

## **Dr. Tim Gombis, Galatians, Session 4, Galatians 2:11-21**

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This is Dr. Tim Gombis in his teaching on the book of Galatians. This is session number four on Galatians 2:11-21.

So, this is the fourth lecture in Galatians, and in this lecture, we're going to cover Galatians 2:11 to 21.

First, in verses 11 to 14 where Paul recounts his confrontation of Peter in Antioch, and then in verses 15 to 21 what Paul does there is he digs into the deep logic of the gospel. Basically, that is his argument with Peter in Antioch, and it really forms the logic of what he wants to argue with the Jewish Christians there in Galatia and also the whole audience there in Galatia. What Paul is doing here is he's bringing together the two situations, that is, the confrontation of Peter in Antioch, and he's using that as basically the substance of the confrontation of his entire audience there in Galatia. So that situation with Peter, basically, he's conflating the two situations because they're the same thing.

Now, there is an interpretive issue of whether verses 15 to 21 were actually part of the speech that he gave to Peter in Antioch, which is part of his confrontation. It probably was. I mean, this is probably something of what he said there in Antioch, but really it doesn't matter for our purposes because what Paul is doing is he's unfolding the theologic or the theological logic of what Jewish Christians, Paul's contemporaries, need to understand about the gospel so they can participate in the fullness of the fellowship of the one new multi-ethnic family of God in Jesus. So let's dig in and see what happens here, the nature of Paul's argument.

In verse 11, verses 11 to 14, Paul recounts his confrontation of Peter and he says in verse 11, when Cephas, and this is Peter, this is his Aramaic name, but when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. Now this is not recorded in Acts, this visit of Peter to Antioch, and I don't know why Peter made his way there to Antioch. It was not necessarily like, I'm going to check you out and see that you're doing everything right, kind of a visit, but Paul doesn't comment on that.

So, Peter ends up there in Antioch, and you remember the Antiochian church is a mixed-race church. There are Jews and Gentiles fellowshiping there together in Christ because they're enjoying their Christian identity together. The Jerusalem church was completely monolithic.

It was Jewish. These are Jewish Christians, and because of that, all the Christians there in the Jerusalem church did not necessarily have to; they didn't necessarily have to work through the logic of the gospel, which would have led them to fellowship with non-Jewish Christians. They just didn't have the opportunity.

They're all Jews who are Christians. Peter did have that opportunity because he was driven in Acts 11 to meet with the centurion in Caesarea. So, Peter has had to work through this issue, but also, it's the case that there's some sense in which you can sort of learn something theologically, but since you're not pressed to embody it practically, sometimes that theological lesson is not always very deeply embedded.

So, Peter makes this visit to Antioch, and Paul ends up opposing him because he stands in the place of judgment. He stands condemned. Well, why does he stand condemned? What did Peter do? Well, Paul recounts here in verse 12 that first of all, he was eating with Gentiles.

That is to say, when the church gathered together, Peter was doing what they did in the Antiochian church. That is, they got together for the Lord's Supper or the Love Feast, the meeting as a church where they would have a meal together, and the Jews, the Jewish Christians, and the non-Jewish Christians were all eating at the same table. They're eating together.

Now, it's unknown whether the Jews would have had kosher food. In my opinion, it's likely that the Jews would have eaten kosher food, specially prepared food for them. Non-Jewish Christians would eat whatever they were going to eat.

But what was important was that they sat at the table together, which was a radical step beyond most Jewish Christians inherited view of what's appropriate. Peter makes a reference. I didn't write down the passage here, but it's in his speech to the Centurion in Acts 11 when he says, you know that it is unlawful for Jews to eat with Gentiles. So, this is not in the law that it's regarded Torah was that it they were prevented from actually sitting down and eating with Gentiles.

