



BIG IDEA: Love has a hard side. When the gospel itself is at stake, silence isn't peace — it's complicity. Sometimes the most loving thing in the room is the costly word no one wants to say.

1 WHEN PETER WAS WRONG (GALATIANS 2:11-13)

- Peter was wrong — not a heretic, not a false teacher, but a real Christian who loved Jesus. He'd been eating with Gentile believers, living the gospel out loud, until certain men arrived from James.
- Then he quietly withdrew from the table. Not a change of doctrine — fear. Fear of what a handful of people would think. And one man's fear moved the whole room; even Barnabas was carried off. Peter never said a false word — his feet preached it for him.

Galatians 2:11-12 CSB *But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. For he regularly ate with the Gentiles before certain men came from James. However, when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he feared those from the circumcision party.*

Galatians 2:13 CSB *Then the rest of the Jews joined his hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.*

KEY TRUTH: A good man's compromise is still compromise. Peter didn't change his theology — he changed his table, out of fear. And private cowardice became a public sermon.

FILL IN THE BLANKS — SECTION 1

Galatians 2:11 — "...I opposed him _____ because he stood condemned."

Galatians 2:12 — "For he _____ ate with the Gentiles... because he _____ those from the circumcision party."

Galatians 2:13 — "...the rest of the Jews joined his _____, so that even _____ was led astray."

2 WHEN PAUL STOOD UP (GALATIANS 2:11, 14)

- Most of us would keep the peace — a quiet word later, in private, where no one's embarrassed. Paul didn't. He opposed Peter to his face, in front of everyone. Not gossip, not a letter from a safe distance — the man himself, directly.
- And it cost him. The junior apostle, risking the friendship, his standing, the unity of the whole movement. But it wasn't anger — it was love: for the gospel, for Peter, for the room. The most loving person in Antioch had the hardest conversation.

Galatians 2:14 CSB *But when I saw that they were deviating from the truth of the gospel, I told Cephas in front of everyone... how can you compel Gentiles to live like Jews?*

Proverbs 27:6 CSB *The wounds of a friend are trustworthy, but the kisses of an enemy are excessive.*

KEY TRUTH: Confrontation can be love. Paul opposed Peter publicly because the wounds of a friend are trustworthy — and here, silence would have been the crueler thing.

FILL IN THE BLANKS — SECTION 2

Galatians 2:14 — "...they were deviating from _____, I told Cephas..."

Galatians 2:14 — "...I told Cephas _____."

Proverbs 27:6 — "The _____ of a friend are trustworthy."

3 WHAT WAS AT STAKE (GALATIANS 2:14–16)

- Was Paul overreacting over a meal? He saw to the bottom of it: the gospel itself. Peter’s withdrawal preached “Jesus plus” — that you need Christ and the law to belong. Add anything to Christ, and the gospel is gone.
- Verse 16 is the sentence Peter’s feet contradicted: we’re justified not by works of the law but by faith in Christ. You’ll never be good enough — and you don’t have to be. That’s the door of grace Paul refused to let anyone shut.

Galatians 2:16 CSB *...we know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we ourselves have believed in Christ Jesus.*

Galatians 4:16 CSB *So then, have I become your enemy because I told you the truth?*

KEY TRUTH: Add anything to Jesus and you lose the gospel. We’re justified by faith in Christ alone. When that truth is on the line, silence isn’t peace — it’s complicity.

FILL IN THE BLANKS — SECTION 3

Galatians 2:16 — “...a person is not justified by the _____ but by faith in Jesus Christ.”

Galatians 4:16 — “So then, have I become your _____ because I told you the truth?”

APPLICATION

Take one. Carry it into the week.

- ☐ **One conversation to stop avoiding** — Name someone you love who’s drifting, and the true word you’ve left unsaid because it would cost you. This week, speak it — to their face, in love.
- ☐ **One fear to name** — Find the “crowded room” where you go quiet under pressure. Name the fear that moves you, and ask God for the courage to keep your seat.
- ☐ **One motive to check** — Before any hard word, ask: am I after this person’s restoration, or their reputation? Am I trying to win them back — or just to win?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Peter didn’t change his doctrine — he changed his table, out of fear. Where are you most tempted to “get up from the table” when the pressure in a room shifts?
2. We’ve quietly redefined love as never making anyone uncomfortable. Why isn’t that the Bible’s definition? Who has loved you enough to wound you with the truth?
3. Paul confronted Peter publicly because the sin was public and already spreading — but normally he’d take someone aside (Acts 18:26). How do you tell a Galatians 2 moment from a Matthew 18 one?
4. Paul paid a real cost — friendship, standing, unity — to protect the gospel. What makes something “gospel-level,” worth the hard conversation, rather than a difference to bear with?
5. The whole fight was to keep the door of grace open — justified by faith in Christ, not works. How does resting in that truth free you to speak it to someone else?

MY TAKEAWAY

ANSWER KEY

S1: to his face · regularly · feared · hypocrisy · Barnabas

S2: the truth of the gospel · in front of everyone · wounds

S3: works of the law · enemy