

Galatians 2:11-3:14 Bible Study

1. What do you normally do when you disagree with another Christian over something to do with the Christian faith?

2. **Read Galatians 2:11-16.** Why was Peter's behaviour wrong? Read Acts 10:9-17, 34-36, 15:6-11. *In Christ there was no longer a distinction between Jew and Gentile when it comes to entering God's kingdom. Anyone can enter by the same means – faith in Christ. Peter knew this. But because of fear, he was acting in a way that contradicted his beliefs.*

3. Why didn't Paul speak to Peter first in private? Wouldn't this publicly dishonour Christ? *Peter was a senior, and public figure in the church, his error was public – people were already being led astray. So the rebuke had to be public, so all would see and be corrected.*

4. **Read Gal 2:17-21.** NB Most likely Paul's response to Peter ended in v.16 (or v.14). V.17 on is his continued argument to the Galatians, answering the accusations of the false teachers against him; that is, that his gospel of salvation by grace alone will only promote sin, with no incentive to repentance and godly behaviour, cf Rom 6:1. If someone is not justified by their own actions but by faith in Christ, what is the incentive to live a life of repentance and godly behaviour (good works)?

The realisation, and constant remembering that "I" died, and the life I now live is "Christ in me" – Jesus died "for me", Jesus "loves me" – this will stir me and spur me on to live for him and put to death the things he died for, supremely the idea that my own effort can save me!

5. What does this paragraph say about any version of Christianity that does not have the death of Christ as its central foundation?

*That it's not true Christian faith. A Christian is one for whom Christ died. His death is now **their** death, their life is he in them. If his death is not central (because 'love' is more important, or good works, or obedience to the law, or etc., etc. ...) then he "died for nothing" – unless his death achieved real salvation and life for others, it was a pointless exercise (and an infinitely expensive one at that!) but it's inconceivable that God would do such a thing for nothing!*

6. **Read Gal 3:1-14.** Vv1-5 sum up where the Galatians were going so terribly wrong. What was the problem? Is this something we could fall into the trap of?

The idea that God gets us started in our salvation, but then we do the rest. We start by the Spirit, but we "lit" "complete buy the flesh".

7. Why is Abraham such an important example in Paul's argument? You will need to consider the context of Paul's quote from Gen 15:6.

*In Gen 15 Abram was old, Sarai was barren, the covenant of circumcision had not yet been given (Gen 17) the law had not yet been given (Exodus 20f) – in other words, there was nothing that Abraham **could do** and there was nothing that he was required by God **to do**. All there was was the word of God. Abraham took God at his word – and that was reckoned by God as righteousness. And so he is "the man of faith" (v9), and the father of all who believe. NB The Judaising false teachers would probably have claimed to be the descendants of Abraham – a mistake made by the Jews of Jesus' day; see John 8:31ff.*

8. "It is not so much what we believe as Christians that is our trouble, but that we fail to live according to our convictions". Do you agree? Discuss.