So, what they thought was unlawful, these Jewish Christians in Antioch are pressing beyond that to live into the fullness of their Christian identity as part of Jesus' one new family. So, Peter is enjoying that fellowship. He ate with non-Jewish Christians for a time, but certain men from James came, and when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

That is to say, these men come down from Jerusalem, and these are Jewish Christians who basically regard fellowshiping with Gentiles as unlawful, either going into a Gentile's house or sitting down and eating food with Gentiles. And when they come down, Peter, because he's intimidated, begins to remove himself from fellowshiping with Gentiles, no longer eating with them, basically fearing their

disapproval of these men who are from the Jerusalem church. Well, the effect of Peter's action is to send the message to the non-Jewish Christians that you have to become like us. To be Jewish is to be part of God's approved ethnic identity, and because you are sinners, you are not of the same group that I'm a part of, you have to change and become like me or else I can't fellowship with you.

So, this is an indication that social behaviors have theological meaning. It is very much a similar thing, but the same basic thrust is going on in 1 Corinthians 11 when the rich are shutting out the poor from the love feast in Corinth, and Paul confronts them that they're not embodying Christian identity and Christian social community rightly when they shame the poor by shutting them out. Because the inherent message is you're not good enough, we have greater social value than you have, meaning sort of we have more inherent value before God than you have.

The same thing's happening here with Peter's action. Paul says that this is an act of hypocrisy on Peter's part. Verse 13, and the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy, which is interesting that Paul calls it hypocrisy.

Why is it hypocrisy? He doesn't comment on that, but it very well may be the fact that Barnabas already knows better. He's already been part and parcel, a full participant in this mixed-race community in Christ. Peter knows better.

As I just mentioned in Acts 10 and 11, he goes to Caesarea and then even reports back the theological lesson that he learned to the church in Jerusalem. So, they know better, but they are intimidated by the presence of these people from the Jerusalem church that they are actually engaging in unlawful behavior. The unlawful behavior is that these Jewish Christians, under obligation to be law observant, are doing something that may be unlawful but certainly feels transgressive and is actually fellowshiping with people who are sinners.

What is going to get them out of this conundrum? What's going to get a Jewish Christian like Peter and Barnabas out of this trouble? This is what Paul embarks on in Galatians 2:15 to 21, where he unfolds for a Jewish Christian like Peter, like Barnabas, and the Jewish Christians there in Galatia, he's unfolding for them the logic of the gospel, which explains how God's one new family in Christ actually can fellowship fully with one another. So, let's take a look at how this unfolds. As I said, this is probably part of Paul's speech to Peter that he gave him in Antioch.

But even if it, you know, parts of it are not exactly what he said, this is basically the theology that Paul would have unfolded for Peter, and is going to be helpful for him. Before we get into this, though, we have to deal with a couple of heavy theological issues. I should say this text is basically one of these crucial texts that contain a lot of Pauline theological issues that are up for grabs these days.

So, we'll have to cover a couple of these major exegetical issues in this passage and Pauline theology. First of all, justification comes up here in this text because Paul, to solve this problem of Jew and Gentile relationships in Christ, goes to justification. He uses justification to solve this problem.

What exactly does Paul mean by justification? Well, first of all, the first thing that we need to say about justification is that many people in our, well, many Christians today understand justification coming out of our Reformation heritage as referring to the verdict that is rendered by God that a believer is justified or righteous at the point of that person's conversion. That is true, it's just that there's much more going on with justification. It's a big notion, it's a large notion.

You remember when I had this one diagram up on the board here where I was talking, I made reference to how at the moment of Christ's death and resurrection, there is sort of an already component to salvation, but there's still a not yet component to salvation. One of the things that's important to say about justification is that justification also partakes of that already but not yet dynamic. That is to say, justification, in a sense, justification is the eschatological verdict that God will render over His people on the day of Christ.

Okay. Justification is a future reality. Paul says in Galatians 5 that we, by the Spirit, await the hope of justification or the hope of righteousness because it's a notion that is going to happen in the future.

Now, as it happens, a key component of Paul's theology is that the future day of Christ is already pressing in on the present and has, in a sense, overtaken the church, the believer, and the church in the present era. So, if you think about, you know, the church as the collection of all the people who are in Christ here in time, the day of Christ by the Spirit, the day of Christ is already secured to everybody who is in Christ in time. Paul says that you are the ones upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

So, there's a sense in which anybody who is in Christ, anyone who turns to Christ and receives salvation, is baptized into Christ by the Spirit. There is a sense in which, in the heavenly courtroom, a verdict of righteousness is rendered, but that's a verdict nobody hears. That's a verdict that's rendered in anticipation of the future day of Christ, that verdict being rung out publicly before the whole cosmos.

