

For Me

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

A. Slide2,3 Harvest Crusade. Stir.

II. Slide4 **Intro: For Me**

A. In ch.1, Paul establishes that **his apostleship** and **gospel** came from **God**, **not** people. **Here**, Paul demonstrates that both were validated by the leaders of the church in Jer.

B. I've been to my share of board meetings:

1. CM (31yrs). Colina de Luz (23). Mercy Projects (21). HEF (19) & others.
2. Some have been **boring**...& some have been **pretty exciting**. Some seemed like a waste of time, some were important life/ministry changing events.
3. In this chapter we have 2 important church board meetings that shaped the future of the church. **One in Jerusalem & the other in Antioch**. Acts 15.

III. Slide5 **1 GOSPEL, 2 APOSTLES, 3 PILLARS (1-10)**

A. SEE PAUL RUN, RUN PAUL RUN (1-2)

B. This is Paul's 2nd trip to Jerusalem, 14 yrs later.

C. Paul was a **runner**...*on the right track, headed in the right direction, for the right goal.*

D. TITUS THE TEST CASE (3-5)

E. (3) The Judaizers are still dogging Paul's steps.

F. Titus...an uncircumcised Gentile convert to Christianity.

G. **Circumcision** – was a sign of the covenant relationship with God.

1. It was commanded of God's chosen people.
2. They must have thought, *why wouldn't Titus want to appropriate this sign that represented being in covenant relationship to God?*
3. And Titus would have thought *can't I just but a Christian Tee-shirt.*

H. Slide6 (4) Notice *false brethren, secretly, stealth, spy, bondage.*

I. **Spied out our liberty** – *i.e.* that Titus wasn't circumcised??? (weird, in Roman Bath house)

1. This was liberty espionage at its finest.
- J. **Bring us into bondage** – Paul saw it was a **freedom/bondage** issue.
1. This was a **deadly** battle Paul was in, & it held an **eternal** outcome.
- K. (5) Spurgeon said it well when he said, *Whitefield & Wesley might preach the gospel better than I do, but they cannot preach a better gospel.*
- L. **1 GOSPEL, 2 APOSTLES, 3 PILLARS** (6-10)
- M. (6-9) Same God, same Gospel; same Spirit, same aspiration, same grace; same vision, same mission; same message...*different ministry.*
1. Here we have: **1 Gospel, 2 Apostles, & 3 Pillars.**
 2. **1 Gospel** (shared by all participants). **2 Apostles** (representing the 2 spheres of the missionary outreach i.e. Jew/Gentile). And **3 Pillars** (**James, Peter, John**).
 3. Paul is both **unified & affirmed** & has **full support** by *the Pillars*.
 4. **Slide7** Peter said, 2 Pet.3:15,16 *And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him - 16 speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture.*
- N. (9) **The right hand of Fellowship** - endorsed them & their differences of labor.
- O. (10) **Remember the poor** – Christians in Jerusalem who were suffering persecution & loss of property. Paul was already doing this.
1. **We show our love to Christ when we sing or pray to Him. But** we can also evidence our love to God one more way, by **ministering to the poor, the less fortunate, the underprivileged.**
 2. **This also** would cement the bond of friendship between Jewish & Gentile Christians.

IV. **Slide8 TABLE MANNERS/FELLOWSHIP (11-14)**

- A. This was *dangerous* because this very thing spawned the Jerusalem council to begin with.

