



WEEK 3 || *GALATIANS 2:11-21*

FREE FROM HYPOCRISY

There's two things to be said about hypocrisy. One, we all hate it. Two, we're all guilty of it. It's a criticism that's especially aimed at Christians.

Why do you think that is?

PRESSURE IN GALATIA

When Paul confronted Peter in Antioch, there was something about Peter's actions that weren't matching his convictions. Worse than that, his actions were communicating the opposite of the gospel to the rest of the church. Not a great look for an apostle!!! Let's check out what was going on.

Read Galatians 2:11-14

Allocate one person in the group to be 'Peter', one person to be 'Paul', a couple of people to be 'the circumcision* group' and the rest as 'gentiles'. Don't worry, this is not a roleplay!

*Remember, 'circumcision' was the physical marker of becoming Jewish.

1. For each character, spend a few minutes discussing (a) that person's actions and (b) how they're feeling about the situation. Feel free to take some time to use this activity to work out what's going on in the passage.
2. Get each person to justify their character's perspective to the rest of the group.

'Gentile sinners' was a Jewish shorthand way of referring to non-Jewish people. Because they weren't Jewish, they weren't under Israelite Old Testament law, and therefore didn't follow it.

Read verses 15-16

3. How did even the Jewish Christians think someone could be made right with God?
4. Why not just try to follow their Old Testament law?

Read verses 17-21

5. When did Paul's association with the law end, and what did it lead him to?

6. Because Peter knew that no-one was justified by keeping Jewish laws, he started living as a fellow Christian 'among Gentile sinners' (v17-18). In other words, he mixed freely with them. But now - under pressure - he's changed. Why does Paul have a problem with Peter living like a Jew again and refusing to eat with Gentiles? What did Peter's action communicate to his fellow Christians?

FREEDOM TODAY

We are made right with God (justified) by putting our trust in Jesus, but once that's happened sometimes we can get mixed up like Peter did. It's possible to be a Christian and yet act like it's something other than trusting Jesus that makes you right with God. Sometimes our actions are out of step with our convictions.

7. When you're deciding who you are keen to socialise with from church, what criteria do you use? How might this reveal an unintentional hypocrisy?

8. Are there certain types of people that you're not happy to mix with, as if they're sinful in a class that's different to you? "Bad influences"? Same-sex couples?

9. What are the rules/standards that you judge others by - the standards that you hold yourself to and make you feel different to others? If it's anything other than trusting in Christ, how might you be in danger of being a hypocrite?

Pray that we would get better at mixing with one another simply because we're following Jesus together. There's no stronger bond than that!