So, one of the things that we have to say about justification is it is a future reality that is applied to believers in the present because we are the people upon whom the future has fallen. So, it's eschatological, that is to say, it has to do with things in the end. A further aspect to righteousness slash justification language, that's the same word group. A further issue that's part of this is that justification has to do with being made right.

It has to do with rectification, that is to say, something previous generations of theologians would object to that justification; it's not right to say that it has no effect in reality because then we're making it just a legal fiction that's rung out in heaven. But for Paul, justification is to be rectified; that is to say, people outside of Christ are brought into the transformed, made new people of God. When we are justified, that is a making right, we are transformed.

So, there's the transformative aspect of justification. But one of the aspects that has the most to do with this passage and how Paul unfolds his argument is that justification also has to do with inclusion in the people of God. That is to say, justification has to do with who is a part of God's people.

In a sense, it answers what is the group of people as we look forward to the future day of the Lord, what is the group of people that God is going to fully and finally justify on that day. What does that group of people look like? Various Jewish groups in the first century would have answered that question differently. According to Paul's gospel and those who are the apostles, according to Paul's gospel, it is all those who are in Christ. Everyone who has faith in Christ or who is of the faithfulness of Christ.

We'll talk about that in a second, which is another big interpretive issue. But everybody who is a follower of Jesus, whether they are Jew or Gentile, those are the people who are going to be justified at the final day. Those are the people who have a right to be called the people of God and, basically, who have the right to claim hope in being justified on the final day.

That is a little bit up for grabs in this Galatian situation because what is being argued in Galatia by the Jewish Christian missionaries is that no, the people who have the right to hope and be justified at the final day are people who are in Christ and look Jewish. People who are Jewish are going to be justified at the final day. And Paul is saying no, the only basis for justification and, thereby, inclusion in the people of God is people who are of the faith of Jesus Christ, who walk in the same way as Jesus walked.

Those are the people who are going to be justified on the final day. So, justification is a complex reality, and there are a lot of issues tied up in that. We'll see how that works out in Paul's argument as it unfolds here in verses 15 to 21.

The second issue, an interpretive issue, is what Paul means by this expression, works of law? This expression is a work of law that Paul uses three times in verse 16. This is where this whole interpretive issue, having to do with what is called the new perspective on Paul, comes into play. And what's happening here is previous

generations of Pauline scholars looked at Paul's gospel as standing against a legalistic conception of Judaism.

That is, Paul was proclaiming a law-free gospel, whereas Judaism is depicted as legalistic. When the gospel comes in, Paul proclaims that it is by faith in Christ alone, not by doing or achieving or accumulating or earning merit. And when Paul uses the expression works of law, that's an expression that has to do with works that are connected to the Mosaic law, whereby one accumulates merit before God in order to present a claim to God for justification on the final day.

So, Paul here in Galatians 2.16 is advocating for faith in Christ over against works of law, by which he means deeds of legalism. More recently, it's been argued that Paul, by this expression works of law, is not talking about deeds of legalism. What he's talking about is the kinds of deeds that a person does oriented by Torah or oriented by the Mosaic law.

Deeds such as Sabbath observance, following food laws in the preparation of food, circumcision, the kind of deeds that represent loads of other deeds in observance of the Mosaic law, but that add up to a life that makes one a Jew. So, Paul is not talking; when he uses the phrase works of law, he's not talking about legalism. He's speaking about the deeds that a person can do that mark him out as a Jew or mark her out as a Jew.

Acts that add up to a Jewish identity and that notion has great merit, I believe, because these are the kinds of things that Paul is actually talking about in this context. He's talking about differences between Jews and Gentiles, and in verse 15, that's how he begins this discussion. We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles.

Nevertheless, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, the works of law stand in there for Jewish identity. Paul and Peter are Jews, but they know that doing the things that add up to a Jewish identity is not the basis of justification. They know that the basis of justification is faith in Christ and that by itself.

