

Hypocrisy Confronted

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[0 : 00] In our text two weeks ago, we saw the Jerusalem apostles, including Peter, recognize Paul as an apostle himself and affirm that Paul was teaching the same gospel as they were.

If we continue with chapter two tonight, we'll see the unity get tested. We'll see Paul confront Peter for failing to practice what he preached. In other words, Paul confronts Peter for being a hypocrite. So let's go ahead and read Galatians chapter two, verses 11 through 16. 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?

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners. Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ.

[1 : 38] So we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law, no one will be justified.

The church in Antioch was made up largely of Gentile Christians. And when Peter came to this church, he began eating and spending time with them.

And that may seem insignificant to us, but it was a huge deal for a Jewish man like Peter. For centuries, the Jews were known for their strict laws and their separation from the Gentiles.

And under the Old Covenant, God had established certain dietary laws and other commandments that were intended to keep the Jews from intermingling with the Gentiles, and then from being corrupted by their idolatry and their immorality.

This made eating with the Gentiles particularly dangerous for them, because Gentiles ate certain foods that were forbidden or considered unclean to the Jews. And even sitting at the table with them was considered by some to be impure.

[2 : 46] Back then, table fellowship was more than just inviting someone over for a meal. It was often considered to be a sign of acceptance and approval. And that's why the Jewish establishment was so astonished when they saw Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners.

But something happened to Peter in Acts 10 that changed his beliefs. So go ahead and flip over to Acts 10 for a little bit, and we'll look at that. We're going to see what life-changing event happened for Peter.

So here are Acts 10, verses 1 through 5. Starting with verse 1, it says, At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.

About the ninth hour of the day, he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, Cornelius. And he stared at him in terror and said, What is it, Lord?

And he said to him, Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God, and now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon, who is called Peter.

[4 : 02] So you see there that Cornelius was a Gentile, and he's been told by an angel of God to send for Peter the Jew. This would have been less of a problem for Cornelius than it would have been for Peter.

Peter had to be prepared for that. And the preparation of Peter happens later in Acts 10. Skip down to verses 9 through 16 of Acts 10 now.

So here are Acts chapter 10, verses 9 through 16. The next day, So picture the scene now.

Peter is perplexed about this until Cornelius' delegation arrives. Then Peter realizes that God is telling him that it is fine to associate with Gentiles, including to eat with them.

And later on in Acts chapter 10, Acts 10.28 shows that Peter understood the meaning. And Peter is talking here in Acts 10.28. And he said to them, That's the main idea of our text tonight.

[6 : 29] Any attempt to add works to the gospel must be identified and be totally rejected. Salvation comes through faith in Christ alone. That main idea holds true regardless of who is in the wrong.

When Paul sees Peter's behavior here, Paul immediately rebukes Peter. And remember that Peter was the preeminent apostle at the time. We're going to look at the time.

We're going to look at tonight's text under three headings. And in verses 11 through 13, we see fearful actions. So fearful actions is your first set of blanks.

Listen to Galatians chapter 2, verses 11 through 13 again. Paul wrote there, Paul leads here by telling us about the incident between Peter and Paul that happened in Antioch.

Antioch was a very important city for the early Christians. During the New Testament period, Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire, and it boasted a population of more than half a million.

[8 : 03] Its political importance came from the fact that it served as the capital city of the Roman province of Syria. The Jewish community there was pretty large. It performed a significant segment of the population.

It was about 65,000 during that time in the New Testament era. Antioch became the home base for the first major expansion of Christianity outside of Palestine.

Acts tells us that persecution against the first believers in Jerusalem had the effect of multiplying their witness. Acts 8.4 says, And some of those missionaries by necessity came to Antioch, where they witnessed first to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles of that city, and they won many of both groups to Christ.

When the church in Jerusalem got wind of the spiritual awakening that was happening in Antioch, they sent Barnabas to assist the new believers there. And Barnabas later traveled to Tarsus, where he recruited Paul to join him in the work of the ministry at Antioch.

John MacArthur commented, Not even Paul's agreement with the pillar apostles over respective missionary strategies for reaching Jews and Gentiles contemplated all of the difficult and dynamic possibilities of Jewish and Gentile believers living and worshiping together in a mixed congregation.

[9 : 30] The incident at Antioch was thus a necessary but painful stage in the development of a mature New Testament doctrine about the church. Looking back from the distance of two millennia, we can see now that the controversy at Antioch was more than a clash between two apostles.

It was a collision between two ways of being Christian. The clash raises the ever-pressing question of the tension between Christ and the culture.

