

Title: "The Heart of the Matter"

Passage: Galatians 2:15a

Theme: Background and Intro to Paul's Central Point: Justification by Faith

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{{Read Passage}}

[i] Beating Around the Bush

Fascin. w/Idioms Imagine learning English

That's a hot potato

A penny for your thoughts

You've just added insult to injury

That's going to cost you an arm and a leg

You're barking up the wrong tree

No use crying over spilt milk

Don't put all your eggs in one basket

I heard it on the grapevine

Time to hit the Road

I think I'll kill two birds with one stone

He just let the cat out of the bag

You've missed the boat

He's not playing with a full deck

You're not on the ball today are you?

It was a piece of cake

You're always sitting on the fence

I'm going to give him a taste of his own medicine

They can put a man on the moon, but they can't . . . (before?)

Beating around the bush. Origin of that phrase goes back to the 16th c. when hunters would employ others to literally beat around bushes in

order to scare game. Employed cautiously, it was an indirect way to spook hiding game into the open.

[ii] Reason I bring up idioms . . .

(spec. BAB) is because no one could accuse TAP of doing such a thing. To BAB is to skirt t/issue. To be indirect.

Paul gets to the point – something we see in chapter 1 (6, 8-9 – cf. 10) Something we've seen already in chapt. 2 (11).

Paul's directness not only applies to strong words at approp. times, it also applies to his getting to t/main point of his argument here in Gal. – an argu that colors the entire letter.

[iii] Verses 15-21 are significant

It's at this point that we move from the shallows into the deep waters.

[iv] Here's what I want to accomplish this morning

I want you to see t/context – t/big picture as to how vv. 15-21 relate to Paul's flow of thot in ch. 2 & set t/stage for what follows in chapt 3-4. I want you to learn some key words & terms that we'll be coming back to again & again (at least thru ch. 4).

Background and Intro to Paul's Central Point: Justification by Faith

"The Heart of the Matter" = Justification by Faith Alone

I. Establishing the Context

II. Examining Key Words

I. Establishing the Context

A. The Context Within the Chapter

1. Brings us back to verse 11: scene shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch

Rem. ch. started w/Paul desc. his 2d trip to Jer. Barn. & Titus accomp. him on that trip which ended up being a test case for t/Gospel.

Accord. to v. 2 – it was bec. of a rev. that they went (ties into Acts 11):
28 [a prophet] named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. . . . 29 And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. 30 And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

Impending Famine. Collection is taken by t/CH in Antioch for t/brethren in Judea which P. & B. deliver to Jer.

While they were there some false brethren (sham Xns) showed up (Judaizers) & began to debate w/them contending that Titus (a Gentile) needed to be circumcised (& keep t/Law) – to be under t/covt.

These pseudo-Xns were opposed & their false Gosp. rejected.

Peter, James & John were in agreement w/Paul Barnabas & Titus.

Unified fellowship in doctrine (nature of t/gosp.) & direction (Paul would focus on t/Gentiles / Peter t/Jews).

2. Then scene shifts from Jerusalem back to Antioch in Verse 11

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned.

1. Here we have Paul rebuking Peter his hypocrisy as it related to the Gentiles and the Gospel

Throws t/entire Titus test case in reverse!

For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they came, he began to withdraw and separate himself, fearing those of the circumcision.

a. Peter “used to eat with the Gentiles”

Not just eating w/them, but eating t/same foods (unclean under t/OC).

That was until some men arrived from Jerusalem whom Peter either feared directly or feared t/news they brought. Whatever t/case, once they arrived he departed – he separated from his Gentile bros & sis.

Out of hypocrisy. Peter's actions were inconsistent w/what he believed (context of 2:1-10 – Titus; Peter/James/John & right hand of fell.).