So, the second thing, the second interpretive issue is that works of law have to do with Jewish identity. It does not have to do with Judaism as a legalistic religion. Third, the third interpretive issue, and this again is tangled, is that this expression of faith in Christ Jesus is a little bit more complicated in verse 16 and beyond than you might imagine.

Paul uses a Greek expression here that I'll get rid of some of this. Paul uses a Greek expression here, *Pistis Jesou Christou*, by which he means, by which he's indicating, well, here's the question, what exactly is Paul indicating? For many English Bible readers, it seems pretty straightforward. One of the ways that this expression can be

understood is as an objective genitive and translated in this way, the way that you are probably used to seeing it, faith in Jesus Christ or faith in Christ Jesus.

Another way of translating this, however, and many interpreters argue that this is more natural, is this is a subjective genitive and it has to do with the faith, and this might sound a bit unnatural if you're just used to reading Romans and Galatians in English translation, is this having to do with the faith of Jesus Christ or the faith of Christ Jesus? Then, the question is raised: What need does Jesus have to exercise faith? Furthermore, *Pistis* can be rendered or translated as faithfulness, something like faithfulness, fidelity, loyalty, trust, that sort of thing. So, Paul does not necessarily contrast internal faith with external deeds. The contrast has something more to do with something having to do with Jesus Christ and his faithfulness or faith in Jesus Christ on one side and, on the other side, Jewish identity when it comes to justification.

So, interpreters have debated whether this expression has to do with justification coming from the agency of Jesus Christ and his faithfulness, emphasizing perhaps divine initiative in salvation, or is Paul talking about the human responsibility in salvation and the human's responsibility to exercise faith in Christ Jesus? This has been one of the big occupations of Pauline theology over the last 30, 40 years or so. It's an issue that's often related to New Perspective kind of issues, but it's actually a very distinct and separate issue because the lines fall in different places with regard to this debate. I think one of the best treatments of this, or at least one of the ones that capture my own understanding, is that by Morne Hooker, who recently wrote an article indicating that it's probably the best way to read this expression as emphasizing both.

I mean, Paul perhaps means to be ambiguous here. That is to say, what Paul is trying to emphasize is that justification comes from Jesus Christ's faithfulness to the Father, the life that he led, and his mission of faithful obedience all the way to the cross. That is the means whereby God unleashes justification.

Furthermore, we see this especially when it comes down to verse 20, where Paul talks about his life being wrapped up into the faithfulness of the Son of God, or the faith in the Son of God. However, you translate that expression because the same issue applies there. But there, Paul does talk about human participation in the faithfulness of Jesus. So, does Paul mean to actually capture both Jesus Christ's faithfulness to the Father and that mode and that life of faithfulness as sort of the template that we imitate, but also the realm of reality that we jump into and are baptized into by the Spirit, and that carries us along as we render to God a life of faithfulness, being empowered by Jesus's life of faithfulness, and imitating Jesus's life of faithfulness? I hope that makes sense.

I sort of take a both-and approach, where this has to do with justification coming by virtue of my being incorporated into Jesus Christ, and I also like the participatory dimension where the faithfulness of Jesus Christ actually sets the parameters and is the template for my own life of faithfulness, even as my life is wrapped up into the life of Jesus. So, these three interpretive issues are going to come into play at many points as we make our way through Galatians 2:15-21, and Galatians 2:15-21 is really the theological heart of this letter and is the theological core of what he wants to communicate to his audience. So, having kind of covered that to some extent without hopefully losing anybody, let's get back into the text.

Paul's strategy here in this passage is to lump together the Jewish Christians there in Galatia and Peter and Barnabas as all making the same error. And so, Paul's theological message in 2:15-21 is what he wants to say to all of them. Let's see how his logic works out.

In verses 15 and 16, Paul starts with agreed-upon notions that Paul, Peter, Barnabas, and we'll assume that the Jewish Christians in Galatia all share. They share these... Verses 15 and 16 are basically the common confession of Jewish Christians of Paul's era. And here's what he says: We are Jews by nature.