And of course, we still see tension between Christ and the culture today. When Peter came to Antioch, he found Jewish and Gentile believers eating together at the same table, and he freely joined them in this practice.

And these meals likely included the Christian love feast, of which the Lord's Supper was an integral part. After Peter had the vision we read about in Acts 10 and reported on his visit to Cornelius, nearly every early Christian from a Jewish background conceded that God could save Gentiles.

The problem, though, was that significant division still existed among those Jewish Christians about what fellowship with Gentiles was acceptable. And we see that tension in tonight's text.

[10 : 47] Peter was in the wrong, and he also was setting a bad example. And that is why Paul had to confront him in public. A private offense deserves a private rebuke, but a public scandal demands public exposure.

And the word translated opposed in these verses is from a Greek word which carries the meaning of hindering or forbidding. By his withdrawal from the Gentiles, Peter had, in effect, joined the Judaizers in belittling Paul's inspired teaching, especially the doctrine of salvation by God's grace alone, working through man's faith alone.

Peter knew better, and Paul opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. Peter was condemned in the sense of being guilty of sin by taking a position he knew was wrong.

He no doubt also stood condemned as a sinner in the eyes of the Gentile believers in Antioch who were well-grounded in the gospel of grace. And by his actions, Peter was going against the true gospel.

Paul, in contrast, was using this example to show the Galatians that he had done what he was telling them to do. He stood up for the one true gospel. Verses 12 and 13 tell us why Paul got so stirred up.

[12:07] They say, Before certain men came from James, he, talking about Peter, 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. As many potlucks as we have at this church, nearly all of us have probably been in a situation where we've taken some of a dish that we dislike when we try to eat it, only to realize that we're sitting at the table with the person who brought it.

So that leaves us with the awkward position of either forcing down the remainder of the item or possibly offending the person sitting with us. But Peter's offense here was much worse than that. Peter's actions implied that the Gentile Christians were second-class Christians, unworthy of association with the Jewish Christians. The closest thing to Peter's misbehavior we've seen in our country likely would be the horribly wrong segregation and discrimination against black people. Verse 12 confirms in a couple of different ways that Peter knew better. We see that before the delegation came from Jerusalem, Peter had been eating with the Gentile Christians.

[13:28] And then verse 12 says that Peter drew back and separated himself after the delegation came. The verb tense there may indicate that Peter's withdrawal was gradual.

So that suggests the idea of a sneaky retreat. He was giving in to both the ritualism and the racism of the Jews, and he began to drift away from his Gentile brethren and stopped accepting their invitations to dinner.

He probably found excuses then to avoid joining them in other activities and finally held himself apart from them. And verse 12 tells us that the delegation came from James.

This reference could mean that the delegation falsely claimed to have James backing, or perhaps James did send them without realizing that the delegation would try to enforce divisions that we saw James announce in the first ten verses of the chapter.

James later joined with the Jerusalem Council in sending a letter to Gentile believers, and one of the statements in the letter noted that some people attributed incorrect teachings to the apostles.

[14:38] Listen to Acts 15, verses 24 through 26. Acts 15, 24 through 26 say, Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with the words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Going back to our text in Galatians tonight, Galatians 2.12 also tells us why Peter acted hypocritically. The verse says that Peter feared the circumcision party.

So think about this, the old Peter who was weak, fearful, and vacillating had surfaced again. Here was the same Peter who, under divine inspiration, declared Jesus to be Christ, the Son of the living God, but who a short while later, rebuked his Lord for saying that he must suffer and die.

And this, of course, was the same Peter who boldly declared he would die rather than deny his Lord, but before the night was out, he had denied him three times. And here was the same Peter who was called to preach, but who disobediently went back to fishing even after he'd encountered the resurrected Christ.

And here was the same Peter who had received the vision in Acts 10, confirming that all foods were now considered to be clean, but who now had gone back to following the dietary restrictions.

[16:16] Peter clearly knew better, but fear caused him to behave wrongly. Think about the situation here. The Judaizers would have been very limited in what they could do to Peter because they were professing Christians themselves.

The Judaizers claimed to be Christians and therefore obviously had no authority from the Jewish Sanhedrin to arrest, imprison, or put anyone to death. Like Paul had before he'd been converted. The most the Judaizers could have done against Peter was to ridicule him and malign him in Jerusalem, as their fellow Judaizers would later malign Paul in Galatia.

Peter was afraid of just that, losing popularity and prestige with self-righteous hypocrites whose doctrines were heretical and whose tactics were deceitful. So when you think about it that way, you can understand why Paul would have been so upset with Peter's actions.