Peter saw Jesus share meals with Gentiles // heard t/words of Jesus as recorded in Mark ch. 7 ==>

“Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him; because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?” (Thus He declared all foods clean.)

b. Other Jewish Christians followed Peter's bad example

Even Barnabas was carried away in hypocrisy.

c. It was all about the Gospel of grace

But when I saw that they were not acting straight-forward concerning the truth of the gospel . . .

(1) “straight-forward” = Greek verb: ὀρθοποδεω (ορθος = straight & πους = foot) = Straight walk / line (opposed to “crooked” / “bent”) they were not acting straight-forward concerning the truth of the gospel . . .

I said to Cephas in the presence of all: “If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how [is it that] you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

IOW – “It was fine before. You lived like your Gentile brethren, eating w/them & treating them as co-equals in God's KD. But now, out of fear, you've gone back to your Jewish ways. When t/Gentiles see your behavior they are compelled to act like you because you're giving t/impression that to truly be a Xn, one must keep t/law.”

. . . you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

Same word used in 2:3 ==>

3 But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4 But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.

Brings us to v. 15 and ff.

B. Verses 15 – 21 Are Transitional

While still recounting what he said to Peter, Paul begins to widen his scope to include t/Galatians (by ext., us).

1. Like a Pie Diagram

At t/narrow point Paul is addressing Peter (v. 14 – “I said to Pet. in t/pres. of all”). As t/lines widen Paul, while still addressing Peter, is

incl. t/Galatians in t/convers. What begins w/Peter's hypoc. ends w/the great truths of Just. by F. alone (v. 16) & t/believer's union w/X (v.20).

a. How far to the quotes extend?

RSV; ESV; NET = through v. 14.

NIV; NKJV; NASB = all the way to the end of the chapter.

The theological thrust of his presentation is seen in the fact that the historical narrative flows almost imperceptibly into his theological exposition. [George, 105]

B. Verses 15 – 21 Are Transitional

It's a transition that looks forward to chapters 3-4.

1:6 – 2:14 establishes the historical context of the letter (much of it related to TAP – much in these verses that are autobiographical).

2:15 – 21 marks a transition to t/rich theological content of chs 3–4. Chaps 5–6 top off t/letter with t/practical outcome of what it means to be united w/X.

Put it this way: We move from history to theology to application.

I. Establishing the Context

C. This Concluding Section of Chapter 2 is Where the Central Issue of the Gospel Comes to the Forefront

Up to this point Paul has used the word “gospel” 9x.

2x he uses the phrase “truth of the Gospel” (2:5,14).

Doesn't state what t/gospel is – what are t/central elements?

1. Here is where those elements are introduced – specifically ==>

No one can be justified by the “works of the law” (an issue he will tackle in greater depth later in 3:6–29).

Justification is possible only “by faith in Christ” (a topic that comes up repeatedly in chapt. 3).

Implicit in these 2 points is t/fact that Jews & Gents are equally under sin // cannot be saved by keeping t/law // can only be justified by faith in X (that assumes we know what saving faith is & who JC is).

Something else that we see that's noteworthy – As far as what it means to live t/Xn life – Paul describes that in terms of co-crucifixion w/JC (Gal 2:20). This speaks of t/believer's union w/X & a corollary to that is what we'll see in chapt. 5 ==> what it means to walk by t/Spirit & t/necessary outcome of spiritual fruit.

D. Lastly – We'll See Several Important Contrasts in Verses 15-21

- 1) “Jews by birth” contrasted to “Gentile sinners” (v. 15)
- 2) Justification “by the works of the law” is contrasted to justification “by faith in Jesus Christ” (v. 16).
- 3) Rebuilding t/old structures of t/Mosaic Law contrasted to its annulment by t/New Covt. Gospel (vv. 17-21).
- 4) “Dying to the law” contrasted to “living for God” (v. 19).
- 5) Being crucified w/X contrasted w/X living in t/believer (v. 20).

I. Establishing the Context

II. Examining Key Concepts

Concepts and Words

caveat – we will be returning to these / I'm still learning.....

