

Grace changes everything.

Red touches yellow, kill a fellow. Red touches black, friend of Jack! It's the rhyme and tale of two snakes, the Coral snake and the King snake. The reason for this rhyme is that these two snakes are similar, both are practically the same size and lengths, both have the same color scheme, both even reside in the same habitat, the American south. And to the untrained eye, placed side by side, these two snakes are seemingly identical, but wisdom would caution you that even though these snakes look the same, one has a bite that will kill you.

Before we go any farther let me just remind you of two more things that look the same, in fact their origin and life span are the same, they have a similar pattern, they both even flourish in the American south and to the untrained eye, placed side by side they are identical. But be not mistaken the Apostle Paul warns us that even though they look the same, one has a bite that will kill...it's the bite of religion. Paul says "be careful for the **Gospel and religion** live the same habitat, sing the same songs, pray the same prayers, read the same bible, sit in the same pew, but one patter leads to life by faith in God while the other leads to death by faith in your actions.

Summit my fear for all of us is that we have been following the wrong pattern, red touches yellow, kill a fellow, red touches black, friend of Jack. Ever found yourself there? Where you thought you were following the patter of the Gospel, living for Jesus, trying to obey him but as the days and weeks went by you found yourself becoming an accidental Pharisee? Where no longer the grace of God was your concern, now longer the light of his mercy shined on your heart but now you're only focused on how your actions made you more righteous, that if you don't do this God won't love you or bless you? Take heart, there is another church that is just like us, it's the church of Galatia and Paul writes this letter to remind them of these two patterns. For they have left the pattern of life for the patter of death, left the Gospel

for religion, left faith for rules, they have forgotten that you are saved by Grace through faith (Eph. 2:8).

Today we are going to spend our time in Galatians 2v15-21 and the overarching theme of this letter is “grace”. It is from this grace that we see three things, first that by the grace of God we are justified. Second that by the grace of God we are dead to the law and finally that by the grace of God we have life in Christ. I have entitled this message “Grace changes everything”.

As you turn to Galatians let me give you some background. The main issue in Galatia is Christians being told that just believing in Christ is not enough to be saved, but that you have to keep certain rules and law traditions to be really saved. What’s interesting is that this letter was written centuries ago but the issue is still present day in the here and now. This issue of believing salvation is in how I dress, or I have to think like this. See some old school, traditional Christians called the Judiazers had been spreading lies about the Apostle Paul, trying to call his apostleship and message into question. They told these Galatian Christians that you need to be circumcised and follow these laws to be really saved and if Paul’s message does not agree with this than he is not a real Apostle and his message is a lie. And what we see from this letter is Paul’s passion and righteous anger against these Judiazers.

Just to give you a heat check on how frustrated Paul is, in everyone one of his letters Paul’s starts off with some type of thanksgiving and prayer for the church, being thankful for them. But there is only one book in which he does not do that, the book of Galatians. Paul goes straight for the neck.

1. Justified by the Grace of God (Galatians 2:11–16)

In v15, Paul is speaking to the Apostle Paul; let me take you into the scene. Peter has come to hang out with the Galatians and they are having a cookout (ribs, bbq, Bo jangles) and he is having a great time eating, fellowshiping, laughing and then it

happens. The room get quiet and in walks the Judiazers and Peter drops the ribs out of his mouth, and his heart begins to race, palms get sweaty, and he then pushes his seat back from the table and heads over to these Judiazers. As you can imagine the confusion in the room, maybe even frustration and as all eyes are locked onto these Judiazers, Paul's eyes are locked onto Peter. To help understand Paul's frustration we need to go back to the book of Acts. 14 yrs. Before this incident, Paul goes up to Jerusalem where Peter and other elders of the church live to discuss this very matter; it's the matter of his message. See Christ met Paul on the road to Damascus and told him to spread the message of the grace that was that salvation is only found through faith in Jesus Christ not in keeping the law. And these same Judiazers were attacking this same message, but in **Acts 15**, Peter and the rest of the church leaders agree to the message of Paul, even write a letter to affirm to others that his message was correct.

And now Paul is starring at Peter with this righteous frustration, and then he confronts Peter. He says "now Peter you just shared a meal with these Galatians brothers, you laughed with them and by doing that you affirmed that they are right with God. But now when these stuck up friends of yours walk in, now you change your tune. I'm confused, **We've already been through this before** Summit and Peter, we've already agreed that there is no other way to God but faith, so why are you acting like you forgot?". Paul called Peter out on his hypocrisy, see what the Judiazers really wanted for the Galatian Christians was less about their heart and more about them assimilating to the their cultures and traditions. Summit no matter who walks through those doors they don't need to assimilate to you, for they are made with infinite value. The church ceases to be Christian if it contains class distinctions; in the house of God everyone has a V.I.P. pass.

