

Trinity Lutheran Church

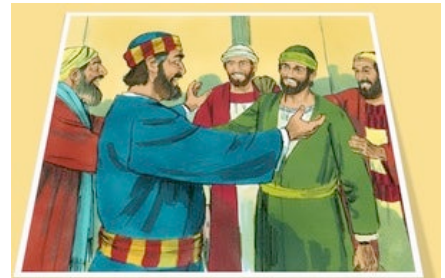
Norman, Oklahoma – www.tlcnorman.org

The Book of Galatians

Theme: “The True Gospel You Have Received”

Date: 5-15-22

Lesson: 11 - Chapter 2:7-10



**Paul and Barnabas
go to the Gentiles
James and Cephas and
John go to the Circumcised.**
Galatians 2:9

TEXT AND STUDY

(7) On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with **the gospel** to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with **the gospel** to the circumcised (8) (for **he who worked through Peter** for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), (9) and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived **the grace** that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. (10)
Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

(Ac 1:25; 4:36; 9:15; 11:29,30; 13:14,46; 15:13; 24:17;

Rom 1:5; 11:13; 12:3; 15:25-28; 1 Cor 1:1; 9:2,17; 16:1-4; 2 Cor ch. 8 and 9; 1 Th 2:4;
1 Tim 1:11; 3:15; Titus 1:3; 2 Pet 3:15; Rev 3:12)

Luther's Commentary - Vol. 26

When Paul says (v. 9) that James and Cephas and John “were reputed to be pillars,” this is not idle talk; for they really were reputed to be pillars. The apostles were revered and honored throughout the church. They had the authority to approve and declare **the true doctrine** and to condemn its opposite.

This is a wonderful text. Paul says that **the Gospel** to the uncircumcised had been entrusted to him, but that **the Gospel** to the circumcised had been entrusted to Peter; for, after all, the situation on both sides was that Paul preached to the Jews in their synagogues almost everywhere and that Peter also preached to the Gentiles. There are evidences and examples of both in the Book of Acts. Peter converted the centurion and his family, and they were Gentiles (Acts 10:1 ff.). He also wrote to Gentiles, as his epistles testify (1 Peter 2:10).

Although Paul preached Christ among the Gentiles, he still went into Jewish synagogues and preached the Gospel there. And in Mark (16:15) and Matthew (28:19) Christ commands all the apostles: “Go throughout the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” Paul also says in Col. 1:2 that the Gospel “has been preached to every creature under heaven.” Then why does he call himself only the apostle to the Gentiles, but Peter and the others the apostles to the circumcised?

This is not a difficult question to answer. What Paul has in mind is that the other apostles had remained in Judea and Jerusalem until God called them elsewhere. For some time, as long as the Jewish state and priesthood continued, the apostles stayed in Judea; but when destruction was imminent, they were scattered through the whole world. But as Acts 13:2 writes, Paul was set aside by a special call as the apostle to the Gentiles and was sent out from Judea to journey through the Gentile lands.

And although he also went into Jewish synagogues, he preached elsewhere to the Gentiles—in the public forum, in private homes, on the riverbank. Then the Gentiles came into the Jewish synagogues to hear Paul's proclamation. Thus it is true that Paul was chiefly the apostle to the Gentiles. Hence these words contain a chronological synecdoche,²⁰ for after the destruction of Judaism there came into being one church made up of both Jews and Gentiles.

From this it is sufficiently certain that Peter, James, and John, who seemed to be pillars, did not teach Paul anything and did not entrust to him the ministry of the Gospel, as though they were his superiors and ordainers. For they had no authority to teach, command, or send him. Therefore he does not acknowledge them as superiors and ordainers. “But they themselves,” he says, “saw that I had surely been entrusted with the Gospel, but not by Peter. For just as I did not receive or learn the Gospel from any man, so I did not receive the commandment to preach from any man. It was directly from God that I received both the knowledge of the Gospel and the commandment to preach it among the Gentiles, just as Peter was entrusted by God with the Gospel and with the commission to preach it among the Jews.”

This is clear proof that all the apostles had the same calling, the same commission, and **the same Gospel**. Peter did not proclaim a **Gospel** different from that of the others; nor did he commission the others with their office. But there was parity among them throughout; for they had all been taught and **called by God**, that is, both the call and the commission of all the apostles had come wholly and **immediately from God**. Therefore none of the apostles was greater than any of the others, and none had any prerogative above the others.

Here Paul refutes yet another argument. “Why do the false apostles brag,” he says, “that the **Gospel** was powerful in Peter, that he converted many, that he performed many great miracles, that he raised the dead and healed the sick with his very shadow (Acts 5:15)? I grant that all this is true. But Peter received **this power from heaven**. **God** endowed the voice of Peter with a force that caused many to believe him and many miracles to be performed through him. I have the same power. I did not receive it from Peter, but **the same God and the same Spirit** who worked through Peter worked through me also. I had the same grace; I taught many; I performed many miracles; with my shadow I, too, healed the sick.”

Luke bears witness to this in Acts 19:11–12 when he says: “And **God** did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.” Read the thirteenth, sixteenth, twentieth, and twenty-eighth chapters of the Book of Acts. In short, Paul refuses to be regarded as inferior to the rest of the apostles in any way, and he takes a pious and holy pride in this.

But here Paul is not dealing with a personal issue; he is dealing with an issue of faith. Where faith is involved, there we should be invincible, inflexible, stubborn, and harder than adamant, if this were possible; but where love is involved, we should be softer and more flexible than every kind of reed or leaf and ready to yield anything. Thus the controversy here dealt not with pride, glory, or prerogative, as we see among the papists. But the struggle is over **the glory of God, the Word of God, the true worship of God, true religion, and the righteousness of faith—these things had to be and remain pure**.

The right hand of fellowship. That is, the hand of communion, the social handshake. They said: “Paul, we preach the **Gospel in** unanimous consensus with you. There we are companions in doctrine and have fellowship in it; that is, we have the same doctrine. For we preach **one Gospel, one Baptism, one Christ, and one faith**. Therefore we cannot teach or command anything so far as you are concerned, for we are completely agreed in everything. For we do not teach anything different from what you teach; nor is it better or sublimer.

We see that the same gift we have is present in you as well, except **that the Gospel** to the uncircumcised has been entrusted to you, as **the Gospel** to the circumcised has been entrusted to us. But we conclude that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision should stand in the way of our fellowship, for **your Gospel and ours are the same**.”

Next to the **proclamation of the Gospel** it is the task of a good pastor to be mindful of the poor. For wherever the church is, there must be poor people. Most of the time they are the only true disciples **of the Gospel, as Christ** says (Matt. 11:5): “The poor have **the Gospel** preached to them.” For both human beings and the devil persecute the church and bring poverty upon many, who are then forsaken and to whom no one wants to give anything. Therefore a true bishop must be concerned also about the poor, and Paul here admits that he was.

LIFE APPLICATION

How have we now been entrusted with **the gospel**?
What is the right hand of fellowship for us today?

Why must we remember the poor, a very thing we are eager to do?