Not to say that there aren't other key words or concepts we'll deal w/those as we encounter them.

A. Key Words

1. νόμος – 0x in 1:1-2:14; 6x 2:15-21; 27x in the rest of the letter

a. νόμος & 'torah' (Heb. / OT) words that usually refer to what God commands

'torah' = instruction (instruction in t/law = Mosaic Law).

b. Nuance of meaning

“law” = Script. (gen. t/Pentateuch) - “law and the prophets” / Psa. 119

“law” = revealed will of God that man is under obligation to abide by.

(cf. “law written on t/hearts of Gentiles – Ro. 2:15).

These “laws” reflect t/abiding nature and attributes of God.

Murder, adultery, fornication, idolatry were wrong before t/giving of t/law to Moses // are still wrong even tho we are no longer under t/MC

c. Most of the time the word “law” in t/Bible refers to t/Mosaic Law

That's t/way t/word is used predominantly in Gal (w/1 or 2 excepts.)

2. Phrase: έργα νόμου – 0x in 1:1-2:14; 3x in 2:15-21; 3x in the rest of the letter

a. Here we're primarily concerned with what “works of the law” mean in Paul (in t/NT letters written by TAP)

It's a phrase Paul uses 8x. Interestingly, a phrase not found in t/OT but found in extra-biblical lit. written about same time as t/NT.

(1) Works of the Law = Requirements of the entire Mosaic Law

Those things that t/faithful Jew must obey under t/Old Covenant.

Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.” quote of Deut. 27:26 – context covt. ratification ceremony / blessings and cursings.

3. πιστις – 1x in 1:1-2:14 (2:7); 3x 2:15-21; 18x in rest of the letter

a. When we speak of faith we speak of belief

More than belief in sense of raw knowl. Best English equiv. = trust. As it relates to t/plan of God for t/salv. of men – trust in JC.

Faith in t/Bible always has an object. No one just possesses faith as some sort of special entity all its own. That's t/way t/world looks at it: “people of faith” / “he's a man or woman of faith” / “what would I do w/o my faith?” ==> Points to object / person / Person and Work of X.

b. Saving faith = knowledge (*notitia*); assent (*assensus*); trust (*fiducia*)

Saving faith requires knowledge (God / man / sin / Savior / Gospel)

// Assent

// Trust -

4. δικαιωω – 0x in 1:1-2:14; 4x 2:15-21; ; 4x in the rest of the letter

5. δικαιοσυνη – 0x in 1:1-2:14; 1x 2:15-21; 3x in the rest of the letter

Difference: 1st is a verb / 2^d is a noun. Meanings: “To justify; vindicate” || Almost always transl. “righteousness” (God's r. / r. God

req. of man).

a. Key Point

As it relates to our judicial standing before God t/word means "to declare righteous."

Why we call it a "forensic" term, or drawn from t/courts of law. When a sinner comes to humble faith in God's provision of X for his sin, God declares that person just. It's not that God makes us righteous in his declaration, but he declares us righteous because we are now united with JC and I.D. w/Him in his death/burial/resurrection. Romans 6.

Romans 3:22-24 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:1 THEREFORE having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Galatians 2:16 {cite}

(1) justified = 'declared righteous'

It's a legal term, it's the opposite of condemnation. When a judge pronounces condemnation on a criminal, he doesn't make him guilty of the offense of which he is condemned, he simply recognizes that he is guilty and pronounces the judgment. And in the same way, when the judge pronounces somebody just, he doesn't make him just, he declares him to be just before the bar of the law.

As it relates to God's Law – we are not ‘righteous’ before the bar of God’s justice.’ We have no recourse to t/court of heaven. We have no possibility of being acquitted of such a great debt of sin.

Good News is that Another has paid the debt. Another has stood in our place. Another has taken our punishment & provided us perfect righteousness.