And if there is anyone who could not afford to forget the grace of God it was Peter. For Peter was the one who denied Jesus three times, Peter was the one who foolishly displayed his pride and arrogance in front of the Son of God. **V15**, it is clear that the only way that we come to Christ is that **We are justified by the grace of God**. This word "justified" is crucial to the Christian, it means that the righteousness

and goodness has been reckoned or given to me the sinner. So that as I stand before God, it would allow him to say to me, like he did Jesus, this is my beloved son/daughter whom I am well pleased.

I've heard it said of a judge presiding over his courtroom and the guilty party, a woman, walks into the court room after committing her crime. The judge then places on her the verdict of being guilty and then gives her a fine. But this judge is wise for he knows that she can not pay the fine, so in an outstanding act the judge takes off his robe, steps of the podium and then stands besides her, the accuser. He then reaches into his pocket and pulls out his check book, rights her a check for the exact amount and hands it to her so that she could pay the fine. He then proceeds back to podium, puts on his robe and then ask the young lady "do you have the money to pay the fine?" She says "yes your honor", receives from her the penalty for the crime that she supplied.

Summit church this is the act and grace of justification, that because of our sin we had a debt we could not pay, but on the cross Christ paid it in full. Now, you can see why Paul is frustrated?

So the question on the table is....**Why would we add to grace?** If I can step into Paul's body and speak with his mouth he would say "how dare we add to that?" Church stop admitting that you need God's grace but then we break our backs to earn it.

We are made right by the grace of God, which justification, and it is by that act of grace that we know the savior.

2. Dead to the Law (Galatians 2:17-18)

So we have just seen Paul explain to us that it is by the grace of God that we are made right with him, and it is also by this grace that we are dead to the law. In **v17**, Paul continues his frustration with Peter, he reminds him of his old Jewish doctrine (beliefs). Peter grew up a Jew, you knew that Gentiles were considered sinner

(meaning anyone who was not ethnically or culturally Jewish). You also knew that to have any dealings with them meant that you could possibly become like them.....a sinner. And Paul reminds Peter of this truth and says “Peter you just got done eating with them, laughing with them and fellowshiping with them and now you want to run back to your old ways it’s to late....haha you’re a sinner now!

If you and I have been saved by faith in Christ, then to go back to the law

truly means that you still need to be saved. But more importantly Peter’s actions taught the Galatians that Christ was a liar. See Christ taught that food nor drink could make your sinful, Christ taught that through faith in him one could receive a relationship with God, and he taught that to be one with him meant that you are one with each others. Peter’s actions showed that the teachings of Christ were all a lie.

For if these Judiazers were right then salvation came through the pattern of the law not the pattern of faith in Christ. How many of us through our conversations, and lifestyle have taught others that the teachings of Christ are a lie? Yea we would never say it but our actions to others do, due to our sin we often shows our families, friends, co-workers and the watching world that the unity, forgiveness and grace of God are all a lie. When you and I believe that faith in Christ is not enough and that I need to do this thing, and joining this group and vote this way and only hang out with these people, I am building up the very wall that Christ tore down.

Summit church, Christ has already tore down the wall of the law as well as the wall of hostility, but in our self-righteousness and pride, in our denominational and traditional arrogance we are building up the very thing he tore down. In fact by doing that we are in more sin, for we are going against the will of God. Paul says “because of this I AM DEAD TO THE LAW! I’m dead to tradition, I am dead to culture, I am dead to peoples opinions if they teach me that faith is not enough, I AM DEAD TO THE LAW!

I used to live in Memphis, TN and worked in the inner city (the hood). I was building with the local neighborhood guys their, loving and growing in the community. If you know anything about the inner city, you know that my white brothers and sisters really don't come around ha ha ha. In fact if you see them most of the time they are police and or some other extra curricular activities. One day a friend of mine (white) wanted to see me, to talk about life and marriage, and so I told him to come down and see me. We began talking about life and what Jesus is doing in our lives and then I hear the door to the community center open and in walk the neighborhood brothers I've been building with. And their eyes are locked on him and mine on them. They walk into my office and I would love to tell you that I was Paul, standing up for the Gospel but I was Peter, when they walked in my conversation with my friend began to change; I was more concerned with keeping the respect with the neighborhood than admit that this brother was my dearest and closet friend. In that moment I preach a different Gospel than before, in fact at that moment I lead both my friend and the men I was building with a stray due to my hypocrisy.

The question is.... what are of your life are you not dead to the law? 3. **What person have you preached two different gospels to?** When have you shown the world that the teachings of Christ are a lie? Church let us not continue down the pattern of death but turn to and rest on the pattern of life. For we are dead to the law and made to live by faith. Amen!

