

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

Dear Prayer Partners,

This **Sunday (02/16)** we continue our brand new study in the book of **Galatians (2:11-21)**. It's the Apostle Paul's first letter. He wrote to the churches in Galatia the importance of knowing they are saved by their faith in Jesus Christ.

In our text (2:11-21), Peter had traveled to Antioch to spend time with Paul and Barnabas. All three men had a great respect for one another. And, genuinely enjoyed being in each other's company.

Their fellowship was sweet and recognized as a gift from the Lord. King David wrote concerning unity among God's people, *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments"* (Ps. 133:1-2).

Time would have been spent sharing testimonies of God's grace, of people being saved, marriages being restored, lives that have been set free from various kinds of bondage, and men called to ministry.

The New Testament places a high priority on Christian fellowship. And, the closer time comes for the return of Jesus, for the church, the more important fellowship becomes. That's what the author of Hebrews had in mind when he wrote, *"Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching"* (Hebrews 10:24-25).

The purpose of that exhortation is the realization that the devil is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The Bible also teaches that

he is cunning like a fox, and is always looking for an inroad to disrupt the grace of God in the church. And, that is exactly what was happening in Antioch between Peter, Paul and Barnabas.

Paul began to notice that Peter was withdrawing from having fellowship with Gentile Christians. He also took note, that Barnabas was also being “carried away” by Peter’s conduct.

At stake was the real possibility of the church being fragmented into two different groups of believers. The Jewish group and the Gentile group. Each one saved by their faith in Jesus, but divided on how to be and stay saved.

“Justification by faith” is a fundamental truth that a church must never compromise. It’s essential to understand how one is saved. If anything is added to it, then it is no longer the *“Good News”*.

The Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, understood what was happening. He confronted the error publicly and declared how important the doctrine of ‘Justification’ was to the believer and the health of the church.

May we continue to be sensitive to the Lord’s warning concerning this error. And, with courage and boldness, be willing to confront those things which undermine the work of the Holy Spirit in the church of Jesus Christ.

Please invite as many as you can (Sunday, 10:00 am). **Time is short. Jesus is coming and the harvest is plentiful.**

Hope to see you,

BLESSINGS,
Pastor