Peter committed a serious offense against the Gentile Christian brethren because Peter was concerned about losing popularity and prestige with a group that promoted incorrect teaching in the first place.

[17 : 27] Verse 13 shows us that Paul had one more reason to be upset with Peter's actions. Peter's actions called other Jewish Christians to disassociate with the Gentile Christians as well.

Barnabas is singled out there as one of those who followed Peter's lead. In our last study two weeks ago, we looked at several references about Barnabas, including the one that showed us why he earned the nickname Son of Encouragement.

And we said then that nearly every time we see Barnabas in Scripture, we see him being an encourager. This verse is one of the exceptions. Here Barnabas is singled out and correctly identified as being hypocritical for his actions.

So if strong Christians like Peter and Barnabas can be coerced by peer pressure to behave incorrectly, we need to be on guard ourselves because we certainly are susceptible to similar wrong behavior.

That's why their actions here should serve as a warning to us. So we've seen the fearful actions of Peter, Barnabas, and the other Jews.

[18 : 35] In verse 14, we have the second section of our lesson. And in that verse, we see Paul's forceful admonition. So forceful admonition is your second set of blanks.

Look at verse 14 one more time. Paul said, 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?

So the first part of this verse reminds us that the hypocritical Jews' conduct was wrong. Paul says that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel.

From what we've already studied in Galatians, we knew that already, but it's important to be reminded of it here. Paul bases his rebuke on the truth of the gospel rather than his own opinion. When we rebuke someone, especially a fellow believer, the rebuke needs to be grounded in the truth of Scripture, like what we see from this verse. Look at the rebuke itself.

[19 : 48] Paul said, Peter was a Jew who'd been living like a Gentile, but in the face of peer pressure, he started living like a Jew again.

By that behavior, he implied that the Gentiles also should live like Jews. So Peter's bad behavior bolstered the false teaching of the Judaizers, and his behavior was a textbook example of hypocrisy.

A hypocrite originally was a Greek actor who wore a mask that portrayed in an exaggerated way the role he was dramatizing. So for obvious reasons then, the term came to be used of anyone who pretended to be what he was not.

Peter was being hypocritical when he decided to follow Jewish customs again, despite knowing that those customs were unnecessary for salvation and unnecessary for acceptance in the church. Peter was like most Christians, finding it difficult to be consistent in spiritual commitment. He would show great courage and conviction, and then he later would stumble.

[21 : 05] He would staunchly defend the faith and then succumb to compromise later. When he did that in Antioch, he played into the hands of the Judaizers, who must have been elated to have an apostle demonstrating behavior that agreed with their teaching.

We need to emphasize something one more time here. Paul's rebuke of Peter and the others needed to be public because their misbehavior had been done publicly. If Paul had declined to publicly admonish Peter, the Gentile Christians at Antioch could have been left wondering whether Paul condoned Peter's behavior.

Peter and the other Jewish believers who withdrew with him knew that what they were doing was wrong, but they were intimidated by the Judaizers into going against the truth of their convictions and consciences.

They became hypocrites themselves and brought heartache to their Gentile brothers and to their Lord. Paul had to address the misbehavior before the wrong actions caused an irreconcilable rift in the church.

The actions of Peter, Barnabas, and the other Jewish believers in Antioch were fracturing the church, and the fact that Peter and Barnabas were spiritual leaders made the matter even worse.

[22 : 22] For years, they had taught that salvation was by faith alone, and they'd exemplified that teaching in their lives. The Antioch church had become a model of Jewish-Gentile fellowship and harmony.

Almost overnight, though, it had become the opposite. The behavior that deviated from the truth of the gospel probably is why Paul felt compelled to remind Peter and the others what the true gospel is, and we see that reminder in the third section of our text.

Following the fearful actions and the forceful admonition, we see the fitting announcement. So, fitting announcement is your last set of blanks.

Paul continues his speech to Peter in verses 15 and 16. Here are verses 15 and 16 again. Paul said, Paul's rebuke of Peter culminated in one of the most forceful statements in the New Testament about the doctrine of justification.

It was the very doctrine that Peter and the others were in effect renouncing by their hypocritical separation from the Gentile believers. Paul was saying to Peter, I am rebuking you because you're violating the cardinal truths of Christianity.

[24 : 04] By your behavior, you're condoning works righteousness, a system of legalism that is contrary even to the covenant given by Moses and the new commandment and covenant given by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul began his definition of justification by identifying himself with his fellow Jewish Christians, including Peter. Paul acknowledged the fact that those who were Jews by heritage and birth had a great advantage over those who were mere Gentile sinners.