That is, you, Peter, and Barnabas, and me, Paul, I, Paul, we are Jews by nature, by birth, and not sinners from among the Gentiles. And when Paul says that, there's a sense in which he's being a little bit obnoxious. He's drawing out all the implicit notions that are in play here and making them explicit.

And he's really a bit racially charged because the way that first-century Jews would look on Gentiles was to see them as inherently unclean, inherently sinners. And that fellowship with them makes a Jew like Paul, or Peter makes them unclean. So, I mean, it's, you know, they're looking down their nose in judgment at Gentile sinners.

So, Paul is saying, you, Peter, and I, we are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles. Yet, or but, or nevertheless, knowing that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Christ Jesus, that is to say, even though you and I are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, we know, Peter, that the ground or the basis for inclusion in the people of God or the ground or the basis for justification before God is not our Jewish identity, but is the faithfulness of Jesus Christ or God's provision for us in Christ, something like that. So, what he's trying to do here in the first sort of two lines of verse 16 is he wanting to say to Peter that even though we are not Gentile sinners and we are Jews, we still know that it's not our Jewishness that saves us.

It's not our Jewishness that justifies us. It's our inclusion into Christ's own faithfulness, or if you like, it is our faith in Christ, not our Jewishness. Because of that,



we also have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by the faithfulness of Christ, or by faith in Christ, and not by being Jewish.

So, he's repeating himself. He's kind of elaborating at length on the logic here so that Peter really gets it. I'll paraphrase this.

We also have believed in Christ or committed ourselves to Christ so that we may be included in the people of God on the basis of the faithfulness of Christ and not because of our Jewish identity since simply maintaining Jewish identity doesn't bring about justification. So far, that's kind of the logic of verses 15 and 16, and what Paul is doing is drawing out at painful length the logic and laying it bare of Jewish Christianity, the gospel as Jewish Christians would know it: Peter, Barnabas, and himself, and those Jewish Christians in Galatia.

And the point is this so far. Jews are on the exact same ground as Gentiles with regard to justification before God. Jews are on the same basis as Gentiles with regard to justification before God.

Theologically, we're cool, but watch what Paul does with Peter. Paul then isolates and makes explicit Peter's difficulty, which is the same difficulty as Barnabas's, the same difficulty as the Jerusalem Christians, and is the same difficulty as the agitators in Galatia. And here it is in verse 17.

If, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? Or I can paraphrase it this way. If putting ourselves next to the rest of humanity before God for justification includes us next to all these sinners, is Christ doing some work for sin, the cosmic power of sin? That is to say, remember what the logic of verses 15 and 16 is. Jews are on the same basis as Gentiles with regard to justification before God.

So, these Gentile Christians and these Jewish Christians, Paul would be saying to Peter, what Jesus just did for us is the thing that you fear. And you fear rubbing shoulders with sinners, making you unclean. That's not a good thing.

Well, Jesus, God in Christ, just did that to us because he set us next to all these Gentile sinners standing in need of justification before God. So, we are standing shoulder to shoulder with other Gentile Christians whom we are being told to regard as sinners. So, is Jesus in league with sin? That's the conundrum.

That's the theological problem. And, of course, Paul says, may it never be. That's an absurd conclusion.

That's an absurd conclusion. But that's really the logic that Peter and Barnabas and the Jerusalem Christians and the Gentiles, the agitators in Galatia, that's the conclusion they're pushed to. And Paul wants them to see that that's absurd.

Something else has got to be going on. So, to get them out of that problem, Paul unfolds this theological logic, and he's going to unfold it with two elaborations. One in verse 18 and then one in verses 19 and 20.

And they're both set off by these, like I said before, these gorgeous conjunctions. There are two fours; excuse me, there are these two fours that set off Paul's two elaborations. The first one he gives here is in verse 18, and this is very, very cryptic.

Very, very cryptic. And whenever something is complicated for me, I have to draw it. So, I'll see if I can draw this the logic here.