1. *Don't seek to be a polite preacher, but a Great Saint.* Whitefield
- B. Slide9 (11) Swindoll, No one is immune to the allure of *legalism*, w/its glittering promise of membership in the *holier-than-thou club*.
1. Don't think you are stronger than this apostle Peter.
- C. Peter knew better – Acts 10
1. Staying in Joppa at *Simon the Tanners* (treating the skins of dead animals). Peter was taught (by the descending sheet 3x's, *kill & eat*) if God called food or people **clean**, then they were.
 2. Peter got to watch a transformation happen right before his eyes w/**Cornelius**.
 - a) He was not only a Gentile, **but** a *Roman-Gentile-Centurion*. Who...got saved, was filled w/the HS, spoke w/tongues, was water baptized, & then Peter even stayed w/ him a few more days. **Read** Acts 11:2,3, 15-18.
- D. Meeting *face to face* is a healthy 1st step toward handling **church conflict** constructively.
1. Often times an email, letter, phone call, or hearing it from a friend, usually causes **surmising** to the issue at hand.
- E. **Application:** We are accountable to other Christians for what we say & do.
1. Slide10a On one hand the gospel makes us **free** **but** not free to live irresponsibly
 2. On the other hand, we aren't called to serve as a secret squad of *lifestyle police*.
- F. *Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty*, said Wendell Phillips. **And that applies to our spiritual liberty** as well.
- G. (12) Since Gentiles didn't observe Jewish food laws, the groups did not eat together. **At first**, Peter shared meals with Gentiles as an act of unity in Christ, **but** his later separation from them reinforced a *divisive atmosphere* in the Antioch church.
1. Slide10b Peter's actions were **hypocritical** because he witnessed this cleansing mercy **firsthand** at Cornelius' home (Acts 10) **and** because, as one of the Jerusalem leaders, he already approved of Paul's **law-free gospel** (Gal 2-10)
 2. Do you know what Peter was eating that day?...**a waffle...then crow. Ha!**
- H. Reason for this behavior? **Fear!** – *the fear of man brings a snare*, Prov.29:25
1. Out of **fear of reproof** from influential Jews, he acted contrary to his beliefs.

2. Heb.13:6 *So we may boldly say: The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?*

- I. (13) **Hypocrisy** – he was sending mixed signals. He was blurring the message of the gospel. He was comfortable eating ham sandwiches until James friends showed up.
 - 1. Remember our **words & actions** have consequences beyond ourselves.
 - 2. How we live affects others in the family.
- J. (14) **Not straightforward** – lit. *to walk w/straight feet*.
 - 1. Not walking a **straight path** towards **the truth of the gospel**.
- K. **Before them all** – **public sin, public rebuke**. (private sin, private rebuke)
 - 1. **Has anyone brought your actions to your attention? How did you respond?**
- L. We're all tempted to succumb to peer pressure & lapse into behavior that contradicts our beliefs. *Note: this didn't take him out of the ministry. God can still use us.*
 - 1. But sometimes it takes **a Paul** to confront us & get us back on track.
 - a) Can you think of a time you **gave in** to pressure?
 - b) Can you think of a time you acted **contrary** to your beliefs?
 - c) How has God demonstrated His forgiveness & His willingness to **continue to use you** in His work?
- M. **Application:** The gospel must not only be **taught but applied**.
 - 1. **Slide11** *What you do speaks so loudly, I cannot hear what you say.*
- N. **Lessons we learn:**
 - 1. **Great leaders can be in error.** Peters 2 biggest blunders are recorded for us:
 - a) Denying Christ & Distorting the Gospel. **But** so are all the times he stood **strong** for his Lord, **suffered** for him, & **preached** in power.
 - 2. **God's grace means there is no 2nd class Christians.** Racism, discrimination, or caste systems, of any brand, w/in any culture, is **incompatible** w/the truth of the gospel.
 - 3. **Standing for the gospel can be a lonely business.** (be a brave warrior)

