



THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS:
Embracing Freedom

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2021

Sermon-based Guide
Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Week of January 10
Galatians Chapter 2

Primary Scripture: Galatians 2:11-21

Secondary Scripture: Acts 15:1-35

Sermon Summary: *Don't Go Back*

1. Don't go back to what never worked in the first place

This scripture starts with the conflict between Paul and Peter, and Paul's admonishment that Peter (Cephas) has abandoned the freedom that the Holy Spirit gave him from the Old Testament food laws and separation from Gentiles.

2. The sacrifice of privilege that comes with embracing the freedom of the gospel

Part of what motivated Peter to go back to separating himself from fellowship with the Gentiles was both the fear of being judged by his fellow Jewish believers and acquiescing to the superiority and privilege that these Jewish believers apparently believed they had.

3. "Crucified with Christ / It is Christ who lives in me"

Paul challenges Peter and the Galatians with the truth that we are crucified with Christ. This means that our earthly securities and positions are dealt with on the cross, taken away by the sacrifice of Christ. The good news, the gospel, is that what replaces that is Christ alive within us.

4. A Model of Confrontation

Galatians 2 serves as a model of what it means for Christians to be in conflict and to move beyond discomfort to confrontation that seeks reconciliation. Paul is reminding the church in Galatia of his conflict with Peter because he is also confronting the Galatians on their own spiritual failings. What we learn from Galatians 2 is that the truth and the call of the gospel of Jesus is important enough to confront those who fail. But we also have a clear sense that this confrontation didn't lead to the severing of the relationship between Paul and Peter. It was, on Paul's part an act of love – love for Peter but even more a love for the Gentiles that Paul was protecting.

Questions

1. Have you ever returned to something even if you know it doesn't work?

What does it mean to continue to embrace the freedom we are given in Christ?

2. What is the role of fear and privilege in your decision making?

How does the gospel strengthen you to do what is truly best for you and for others?

3. Where do you see Jesus alive in you, alive in our church?

How do you celebrate that and move toward it?