

The Gospel

Legalism



**Hold Firm**

**Galatians 2:1-5**

# Hold Firm

## Galatians Setting

- Roman province – Gentile area
- Churches planted by Paul
- Letter with urgency, strong language

## Setting Today

- Paul 17 years or so into ministry
- Conversion – zealous Saul – blind Paul
- 2-3 years in Damascus and Arabia
- 15 days in Jerusalem
- .....”after 14 years.....



# Hold Firm

Gal 2:1-5

*Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. <sup>2</sup> I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. <sup>3</sup> Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. <sup>4</sup> This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. <sup>5</sup> We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.*



# Hold Firm

Gal 2:1-5

## 1. The Journey

- Paul, Barnabas & Titus to Jerusalem
- Response to a revelation
- not told what that is, only they went
- Goal to clarify and communicate
  - \* Gospel – received from Jesus
    - communicated faithfully
    - responded to with faith
- has come under attack from false leaders



# Hold Firm

a) responsible accountability

- privately among leaders
- willing to share in relationship
- done with humility and openness

b) fear that work had been in vain

- not questioning the message
- not saying it wasn't working
- aware – potential division between the Jewish Christians & Gentile Christians destructive



# Hold Firm

Gal 2:1-5

- great harm to the work if there was not unity among the leaders of the church
- needed to clarify, understand one another, agree on truth – not allow division to split church and damage the disciples of Jesus.

\* Many divisions in churches happen over issues of tradition or preference, and have no basis in the gospel.



# Hold Firm

## 2. Paul's Object Lesson

- Titus – strong believer, leader
- filled with Holy Spirit
- inspired by God to write book of Bible
- not compelled to be circumcised
  - important mark of identification
  - began with Abraham – significant mark of belonging to God's chosen
- here is a spirit filled, called leader who feels no compulsion to be circumcised



# Hold Firm

Gal 2:1-5

## 3. The Situation

a) spies have infiltrated

- joined the body, made friends
- watching to see how they are living
- specifically – condemning freedoms

\*note motivation is not....

- grow together in community
- hold Jesus high – live the gospel

\* motivation – critic and attack behavior





# Hold Firm

Gal 2:1-5

- at issue – is Jesus the fulfillment of the law?

Matthew 5:17-20 <sup>17</sup> ***“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.*”**



# Hold Firm

Gal 2:1-5

- critical truth – Jesus is fulfillment of law
- sacrificial system & covering for sin
- separation between Holy God & men
- presence of God from a place to person
- no longer needing a High Priest, all can come to God
- presence of the Holy Spirit in us
- Law of God written on our hearts



# Hold Firm

Gal 2:1-5

- b) goal of spies – enslave Christians
  - to traditions, methods, systems
  - lie that says – when I do these things, I am good!
  - truth – God looks at the heart
  - truth – we cannot earn or deserve his grace
  - truth – free to love God with abandon, allow Him to transform our hearts and lives



# Hold Firm

## 4. The Response

### a) Did not Give in for a Moment

- no negotiation, compromise, lets find a solution we can all live with

- held firm to the truth – seeing the potential disaster of the lie

### b) So Truth of Gospel might remain

- central – without distraction

- alone – nothing added.

- free – to pursue God



# Hold Firm

So What

## 1. Check Our Hearts

- a) am I clear about the Gospel?
- b) am I willing to be humbly accountable?
- c) do I recognize the danger?

## 2. Be Aware

- a) there will be division from within

***I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. <sup>30</sup> Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> So be on your guard! Acts 20:29-31***



# Hold Firm

- well intentioned people that present Jesus and.....
- issue driven leaders – keep something other than gospel central
- critical leaders – desiring you to abandon freedoms and follow their rules or teaching
- taking away the need to develop listening skills to the Holy Spirit – exchanging that for regulations that ultimately enslave you



# Hold Firm

Gal 2:1-5

## 3. Stand Firm

a) don't negotiate, placate, compromise or allow divisive issues of behavior and tradition to divide you.

- caution – does not override humbly allowing authority in teaching and life

b) Truth of the Gospel and the power of the Risen Lord over satan, sin and death, allowing us relationship with almighty God must remain central!

