
WORSHIP

Suggested worship songs: Great Things, Your Love Awakens, You Alone Can Rescue, Yet Not I, Your Great Name

WELCOME

Have you or someone you know ever had to defend loved ones from a certain life-threatening danger?

WORD

GALATIANS 2:1-10 (Read the rest of the chapter)

2 Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. ² It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but *I did so* in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. 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 secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. ⁵ But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you. ⁶ But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. ⁷ But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised ⁸ (for He who effectually worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), ⁹ and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we *might go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰ *They only asked* us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.

Very soon after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, the gospel message was already being distorted by certain groups of people. Paul addressed this in his letter to the Galatians, and we also need to learn the importance of defending the gospel. Some gospel distortions, then and now result in a legalistic gospel, a licentious gospel, a prosperity gospel, etc. But defending the gospel is not only about how distortions from outside may influence us, it's also how our own minds and hearts are capable of selling a distorted gospel to ourselves. Followers of Christ need to defend the gospel with our lives. Why? Because the true gospel is "TO-DIE-FOR" (non-negotiable truths like Jesus is God, the Bible is God's word, Jesus will return one day); it is a matter of LIFE and DEATH, depending on whether we accept or reject Jesus. How do we defend the gospel? We expose and oppose its distorted versions and SHARE and LIVE the gospel as a lifestyle. After all, "the best defense is a good offense!", as George Washington was believed to have rallied his troops for battle. As believers in Christ, we are engaged in a spiritual war for the gospel.

Here's a background of Galatians:

- Fourteen years after an initial visit, Paul again travels to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas and Titus.
- He aligns with Peter and the church leaders about the gospel he had been sharing to the Gentiles – that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone.
- Paul does this because Jewish "false brethren" were insisting that Gentiles who believe in Jesus must convert to Judaism and follow Moses' law.

As a result of this visit, Paul received the affirmation of the church leaders that he had the right gospel, the same gospel for everyone (**Galatians 2:9, Acts 11:17-18**). The rest of chapter 2 is a recounting of a confrontation between Paul and Peter on the same issue:

THE COMPROMISE OF CEPHAS

Peter didn't just make a mistake --- he was guilty because he knew what he was doing (**v.11**). Why did Peter discriminate against the Gentile believers? It was because he feared men rather than God (**v.12**). Earlier in his life, Peter denied Jesus with his words. Here, Peter denied the gospel of Jesus, not in words but in his actions. Peter was being untrue to himself, and to the Savior. Worse, other Jewish believers joined Peter in his hypocrisy (**v.13**). Peter's walk did not match his talk, so Paul confronts him (**v.14**). We may be declaring the correct gospel, but do our lives match our words? We compromise the gospel when we share a water-downed or distorted version of the gospel, or we don't share the gospel at all – out of negligence or fear of people, or perhaps we behave in ways contrary to the gospel (our walk does not match our talk). What will it look like if all followers of Jesus consistently SHARED and LIVED the gospel? What difference will that

make in our neighborhoods, homes, schools, offices or wherever we may go? God's people are to be the light in this world. Our lives is an expression of gratitude and worship for the One who alone saves us (**Matthew 5:14-16**).

THE CLARITY OF THE GOSPEL

"If the Lord's bearing our sin...is not the gospel, I have no gospel to preach." (C.H. Spurgeon). The gospel is not about us; it's about Jesus and what He has done. His letter to the Galatians was the first time Paul used the word "justified", and he uses it three times in one place (**Galatians 2:15-16**). This shows its importance in relation to the gospel (**Romans 5:1, 10**). Justification means we are declared "not guilty" for our sins because Jesus took our guilt upon Himself (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). Christ's righteousness was imputed to us --- our pitiful spiritual bank account had zero balance, no value for our salvation or going to heaven, so Jesus had to impute His holy and perfect righteousness so that we may become righteous in Him when the Father looks at us (**2 Corinthians 8:9, Titus 3:5**). The gospel is so clear, even a child can understand it! Let's not complicate it or distort it but let us defend it with our lives.

THE CONVICTION OF THE BELIEVER

"When we preach Christ crucified, we have no reason to stammer, or stutter, or hesitate, or apologize; there is nothing in the gospel of which we have any cause to be ashamed" (C.H. Spurgeon). Since we can't perfectly fulfill God's law, (which represents His holy nature), we died spiritually and were separated from God (**Galatians 2:17-19**). If you have placed your trust in Christ (Christ living in you), then like Paul, you can say that you are now a new creation, and your life has a new trajectory (**v.20**). The chapter ends with Paul writing that if grace is something that can be set aside in relation to our salvation (*i.e., to nullify – reject, despise, make void, disregard, set aside because of perceived lack of value*), then Jesus died needlessly, the greatest waste ever in the universe (**v.21**)! But Jesus did not die in vain, it is by grace that we have been saved through faith. Let's unite and put on the best defense of the gospel through a good offense as we Pray, Care and Share:

- 1-PRAY - List 10 people and pray that they will know Jesus. Also personally pray WITH them.
- 2- CARE – Do something kind and helpful for them that will demonstrate God's love.
3. SHARE – Share your testimony and the gospel clearly, in the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. BUILD AN EVANGELISTIC LIFESTYLE – Do the above on at least one specific day of the week.

By the grace of God, let's defend the gospel with our lives as we go through the days, weeks, and years to come until Jesus comes again.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. What is your understanding of the gospel? Explain it as clearly as you can.
2. How has the gospel impacted your life? How has it transformed you?
3. What will you do to build an evangelistic lifestyle and share the gospel consistently with the people around you?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for the people you meet every day to know the true gospel through your life and words. Do kind and helpful things for others, letting your light shine before everyone to point them to Jesus. Share the gospel faithfully, start with the people you live with and work with but also include those you “randomly” encounter daily.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- For legislators to promote and support bills and laws aligned with God’s Word.
- PRAY for the protection, safety and release of kidnapped American Christian missionary, Kevin, serving in Niger (West Africa). For God to turn the hearts of the kidnappers to repentance and salvation. Peace and comfort for Kevin’s family.
- Pray for persecuted Christians in Sudan and Nigeria) --- many have been beheaded and murdered; earnestly seek God’s intervention to stop the bloodshed. Pray for freedom from oppression, that God’s word and His people bring them comfort and hope.
- PRAISE God that the rest of the living Israeli hostages have been restored to their families safely! Continue to pray that even all the dead hostages will be returned to their families for burial.
- For Israel’s war with terrorists to end according to God’s purpose and for His glory. For Jewish people worldwide who are experiencing a surge of antisemitism; may this lead them to the Messiah, Jesus as they turn to God for help and comfort.
- For protection of Iranian, Syrian and Lebanese Christians and other minorities, and freedom from oppression. Pray for the gospel to spread rapidly throughout their region.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented.

- Typhoon victims in different parts of the Philippines. Seek God’s mercy upon our land. May many more Filipinos turn to Jesus!

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God, and make disciples
- For elders, pastors, deacons, and families to become holy, humble, harmonious, happy, and heart-working)
- For ministries and church expansions worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain (MMRC)

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper and intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

Galatians 2:20

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 gave Himself up for me.