3. Life in Christ (Galatians 2:19–21)

So we've seen that by the grace of God we are justified and that we are freed from the law but know it's by the same grace that we have life in Christ Jesus. Often times Paul's letter are a little confusing, especially on the issue of grace and following the law. Many of us have a hard time understanding the dichotomy, "Pastor Ricky is Paul saying that I should not obey the law and commandments of God?". Prime example in Duet 30:16 Moses says 'obey and keep the commandments to live". So now as Paul say's that I am dead to the law, is he deleting the words of Moses? By no means,

Paul is not disregarding the written law but what Paul is describing is the normal, everyday life of the believer. The issue is now with the law, but it's with people trying to place extra theological baggage on others that God, himself, never placed on people. These Judiazers are the doing the same things the Pharisees did in Matthew 23:4.

Paul knew that the unity he had with Jesus changed his entire view on life. Let me just remind you that the law (10 commandments) were only given to show how sinful you really are, since none of us would admit it, and it showed that you needed someone to save you. So many of us base our relationship with Jesus on avoiding the big sins, well on your best day your it is filthy rags to God. **If the law shows us**

how sinful we are, then why are we living for the law—and not for Jesus?

This is so hard for us in the south, for our Christianity is based off how nice we are and how good we look on the outside, be careful that we don't become an accidental Pharisee, for they looked great on the outside, followed all the laws but were dead in their hear. Christ called them 'white washed tombstones'. Paul says that the death of Christ was given to me by faith, which included justification, but these benefits mean nothing if I am not identified with Christ. If right standing with God was based on my quite times, prayer life, not having sex, then Christ died for notihing.

“As long as Christ remains outside of us, we are separated from him, [and] all that he suffered has no value to me or the human race.”

—John Calvin

If we continue to believe that it is our actions that make us right with God and bring salvation, Christ remains separated from us.

Summits the only way to be connected with Christ is through faith in him only. For Christ says in **John 14:6** “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the father except through me”. Listen church, if we try to climb to heaven by any other way, what we are saying is “Christ come down from the cross I have found another

way died for nothing. Paul says “this is the message that I received from Christ my savior, this is the only true Gospel, and this is the message that leads to the pattern of life.

Sophie Scholl was born in Germany, May of 1921, raised in an Lutheran Christian home along side a loving mother and father. But in 1933, only 12 years later the emphasis Adolf Hitler would come to power, controlling the German society, derailing the Christian love for their Jewish neighbor. As a young woman Sophie would see the hypocrisy and sin of the Nazi regime and join groups that would desire to see it crumble and cease. One day along with two of her Jewish friends would walk into the center of town and there she saw it, police officers with signs that said “Jews not wanted here”, feeling the hurt and pain for her friends, it would send her into an everlasting fight for the Gospel as well as the dignity for all humanity. But it was in 1942 when her life would take a turn for the worst; she would join an organization that publically opposed the Nazi regime, called the White Rose. Due to their open hatred of Hitler, they were watched carefully and kept in high surveillance, Sophie began to feel the tingle of death around the corner, and as fear began to grip her soul these words came to her...” *I will cling to the rope God has given me in Christ Jesus, even when my numb hands can no longer feel it*”. Soon after she would be beheaded.

“I will cling to the rope God has thrown me in Christ Jesus, even when my numb hands can no longer feel it”. Paul says “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me and the life I live now in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Paul says “when they tried to discredit me, I clung to em, when they stoned me and left me for dead, I clung to em, when I was shipped wrecked and left for 3 days by myself, I clung to em, when I beaten with rods, I clung to em, even robbed by my own people, I clung to em, when I couldn’t sleep, I clung to em, when I lay in the

prison cell, I clung to em, when I had no food to eat I still clung to em, and when I heard the blade leave it's place to behead me, I clung to em.

Summit church, God knew that you could not get to him so he sent you a rope in Christ Jesus, you didn't earn it but yet and still he gave it to you through faith in him and now hang on to him with all you got. If the world hates you, cling to em, when bills pile up and there is no money, cling to em, if the people talk about you and spit on ya, cling to em, if they try and disregard your message cling to em, if family and friends turn their back on you, cling to em, and if anyone tries to change the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is then when you cling to em.

This is the Gospel, that Christ would live, that Christ would die, and that Christ would rise, that all who believe my find life, that all who believe may find love, that all who believe may find the patter of Grace.

Red touches yellow, kill a fellow, red touches black friend of Jack, be not mistaken there are two things that look similar but one has a bite that will kill you, church let's be wise and choose the right patter, the pattern of grace.

Amen!