Paul says this in verse 18, for, that is to say, here's why this is not a problem, Peter. If I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I will prove myself to be a transgressor. What in the world is Paul saying? If I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

And what Paul is doing here in verse 18 is he wants Peter to understand, and also the agitators, the teachers in Galatia, he wants them to understand that what they're doing, driven by their fear of fellowshipping with Gentile sinners and thereby becoming unclean, what they're doing, driven by that fear, is putting them in a far more precarious situation before God than what they think they're avoiding. Here's what I mean by that. I could paraphrase verse 18 this way: if you, Peter, agitators, Jerusalem Christians if you really do act out your Jewish Christianity the way you're doing, you become worse than a sinner; you become a transgressor.

You become a high-handed sinner against God. Now, how is that the case? Here's how that is the case. Paul talks about rebuilding what he has once destroyed.

And what Paul, I think, is doing here is he's regarding, well, I don't even know if I want to say the law itself because the law didn't necessarily teach this, but what Paul has understood to be lawful or unlawful is to be fellowshipping with Gentiles. And this is what Peter talked about in Acts 10 and 11. That is, it is unlawful to be fellowshipping as Jews with Gentiles.

You can picture their understanding of the law as a fortress. In fact, maybe I'll put this in quotes: the law, because the Mosaic Law actually didn't do this in a sense, but Peter and Paul formally thought that it did this. The law was sort of functioning as a fortress, keeping them in.

Gentile sinners are out here. Now, Paul, formerly in here, within the law, avoiding contact with Gentile sinners, is basically staying within the fortress, keeping his purity. What he realized in Christ is that Christ has broken down these barriers between Jews and Gentiles.

And so, where is Christ located? There's a sense in which Christ is located here. He is building together one new family in Christ that's multi-ethnic and multi-national. That's a problem if you are stuck within the fortress because Christ is breaking these boundaries.

In fact, we probably could just put the cross completely outside because what Paul has done is he has broken down this fortress so that he can be out here where Jesus is. Peter has also broken down that barrier. Remember, we had that episode in Acts 10 and 11.

And also, he's come to Antioch, and he's been eating with Gentiles. So, he has left to be where Jesus is, out there among Gentile sinners, where also Jews in Christ are, because it's no problem to be out there. Jews in Christ, Gentile sinners, all one big happy family.

Now, what Peter is afraid of, and the Jewish Christians are afraid of is they don't want to be shoulder to shoulder with these Gentile sinners. That's going to make them unclean. So, they're staying within the fortress and Paul is saying, this does something far worse for you.

It makes you a transgressor. Why does it make you a transgressor? Here's why. Paul is saying, if I have gone out here now, which I did, Peter, I've been eating with Gentiles.

You also did, Peter. You were eating with Gentiles. If I have gone out here realizing that this can be torn down, what keeps me within these boundaries can be torn down so I can be where Christ is among sinners, people I thought were sinners.

If I've torn that down and then I rebuild it, I'm a transgressor because here's what I'm doing. I'm already out here. This is me and you, Peter.

This is me and you. If I now say, from a position out here, it's necessary. If I now say it is necessary to remain within the fortress to be justified before Christ, well, I'm already out. So, what I am doing, and this is what Paul wants Peter to understand, Peter, you are holding to two mutually contradictory positions.

You're saying by your life you need to be outside with Gentiles, and you're saying you can't be outside with Gentiles. You're saying you have to remain within, and you've

already left it. So, you basically reveal yourself to not be a sinner but to be a transgressor of the law.

Somebody who purposefully just steps over the line of what the law teaches becomes a transgressor. So, you're basically saying that salvation is only among those who participate in a Jewish identity and it's among those who participate among the Gentiles. You can't have it both ways.

It's mutually incoherent. That is the logic of verse 18. Peter, I know you're trying to avoid being a sinner.

If you go back and you've shrunk away from fellowship with the Gentiles, if you do that, you actually are a transgressor. So, that's his first argument. His first argument is just a way of saying, actually, it's far worse if you do what you do, Peter.

Then, in verses 19 to 20, Paul is going to explain the logic of why he can actually fellowship with sinners, and it's not a big deal. He's going to explain the underlying logic to everything that's going on in this whole passage where he says in verse 18, the second explanation set off by a four, for through the law, I died to the law that I might live to God. What is he saying there? I think that Paul is still working with the same notion, this notion of the law as a fortress that calls for the death of anybody who transgresses.