From the Jewish perspective, Gentiles were sinners simply because they were Gentiles. Gentiles. In Ephesians, Paul described the desperate condition of Gentiles. He said they stood under the judgment of God because they'd been excluded from citizenship in Israel.

Listen to Ephesians 2, verses 11 and 12. He said, Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands.

Remember, you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

[25 : 20] Fortunately, for the people in Antioch, Galatia, and all of us who are Gentiles, Paul had good news in Ephesians for those same Gentiles. Listen to the very next verse.

In Ephesians 2, 13, Paul wrote, But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. What he's saying here in Galatians is, unlike the Gentiles, the Jews had a head start.

Jews by birth were privileged. They'd received the law of God, the Old Testament Scripture, as well as circumcision, the sign of the covenant. Given all those wonderful benefits of life under the law, why should Jewish Christians have moved beyond the law to faith in Jesus Christ?

Well, the answer is that they should have because there was a fundamental difference between the best that could be obtained by observing the law and the gift of salvation freely offered through Jesus.

And that's the point that Paul is making in verses 15 and 16 of Galatians 2. We can paraphrase his argument like this. Forget the Gentile sinners.

[26 : 30] We know they're outside the covenant and hopeless before God. But even we Jews who claim all the privileges of the chosen people, even we had to realize that no one could be justified by observing the law.

We too know less than the Gentiles have been accepted by God through faith in Jesus Christ.

When Paul referred to Gentile sinners relative to the Jews, Paul was saying that despite all the advantages of the Jews, the Jews had to be the same way as the Gentiles.

Look at verse 16 of Galatians 2 again. He said, Yet we, talking about Jewish Christians, know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ.

So we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

It's pretty easy to see the theme of verse 16. That theme is how a person is justified before God. In the ESV translation, the word justified is used three times in just that one verse.

[27 : 43] Justification is an important theological term. We'll introduce that concept tonight and dig deeper into it next time when Paul defends the concept. In its most basic meaning, justification is

the declaration that somebody is in the right.

Justification is the favorable verdict of God, the righteous judge, the one who formerly stood condemned, has been granted a new status by God. So listen to that definition again.

Justification is the declaration that somebody is in the right. Justification is the favorable verdict of God, the righteous judge, that one who formerly stood condemned has now been granted a new status.

The basic term was originally used forensically of a judge declaring an accused person not guilty and right before the law. It was the opposite of being declared guilty and condemned.

Throughout Scripture, justification refers to God's declaring a sinner to be guiltless on the basis of faith in Him. It's the free and gracious act by which God declares a sinner right with Himself, forgiving, pardoning, restoring, and accepting Him on the basis of nothing but trust in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ.

[29 : 02] That last part is key. Throughout Scripture, justification refers to God's declaring a sinner to be guiltless on the basis of faith in God. It is the free and gracious act by which God declares a sinner right with Himself, forgiving, pardoning, restoring, and accepting Him on the basis of nothing but trust in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ.

We know that God in His holy law demands two things from us, perfect obedience and eternal punishment for disobedience. Christ as our covenant head came to satisfy both of these demands. He obeyed the law of God perfectly and gave Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. God accepts Christ's people as righteous because of the righteous obedience of Christ Himself.

That obedience and righteousness is imputed to them so that they are considered righteous in God's sight. One shorthand way Christians often refer to the meaning of justification is like this. When God saved me, God treated me just as if I never sinned. Well, that definition is partially true but it's incomplete. When God justifies people, He does treat them just as if they have never sinned.

[30 : 27] But He also treats them as if they always have been perfectly righteous. So in justification, God does two things. He forgives all sin and He declares the person to be righteous in His sight just as if that person has always been perfectly righteous.

completely avoiding sin is impossible but if something could be even more impossible, that something would be always doing what is righteous your entire life.

No amount of law-keeping can make a person righteous because the root of sinfulness is in the fallenness of man's heart. Our basic problem is in what we are rather than in what we do.

Sinful acts are just the outward expression of a nature that contains sinful thoughts. Think about what we studied when we looked at the Sermon on the Mount. A person who hates is inwardly a murderer whether he ever takes another person's life.

And a man who has immoral thoughts about women is an adulterer whether he commits the physical act of adultery or not. Faith in Christ is more than intellectual assent to the fact that Jesus died and rose for our sins.

[31 : 40] Faith in Christ is personal trust in his death to remove and forgive our sins. It's total commitment to submit to Christ as Lord. Three times in Galatians 2.16 Paul declares that salvation is only through faith in Christ and not by law.

The first statement is general. He says a person is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. The second time is more personal.