Justification isn't just about being forgiven – not just a neg. Also about having a positive state of righteousness. – Perfect righteousness of JC.

6. ζαω – 5 times here; 3x in the rest of the letter; 1x prev. in 2:14

Galatians 2:19–20 19 “For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live to God. 20 “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

B. Key Terms:

1. Union with Christ (Galatians 2:19-21 above)

Union w/X describes t/abiding position of the believer. When I come to faith in X, I am spiritually joined with Him. I am part of His body, t/CH. He indwells me thru t/agency of t/HS. “I am in X”/“X is in me”

2. Justification by Faith

JBF is another key phrase & we've already covered that ground earlier when we looked at t/key words δικαιοω / δικαιοσυνη.

Spec., JBF (alone) – sometimes called t/material principle of

t/Reform. – is t/means by which sinners have right standing b4 God.

a. Two other concepts I'd put under JBFA

(1) PSA - Penal (punishment) + Substitutionary (substitution) + Atonement (satisfaction)

(2) Imputation

To charge or credit to t/account of another — ‘if he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to my account’ Phm 18.

Bel. sin is charged to X & X's righteousness is credited to t/bel.

“The point of the Gospel is that imputation is real—God really laid our sins on Christ and really transferred the righteousness of Christ to us. We really possess the righteousness of Jesus Christ by imputation. He is our Savior, not merely because He died, but because He lived a sinless life before He died, as only the Son of God could do.” [RC Sproul]

Imputation doesn't make X sinful anymore than it makes me righteous. T/sin of t/elect was credited or charged to X on t/cross - X's righteousness is credited to t/individual believer.

Does that mean I don't have to be righteous? Well, I don't have to be righteous (perfectly holy) to be saved. JC was, is, did, does what I couldn't & can't ever do. That's imputation.

That doesn't mean I can live like t/devil. If I am justified, I will also be sanctified // saved I am a new creature in X // born again I am united w/X. Why ==>

Romans 6:1-2,5-7 1 WHAT shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

Gal. 2:20.

3. New Perspective on Paul (NP)

This is t/only concept as it relates to Galatians that's recent. IOW . . .

a. What is the NPP?

(1) New + Perspective + About TAP

Specifically, what Paul taught as it relates to justification by faith over against t/works of t/law.

(a) New Perspective on Paul from Theopedia:

The New Perspective on Paul . . . is a system of thought in NT scholarship that seeks to reinterpret the Apostle Paul and his letters. In brief, the NPP is a reaction to the Reformation perspective on Paul [which] . . . understands Paul to be arguing against a legalistic Jewish culture that seeks to earn their salvation through works. However, supporters of the NPP argue that Paul has been misread. They contend he was actually combating Jews who were boasting because they were God's people, the "elect" or the "chosen ones." Their "works," so to speak, were done to show they were God's covenant people and not to earn their salvation. According to the NPP, the result is a Judaism that

affirmed sola gratia (grace alone). Presently, effects of the NPP are primarily seen in the academic world of New Testament scholars, particularly those who focus their attention on Pauline studies and the study of first century Judaism. However, ramifications of the NPP directly affect the Protestant doctrine of Justification by Faith (Sola Fide).

(2) Summed up

NP advocates claim t/CH (Protestants / Evangelicals) has misunderstood Paul's teaching on salv. (prim. as expressed Rom. & Gal) because we have misunderstood t/context of 1st c. Jewish thot (2d Temple Judaism).

Luther and the reformers read too much into Paul and the law. They read it in the context of RCC / works righteousness of medieval Rome.

Jewish rel. of Paul day wasn't legalistic / works-righteousness system. Rather, God was merciful to His people Israel & they were in right standing w/God by virtue of their being in t/Covt. Grace, faith, mercy. T/Jews kept t/law to remain in t/covt.

When Paul speaks of justification as opposed to works / law, he's not talking about an individual sinner being declared righteous b4 God, he's talking about Gentiles being accepted as Xns by t/Jews. It's more about acceptance in t/CH than it is about acceptance b4 God.