There's a difference between intentional transgression of the law's boundaries in the Old Testament and everyday sins that could be atoned for. But, the law requires the death of transgressors. It is basically this fortress, and the only way out is death.

So, Paul is saying through that mechanism of the law, through the law, through the law's own mechanism, I actually died to the law. He goes on to explain that in verse 20, he has already died because he's been co-crucified with Christ. He is dead, and he died with Christ.

So, he died to that old world, and he's also died to the version of Judaism that regards it as being unlawful to actually leave this fortress and go out and fellowship with Gentile sinners. So, for Paul, the theologic that gets him out here, fellowship with sinners, is being co-crucified with Christ. You can put Paul's name on there.

He does not have to worry about transgressing any boundaries, and he doesn't have to worry about fellowshiping with sinners because he's dead. So, he doesn't abide by this reality anymore, which gives them their label, and he's not bound to remain within it anymore. This, going back to verse 19 briefly, allows him to truly live to God because what God is currently doing is building this multi-national, multi-ethnic community, this multi-ethnic family, and Paul's full participation in that is his being alive to God.

And it's the law's own mechanism that allowed him to do that by virtue of his co-crucifixion in and with Christ. So, by virtue of Paul's inclusion in the death of Christ, he makes his way out from that exclusive fortress to a place where he can now fully participate with Gentiles. So, let's make our way through the rest of verse 20 here.

I've been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live. That is to say; it's no longer that constructed Paul and all his achievements and the social status that he had built in a culture that was Torah-based. That person is dead.

It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me and the life that I now live in the flesh; I don't live by virtue of remaining within a Jewish culture to earn social status among my peers. I now live by the faithfulness of the Son of God, so empowered by Jesus himself. I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered himself up for me.

So, Paul no longer lives a life of coercion. He no longer lives a life of maintaining these boundaries. He now has left it, and he lives a life that imitates Jesus's life of self-giving love and, well, actually of self-giving love, those two elements, who loved me and delivered himself up for me.

And that loving and delivering himself up for us sets the trajectory for Paul to live a life of loving others and giving himself up for them. So, I hope that that logic makes sense. That is to say that it makes sense of what Paul is arguing here.

How he gets out of this fortress kind of structure is by dying because leaving it requires death. If he's already dead, there's nothing to worry about. Going back to this sort of scenario in we can imagine the present evil age.

This is a realm of exclusion. This is a realm of pushing out sinners. This is a realm of establishing my identity as better than others.

So, identifying sinners, others as sinners, as tainted or bad or worthless or relatively worthless. Those are all behaviors, attitudes, actions, and social dynamics that come from a corrupted cosmic realm, the present evil age. And by virtue of the death of Christ, we are delivered into the new creation, which takes on the character of Christ himself, oriented by love, self-giving, and inclusion.

So, rich, poor, male, female, Jew, Greek. I mean, in Christ is this radical dimension of inclusive attitudes and behaviors. So, from Paul's perspective, Jewish Christians don't look at non-Jewish Christians and label them sinners, less valuable than anything like that.

We see ourselves as siblings in the new family that God is building in Christ—no more excluding others. No more, sort of, remember that the dynamic whereby Paul was trying to work for the purification of Judaism.

Now, there's a radical going out, so people who were formerly regarded as dangerous are now friends. So, it's a radically different kind of way of life and a community way of life. This is really the realm of resurrection.

And this is the realm that, in Paul's theology, will eventually become the kingdom of God in the future. This is the realm that's going down to destruction and is coming apart and will ultimately be destroyed at the day of Christ. And so, this, like I said, this is the realm that is going to move into the new creation.

This helps us to make sense of verse 21 because this is the realm of rectification slash justification. This is the made-right realm, the realm of being justified before God, which helps make sense of verse 21 when Paul says, I do not nullify the grace of God. For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly.

And I think that what Paul is trying to get at there is he's saying he's not nullifying God's grace. In fact, seeing any other way as being able to actually produce this reality, the new creation, the realm of rectification, if any other way could produce that, would be a claim that God's grace is working in some other way. Paul's not nullifying God's grace.