He says we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law. Then the third is more universal when he says by works of the law no one will be justified.

All three of those statements have the same great reality. John Stott explained the significance of Paul including the doctrine of justification in his rebuke of Peter.

John Stott said if God justifies Jews and Gentiles on the same terms through sinful faith in Christ crucified and puts no difference between them who are we to withhold our fellowship from Gentile believers unless they are circumcised?

[32 : 56] If God does not require this work of the law called circumcision before he accepts them how dare we impose a condition upon them which he does not impose?

Then he goes on to say if God has accepted them how can we reject them? If God receives them to his fellowship shall we deny them our fellowship? God has reconciled the Gentiles to himself how can we withdraw from those whom God has reconciled?

And that is what Paul is saying to Peter in these verses. Paul summarized this principle well in his letter to the Romans. Listen to what Paul wrote in Romans 15:7 Here is Romans 15:7 He said Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God.

Our passage tonight omits the result of Paul's rebuke. Subsequent history though tells us the result. The incident in Antioch led to the future council in Jerusalem described in Acts 15 and we looked at a passage from there earlier.

Paul may even have been on his way up to Jerusalem for the council when he was writing to the Galatians. We know from Acts 15:1 and 2 that the dissensions provoked by the Judaizers in Antioch were the immediate cause of the council.

[34:25] Paul, Barnabas, and certain others were appointed by the church to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders there about this very question. We also know the decision which the Jerusalem council reached, namely that circumcision was not to be required of Gentile believers.

Partly as a result of the stand that Paul took at Antioch against Peter that day, a great triumph for the gospel had been won. Scripture also provides evidence that Peter and Paul later reconciled. When Peter wrote what we now know as 2 Peter, Peter referred to Paul as our beloved brother. 2 Peter 3:15 says, and count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him.

If Peter was still upset with Paul, it's highly unlikely that he would have called him his beloved brother in 2 Peter. So we can see that the passage tonight was more significant than a simple disagreement at an early church potluck.

Remember the main idea. Any attempt to add works to the gospel must be identified and be totally rejected. Salvation comes through faith in Christ alone.

[35:51] The Christian church can't be what it's called to be when ritual, race, class, or other distinctions separate members from each other. The labels men put on themselves and on others are irrelevant to God and should also be irrelevant to his people.

Before salvation, every person is equally separated from God, and after salvation, every person is equally reconciled to God. Believers are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, and because believers are all children of God, they are all brothers and sisters with no exceptions or distinctions. When we get to Galatians chapter 3, we'll see these words from Paul in verses 26 through 28 of Galatians 3. Paul writes there, We've already touched on one of the key takeaways from this passage.

If the Apostle Peter and Barnabas can fall victim to peer pressure, we need to be on our guard against doing something similar. The passage shows us several other things as well.

One of the first things it shows us is we must apply the gospel, and that's where Peter failed. Peter knew perfectly well that faith in Jesus was the only condition on which God will have fellowship with sinners, that Peter added circumcision as an extra condition on which he was prepared to have fellowship with them, and he contradicted the gospel by doing that.

[37:45] We need to have rules and requirements for church membership. However, we must be certain that those rules and requirements are biblically based rather than preference based.

Another thing we can see from this passage is that we must oppose those who deny the gospel. When the issue between us is trivial, we must be as pliable as possible, but when the truth of the gospel is at stake, we must stand our ground.

In the verses tonight, Paul demonstrated the proper way to oppose people who attempt to deny or change the gospel, and we need to follow that lead when necessary. Another thing we can see here is that we must welcome anyone into our fellowship who is a true believer.

If we regard any true believer as someone whom we wish would worship somewhere else, we need to examine our own hearts and motives. One more thing we need to do is that we should rejoice in the doctrine of justification.

We've looked at a few definitions for justification tonight. Here's a one-sentence summary.

Justification is the gracious act of God by which God declares a sinner righteous solely through faith in Jesus Christ.

[39:04] We'll dig into that definition more next time. For now, just remember that we can do nothing to earn that justification. No believer has ever deserved or ever will deserve justification, but all believers have received justification through faith in Christ.

Paul summarized the importance of true biblical justification well in Romans chapter 3, verses 19 through 25. So here are Romans 3, 19 through 25.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

For there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.

[40 : 24] Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the example tonight of how to properly confront a fellow believer if that person is strayed from the truth of your gospel.

Help us, if we find ourselves in such a similar situation, to be willing to do that ourselves, just as Paul did here in this passage tonight. Let us also remember to be grateful that we are justified solely on the basis of what Christ has done for us and our faith in him, rather than anything that we can do.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.