t time to play politics, but to rescue the perishing, and put out the iniquitous fire!
    3. We need the courageous love to cover a multitude of sins – **James 5:19-20**
14. Contemplating Consequences
    1. Part of maturing is being able to think about our actions and words with foresight. What will become of them?
       1. Not only are the sinful in themselves, but will they lead somewhere that provides opportunity for sin myself, or for others?
       2. **Matthew 18:6-9** – are my actions causing someone else to stumble, are they sinful in themselves, am I holding onto something or engaged in something that is hindering myself or others?
    2. His actions contradicted the gospel he obeyed, and preached to others – (**vv. 14-15, 17**)
       1. Doctrine affects morality, and morality affects doctrine.
       2. **If I teach/believe error, my daily life will be affected; if my daily life is not subject to Gods’ will, I will adapt/teach a doctrine which permits how I am living.**
15. Understanding Unity
    1. Some try to make unity into something it isn’t by suggesting that faith in Christ is something distinct from obeying the law Christ has ratified and revealed.
       1. I.e. we don’t need to be united in matters of practice and doctrine, but only in a vague acceptance and trust in Jesus as Savior.
       2. However, the ***“works of the law” (v. 16)*** which Paul referred to were not equated with works of obedient faith to Christ’s commands – **5:16-6:5** (otherwise this section makes no sense).
       3. By inspiration, Paul said we must be united in doctrine and practice – **1 Corinthians 1:10**
    2. The unity the gospel provides for and requires is within adherence to the standard of Christ – **Galatians 1:6-9; 5:18, 25; 6:15-16**
       1. Unity is preserved, not by tolerating differences in doctrine and behavior that are contrary to this standard, but in correcting them – **6:1-2**
       2. **Jude 3** – wanted to write concerning the salvation they were united in, but needed instead to defend it lest it be abused, and lead to division by error.

**Conclusion**

1. It is imperative that we not only hold to the truth of the gospel in our teaching, but also in our daily practice.
2. Christ’s gospel is a law of liberty we must adhere to in faithfulness in order to be justified by God, and this requires calling any who are out of step with the pattern back to faithfulness.