He's actually saying only the cross brought this about. Only faith in Christ enables participation in it. If it was brought about by the law, by Jewish identity, or if you could participate in it by being a Jew, then God was absurdly cruel for sending Christ to die because it could have been done some other way.

The only way that this new creation reality can be created is by the cross. And the only way to participate in it is by faith in Christ. So, Paul is actually sort of a way of saying something positively. By saying negatively, I do not nullify the grace of God.

Paul is actually proclaiming the grace of God. This is how God's power works. It doesn't work by some earthly, earthbound agenda.

One final comment I'd like to make, and that is in sort of a spiritual life, a spiritual self-regard notion. When Paul says, I've been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. Please don't think about that in terms of a false kind of John the Baptist kind of spirituality.

I've heard a lot of folks use this statement, and then also John the Baptist's statement, I must decrease, that he must increase. Please understand that John the

Baptist is talking about a sequence. He had a crucial role on the stage of God's redemptive work.

Now, it's time for him to take a step back. But that's not the kind of statement that should govern everybody's spirituality. When Paul says here, I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.

It is not the case that I, as an individual, must diminish so that Christ is magnified. Paul is making a contrast here between a falsely constructed self and who I thought I was. Who I thought I was and who my culture told me I was.

Who I thought I was, and who I thought I was in the esteem of my peers. That self is dead. The self that excluded others, the self that mistreated others, the self that coerced others, the self that sought power over others, that self is dead.

It's on the cross. And it's not that I'm abolished and Christ just takes over. By virtue of Christ being in me and me being absorbed into Christ by the Spirit, I become who I finally am.

I become my truest self. So, Christ living in me, me being absorbed into the faithfulness of the Son of God, makes me who I finally and fully am. And what I mean by that is this.

I now can think about, because I'm set free and fully loved in Christ, I can actually think about all of my skills and abilities and be really honest. Because I can think about what I contribute to a community well. Where can I maximize my time? What am I not so great at? Where do I need others? I can be fully honest about that because none of those behaviors, none of those stations I might occupy in my church, none of that determines my value. I am fully loved in Christ.

Here, on a corrupted conception, I have to be the teacher, I have to be the leader, I have to be the director, I have to be the guy in charge, whatever because then I'm more valuable. That's a world that's dead now. And I can be a follower, I can be a participant.

I can be, at times, directing something, but I can be someone who takes orders. It doesn't matter because I'm one of a number of people who are fully loved in Christ. I become who I finally am.

I become who I truly am in my marriage. I don't have to fight for turf. I can listen.

We can have roles that kind of switch around in the home as far as functionality is concerned based on what's best for all of us. Knowing that the more of a servant I am, the more I receive, the more I listen, the more I engage in self-giving love, the

more those behaviors are generative of resurrection presence in my home. I've thought loads about this with regard to how to participate on a faculty, where sometimes turf warfare breaks out.

But Christian identity and me becoming who I truly and fully and finally am offer so much hope and so much promise in so many areas of life. When we think about taking the shape of the cross in our conversation, in our relational dynamics, in our postures toward others, and as a community, with regard to the posture that the church takes to the wider culture, we begin to radiate God's love and enjoy for ourselves more of God's presence. But that usually means giving up power, giving up power pursuits and coercion and power grabbing, and taking up postures of hospitality service and self-giving love.

So, just to say, when it comes to thinking about embodying Christian behavior, we're not canceling ourselves and letting Jesus be on display. We're putting to death false conceptions of ourselves and determining how, like Paul, my body, my social relationships, how can my body be a site that reveals Jesus? And that means me becoming who I truly and fully am. And that goes a little way towards explaining how it is that Christian liberty and freedom can be fully inhabited, because that truly is a freeing reality.

So, the theological logic that Paul unfolds for Peter and for the Jewish Christians who are there in Galatia has everything to do with inhabiting the death of Christ and how that brings about the creation of a radically new world where God is building his multinational people made up of all ethnicities in Christ—the heart of the letter that we're going to see worked out throughout the rest of Galatians.

This is Dr. Tim Gambas in his teaching on the book of Galatians. This is session 4 on Galatians 2:11-21.