NPP view t/issue as being vertical (how we relate to God) & maybe even more horizontal (how Jews / Gent. relate to ea other).

Paul is not opposing good works (even as contributors to final salvation). He's opposing a form of Jewish Xnty (Judaizers) required Gentiles to keep t/Law in order to be part of God's covt. people.

Law / Justification related to who was in covt. relationship w/God & how they stayed in. IOW – As a Jew you kept t/Law out of faithfulness (not out of legalism) & your works/law keeping would be a basis of your final justification at t/resurrection & judgment.

Most NPP advocates would say that for t/CH, for Xns, our works contribute to our salv. We have to stay faithful & believing to stay in t/New covt. Our good deeds will also be required when we stand b4 God at t/final judgment.

NPP is about who's in, who stays in, and who is finally & forever in (at t/final judgment).

b. History (3 men who are still alive)

Have been some others who laid some of t/groundwork – but these 3 men are most significant.

(1) E.P. Sanders (born 18 April 1937)

A NT scholar who was Arts and Sciences Professor of Religion at Duke University, North Carolina (retired in 2005).

In 1977 Sanders published, “Paul and Palestinian Judaism” in which he argues that 2d Temple Judaism was not based on legalistic works righteousness. Instead, he contended, it was based on God’s choice of Israel & His grace toward them.

Sanders coined t/term “covenantal nomism”—t/Jews relationship w/God was grounded in His grace & mercy (“covenantal”), but also driven by t/expectation that they would obey t/Law (“nomism”).

The sacrificial system presumed that the covenantal people would fall short of the high expectations of the Torah, and provided a means for restoration and atonement when such transgressions occurred.

(2) James D.G. Dunn (born 1939)

Dunn coined t/phrase “NPP”. Dunn emphasized that t/Law had a social function as an ethnic boundary marker or badge of Jewish ID. Paul was not arguing that it was wrong to perform works in general; his concern was that t/Jew's obsession w/the Law had become a barrier between Jews & Gentiles—1 that X had abolished.

(3) N.T. Wright (born 1948)

Wright has popularized t/NPP (this is what often happens – certain views – I'm thinking of bad ones – start in t/schools & make their way to t/CH thru “popularizers” – Open Theism / Greg Boyd – Same w/NPP).

Wright is a popular speaker and author. He's written lots of good things – he's done a lot to defend t/historicity of t/resurrection & t/historicity of Jesus life in general over against t/Jesus Sem. types.

He's British and often appears on t/BBC defending t/integrity of Scripture against liberal voices (of which there is no shortage in Engl).

I will likely be interacting more w/NTW in t/weeks / mo. to follow.

Dunn and Wright seem to have softened their views somewhat. Both have been more recently quoted as affirming justification by faith alone. But there is a lot of double-talk as well, so the jury's out.

c. Assessment?

(1) There is some truth in NPP

It's good to try to understand t/historical setting (Jewish) of t/NT writings.

There's some truth that relates to t/believer's future justification.

While I believe that justification (being saved) is point in time Evang. today miss t/point that even believers will stand b4 t/judgment seat of X. Our "works" will vindicate our lives in that they will testify to t/fact that we belong to X.

(2) The bad....

NPP leads to works-driven salvation & ultimately denies t/gospel of grace.

Guy Prentice Waters ==>

"The soteriological sympathies of the New Perspective on Paul (NPP), to the degree that these sympathies exists, are not with Protestantism, but with Roman Catholicism." [Waters, xi]

NPP = ecumenical dialogue w/RC's - "We basically believe the same thing about salvation after all."

Galatians is relevant after all. Gospel of grace.

Are Xns under law? In at least 1 sense we are: Gal. 6:2 “the law of X”

That's a law not of bondage, but of freedom.

There's no beating around the bush on that.