V. Slide12 **SOLA FIDE** (15-21) **FAITH ALONE**

- A. (16) **Justified** – *Opposite of being condemned. Declared just. Made rt w/God.*
1. **Slide13** It is **absolving** a man from a charge, the **acquitting** him when accused, & **pronouncing** him righteous.
 2. *The one who formerly stood **condemned** has now been granted a **new status** at the bar of divine justice.*
 3. Paul spells it out: **Acceptance w/God** comes through a simple act of trust in **Jesus...& nothing else.**
 4. If we lose on this truth we lose...**God, Christ, all the promises, righteousness, faith, & eternal life.**
- B. **Justified by faith** –
1. **He is the well**, but we must by faith **draw water** out of it.
He is the refuge, but we must by faith **enter His borders.**
He is the bread of life, but we must by faith **eat of Him.**
 - a) Yet don't turn **faith** itself into one of *the works of the Law*.
 - b) We are saved **by** faith, **but not on account of** our faith.
- C. **So what is the truth of the Gospel?** That God's acceptance of us depends solely on His Grace - The grace of His Son's substitutionary payment of our sins on the cross that we accept by faith...Plus nothing!!!¹
- D. **Slide14** (17,18) Swindoll, *"To us, our best efforts may seem like a sturdy enough staircase to ascend to God. **But**, like **rotten wood**, they can't hold us. We can't even take the 1st step toward heaven w/o its snapping into **splinters** beneath us."* **Jesus** is our only secure **staircase.**
- E. (19) **The Law** is not a way of life, it is a way of **death**. *The Law kills.*
1. **The Law kills us** that **the gospel** might rise us up again.
- F. **Slide15** (20) Martin Luther said, *On Good Friday I clearly see my sin – but on the Day of Easter no sin is any longer to be seen. :)*
- G. This is the Christian life...**When He died, I died. When He rose, I rose. When I live my life, He is actually living it out through me, as I walk by faith.**

¹ Charles Swindoll, Galatians, pg.31

- H. I have been crucified **with** Christ – It's **ok** to wear a cross around your neck, tattoo it on your body, or have it on your ring...**but** it's most important to wear it in your **heart**. **And** a cross in the **heart** helps carry every cross on the **back**.
1. Paul said, *I have been crucified with Christ*. He did not say, *I have made a determination to imitate Jesus Christ*, **or**, *I will really make an effort to follow Him*, **but** I have been **identified** with Him in His **death**.
 2. **What died then?** my old nature, my flesh, my self, my rights, my way.
- I. **The life** which I now **live in the flesh** – like sap from the stem, running into me, the branch.
- J. **I live by faith** – saving faith cannot be reduced to a **one-time** decision **or** event in the **past**; **it is living, dynamic** reality permeating **every aspect** of the believers life. **I live by faith**.
1. When you become a Christian, **you place your sins on Him**, He places His **righteousness on you**.
 2. **He then is treated like He's done everything you've done. And you are treated like you've done everything He's done.** [like all **His** medals placed around your neck]
- K. **Slide16** Who loved **ME** & gave Himself for **ME** – Can you say this?
1. ***Brian** has been crucified with Christ; it is no longer **Brian** who lives, but Christ lives in **Brian**; and the life which **Brian** now lives in the flesh **Brian** lives by faith in the Son of God, who loved **Brian** and gave Himself for **Brian**.*
 2. **Wow**...how daringly personal Paul makes this.
 3. **No Christian who has grasped these truths could ever seriously contemplate reverting to the old life.** Stott
 4. We are talking the **unmerited, immeasurable, & infinite love** of God...that sent Jesus to the cross.
 5. One paraphrase of Galatians 2:20 suggests, ***If He loved me enough to give Himself for me, then He loves me enough to live out His life in me.***
- L. (21) **If** it were possible to obtain a **right standing** before God through the **works** of the **Law**, **than** Christ had no business dying.
1. **Jesus would be just a footnote** in history.

2. **But** he didn't die in vain. His death was purposeful, deliberate, & designed by God Himself to secure our salvation.

M. **Slide17a** Every man's heart is his throne. Before one is saved, **self** reigns supreme in arrogance and pride. Only the **grace** of God can dethrone the ego **and** let Christ have his **rightful place**.

1. In the Christian, **self** is the last enemy to be destroyed. **Self will permit the believer to do anything, sacrifice anything, suffer anything, be anything, go anywhere, take any liberties, bear any crosses, afflict soul or body to any degree... Anything, if it can only be allowed to live.**

2. **Slide17b** **Self dies hard!** Yet self **must** die, if Christ is to **reign supreme**. Feb8, Bread

a) **Slide17c** *Sign the death certificate of your **sin nature**.*