



9.4.11/Galatians 2:11-14

Read Galatians 2:11-14

But when Cephas (Peter) came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Opening Discussion:

Have you ever noticed what color eyes the people in your class have? Some have brown, some have blue, some have green. What if one day someone told you that only the kids who have blue eyes were allowed to be students in the class? What would you say to that? *It would be unfair. . . and it would be silly! What does eye color have to do with the class you're in? You can't control your eye color!* What if someone said instead, that if you didn't bring the right type of pencil to class, you couldn't be a part of the group? *That's also silly. . . what does it matter what type of pencil you use as long as everyone is learning?* It seems pretty obvious that minor things such as eye color and pencils shouldn't make a difference in your class, in today's passage, we'll see that there were many disagreements among people about how we are saved by God.

Questions:

1. Many of the Jewish people of the day believed that Gentiles (anyone who was NOT from the nation of Israel) were unclean like dogs and because they were a different race, Jesus did not die for them. There were others who believed you had to follow certain rules and laws to be made right with God. Using what we learned a couple weeks ago from Ephesians about being saved by grace instead of our actions, how can we know that the Jewish people who felt this way were off-base? *There is nothing about who we are or what we do that can save us. ONLY the work of Jesus Christ on the cross can be enough to restore us into relationship with God. The race we were born into (which we have no control of) does not matter. The things that we do or do not do cannot make God love us more or less.*
2. Paul wrote the Scripture we're studying today, and you can see from the very first verse that he is in a conflict with Peter (Cephas). Peter and Paul are both Christ-followers and love Jesus with all of their hearts. However, Paul saw that Peter (who was Jewish and KNEW that only God's grace was enough) was acting as if race and obedience would make him right with God when he was with certain people. So Paul chooses to "oppose him to his face." Do you think it's ok if Christians disagree with other Christians? *Of course! As long as it is done humbly with patience and love, disagreement can be very healthy if the intent is to honor God and help one another rely on Him even more. It is important if we see a fellow brother or sister whose "conduct is not in step with the truth of the gospel," that we gently point them back to the truth. Here, Paul knew that Peter was forgetting that only Christ's love and grace is enough to save us. Paul, knowing that Peter's actions were taking away from the truth of the gospel, had to confront Peter.*

Reflection/Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for doing all the work on our behalf to save us. We pray that you will surround us with friends and family that will lovingly point us back to you when we stray. Please allow the Holy Spirit to guide our actions in a way that will bring glory to You, and remind us that our actions are not what saves us. Remove the judgment in our hearts when it comes to race or money or background. Thank you for your son, Jesus, who died, was buried, and rose again. Thank you that you don't want ANYBODY to perish and to be apart from you. Amen.