

Galatians 2:11-21

Straightforward with the Gospel

Scripture: Galatians 2:11-21

Memory Verse: Galatians 2:14a "...I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel..."

Lesson Focus: In our text today, we will see how easy it is to not be walking straightforward or "in line" with the gospel. We hope this lesson will help "straighten" out the kids' understanding and application of the gospel!

Activities and Crafts: Justified by Faith Coloring Picture and Bring It Home Discussion Qs for 3rd - 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: Life In Christ vs. Life Without Christ

Starter Activity: Cats vs. Dogs

We will keep all of the kids in the Summit Room for a quick little video. We will watch the [trailer](#) of the "Cats & Dogs" movie that came out years ago. * After a little bit of discussion over how cats and dogs typically do NOT get along, we will dismiss the 1st/2nd graders to their classes.

After the video have a little chat about cats and dogs. First take a poll of your class to see how many kids have cats as pets and how many have dogs. Put "Cats" and "Dogs" on the whiteboard and underneath add how many cat-owners and dog-owners there are in your class (some may have both!). *

Next, dial in the discussion over which one makes a better pet. See how many kids think cats are better pets and how many kids think dogs are better pets. Assuming there will be some strong opinions here, ask the kids **why** they think one is better than the other. As kids give their answers, consider summarizing them on the whiteboard. (Teachers: Consider bringing in some dog or cat stuffed animals to help liven up the discussion and help the kids understand the text as well)

As you wrap up this "battle" between cats and dogs, point out how in the book of Galatians we've learned about a more important battle, the battle for the gospel. * Just like how cats and dogs typically don't get along, we're going to see today that there were two groups of people that also didn't get along. And it's only the true gospel of Jesus Christ that makes a way for peace between them. Let's take a look!

Bible Study: (**Teachers:** I recommend providing background before getting into the text) Last week we saw Paul go to great lengths to defend the true gospel. Paul described a huge meeting with the church leadership which included men like Peter over whether people are saved by God's grace alone through faith in Jesus alone OR whether salvation comes through faith in Jesus plus keeping the Jewish law.

Now the Jewish people were indeed God's people and God gave them special laws to preserve them from the world. God chose them to bring forth Jesus, but now that He had come things had changed. * In the meantime, the Jewish people had become like **cats**! Like cats, they had become very independent and particular with their religious rule-keeping. So much so that they looked down on the *Gentiles*, people who were not Jewish. They viewed them as dirty **dogs** that were to be avoided! *

Q: Have you ever seen a cat "hiss" when a dog approaches it? A: That's kind of like how the Jews saw the *Gentiles* during this time. * And yet as *Gentiles* were getting saved, some of the Jewish believers thought the *Gentiles* needed to become Jewish! It's like the "Jewish cats" were saying the "Gentile dogs" needed to become "cats" to be true followers of Jesus! Simple trust in Jesus wasn't enough for them.

But it was enough for God! This was never God's intent * and at this church meeting Peter and Paul agreed it was dumb to require "dogs" to become "cats"! But look what happened shortly afterwards!

Galatians 2:11-12: Peter (who was Jewish) fell back into some of his bad "cat" habits! * Antioch was the home of the first *Gentile* (or dog) church. * Peter was making friends with these "dogs" until certain "bully cats" showed up. * And Peter, fearing those "bully cats", turned his back on the *Gentile* believers! (**Teachers:** If you brought in cat and dog stuffies, consider using them here to role-play)

Galatians 2:13: And it wasn't just Peter! Imagine dominoes falling, one after the other, * as other Jewish believers and even Barnabus followed Peter back into these bad "cat" habits. This had to be stopped! Not only was this wrong, but the gospel itself was at stake! *

At the beginning of our lesson we saw that several of you were cat-lovers and several of you were dog-lovers. By separating themselves from the *Gentile* "dogs" Peter and Barnabus were suggesting that God is only a "cat-lover"! But God loves both the Jewish cats AND the *Gentile* dogs! * That's the truth of the gospel!

Galatians 2:14: Paul lets them have it! Not because he is mean, but because the gospel is at stake! * Through the gospel, Peter was united to the *Gentiles* by faith. But by shunning them he was denying the gospel and treating them like "dogs".

Paul says Peter was not walking straightforward or "in line" with the gospel.

Teachers: We will provide you with some tape. * Put a long strip on the floor and write the word gospel on it. And then on the wall that the tape points to put up a sign that says "God" on it. Have kids walk on the tape and point out as they walk "in line" with the gospel, it will bring them closer to God.

Galatians 2:15-16: I don't know how Paul could it say it any clearer. Three times he says that people are "justified" or saved by faith or trust in Jesus, and NOT by works of the law. This is the true gospel that we are to walk "in line" with every day!

Teachers: Put another piece of tape down from the same starting point as the first one, but point it just slightly off from the first one so that if you follow it you will miss the "God" sign. On it write "being good". Point out how close the lines are.

Q: But what happens if you walk on this other line? *

A: You will miss the target! This is what Peter and Barnabus were in danger of by falling back into their old habits of earning God's favor by being "good cats"!

Galatians 2:17-18: Paul here describes walking on this other line. By doing so Peter and others were going back to bondage. * Imagine that before they were Christians they were trapped in a jail of religious rule-keeping. When they believed in Jesus, they were set free! But now they are trying to climb back into that jail of religious rule-keeping!

Galatians 2:19-20: To walk in line with the gospel means you are dead to the old way of trying to save yourself by being moral and good. Paul says he is dead to that way of living and instead he is "born again" to a new way of living: **Living for Jesus, the One who loved him and gave His own life for him!**

That makes all the difference! When you understand how deeply loved you are, so much so that Jesus gave His life for you, it changes you. Then as you walk "in line" and straightforward with the gospel by faith in Jesus, you WILL do good. Not because you have to, but because you want to out of sheer love for the One who first loved you and gave His life for you!

Galatians 2:21: To stray from the gospel and return to mere religious rule-keeping makes Jesus's death meaningless! It's all grace or nothing! *

Key Point: We've seen two lines in our study today.

Q: Are you walking in line with the gospel? It's not that God doesn't want you to "be good". But He wants you to be good for the right reasons! Not to BECOME a child of God (that's by grace), but BECAUSE you are a child of God through faith in Jesus. * Let's walk "in line" with the gospel this week, living for the One who loved us and gave Himself for us!

Bring It Home

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

*Greetings! Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

First

Read Galatians 2:14. How was Peter not walking "in line" with the gospel? How can you walk more "in line" with the gospel this week?

Second

Read Galatians 2:16. How can a person be saved or "justified" before God?

Parent Challenge

Read Galatians 2:21. What are some ways that we might make Christ's death meaningless if we aren't careful?

By His Grace,

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