

Galatians 1:10-2:14

Gospel Authority

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Introduction:

1. Shark Tank is an ABC television show about entrepreneurs.
2. In every show small business owners pitch their ideas to the Sharks.
3. As the intro rolls, images of each investor and their private planes, luxury cars, and big offices appear.

Who are the Sharks? They're self-made millionaire and billionaire investors who are entrepreneurs themselves. Kevin O'Leary is a venture-capitalist who turned a \$10,000 loan into a software business worth \$4.2 billion dollars. Barbara Corcoran went from working as a waitress in Manhattan to building the city's preeminent real-estate empire. Daymond John is a fashion and branding expert who grew his home-grown clothing line into the globally recognized fashion brand Fubu. Robert Herjavec, the son of an immigrant factory worker is now the technology mogul who sold his first internet companies for over \$350 million dollars. And Mark Cuban, notorious billionaire entrepreneur and the outspoken owner of the Dallas Mavericks.

4. Notice each story starts with a shark making themselves out of nothing into something.
5. The sharks have to see each individual's effort before they'll invest in their lives and businesses.
6. The Apostle Paul wrote the book of Galatians to a bunch of Sharks.
7. These sharks wanted to see the Gentile believers prove themselves before they'd call them Christians.
8. These sharks are attacking Paul's message of God's grace for a message of self-merit.
9. Galatians 1:10-2:14 tells us, *the gospel defeats our self to win our freedom* (read Gal 1:10-2:14).

I. The gospel defeats our self reliance. (1:10-12)

A. The gospel makes us choose between self reliance or God reliance. (v. 10)

- a. In Galatia, Paul faced extreme opposition from the Judaisers (circumcision, obey laws)
- b. He had to choose between trusting in himself and his ability, or in God's ways.
- c. Timothy Keller wrote a book called *Galatians for You* that helped me prepare.¹
- d. Keller makes the point that we can either be people-pleasers or God pleasers.
- e. I'm a people pleaser, which isn't the best quality to have in a pastor—thanks for ordaining me.
- f. Paul received the gospel from God himself and so doesn't care what others think.
- g. The gospel makes us choose between self reliance or God reliance.

B. It's probably hard to believe now, but I took Business Calculus in college.

- a. I was nervous about this class so I devised a plan (sit up front, get to know teacher, office hours).
- b. One day the teacher turned to me in the middle of class and said, "Jonathan, do you get it?"
- c. Classmates I didn't know would say to me they were in my Calculus class ("teacher's pet").
- d. In the end, I don't know what grades they got but I got an A.
- e. I knew the reward was greater for pleasing my teacher than my classmates.

C. The gospel defeats our self reliance. (v. 11-12)

- a. In v. 17-18 tell us Paul went to Arabia for three years where he received this revelation.
- b. The gospel is so unique only God could have made it up, not Paul (explain gospel).
- c. The gospel is God's plan to both defeat us and win us.
- d. Paul finds his authority not in his plans or others, but in God's plans.

¹ *Galatians For You* by Timothy Keller: <https://www.thegoodbook.com/galatians-for-you>

D. Frank Sinatra sang the song “I did it my way.”

- a. The last verse says:

*For what is a man, what has he got?
If not himself, then he has naught.
To say the things he truly feels;
And not the words of one who kneels.
The record shows I took the blows -
And did it my way!
Yes, it was my way.*

- b. Paul sang, “I did it God’s way” and you can too (*It's my life* by Bon Jovi).
c. Do you go through life doing it God’s way or your way?
d. Doing it God’s way creates awkwardness at work, school, play, relationships, ministry.

(The gospel defeats our self reliance.)

II. The gospel defeats our self righteousness. (1:13-24)

A. The gospel makes us choose between self righteousness or righteousness in Christ. (v.13-17)

- a. Paul shares his testimony and call to ministry to show how the gospel changes us.
b. Paul was “zealous for the traditions of my fathers...”—he was eager or jealous for God’s honor.
c. In Philippians 3:4b-6 Paul says of himself (NIV):

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

- d. If Paul were here this morning, I think he may have written it more like this:

If you thought you were more Christian than me, you'd be wrong because I've done everything right. I grew up in the church going to Sunday School, I was a Pastor's Kid who memorized all of his Awana verses, read his Bible daily, and went to the very best private Christian college. I always obeyed the rules and believed the right things. I even opposed those liberals who believed the wrong things. I was a perfect A.

- e. On the road to Damascus, Paul had to compare his righteousness to Christ’s (Acts 9).
f. God shined his glory on Paul so that Paul would see his sin and believe in Jesus.
g. In v. 15 Paul says God “set me apart from birth and called me by his grace.”
h. God chose Paul before he could do anything good or bad.

B. Paul was an orthodox Jew who believed and did all the right things.

- a. My orthodoxy = If I believe the right things, I go to heaven.
b. God’s orthodoxy = My grace saves you, nothing else.

- c. It's easy to fall into the trap of self-righteousness (Bible, tithing, volunteer, worship, etc.)
- d. We set up goals for our behavior and our spiritual walk and then we fail.
- e. God doesn't love you more if your reading your Bible or spending a day on the Cape.

C. The gospel defeats our self righteousness (v. 18-24)

- a. The Judaizers believed they could make themselves holy before God.
- b. Paul tells the Galatians they can trust his gospel authority for two reasons:
- c. First — Paul believed the same thing as Peter and James before ever meeting them (v. 18-19).
- d. Second — The fruit of the gospel is evident in Paul's life to fellow Christians (v. 23-24).
- e. So when we talk about the gospel, other Christians should recognize it.
- f. And those same Christians should see the fruit of change in our lives.

(The gospel defeats our self reliance and our self righteousness.)

III. The gospel defeats our self to win our freedom. (2:1-14)

A. The gospel defeats our self to win our freedom (v. 1-5)

- a. In v. 4, Paul says the Judaizers are trying to steal their freedom or "liberty".
- b. The word for "slaves" means "to oppress, make subservient, to cause to labour."
- c. Paul would have been a resident of New Hampshire, "Live free, or die."
- d. Why's it such a big deal to give into their demands to be circumcised?
- e. Titus is an example of gospel freedom—he doesn't have to do anything to please God.
- f. Titus' today don't feel like they have to perform (read Bible, attend church activities, etc.)
- g. The gospel gives us freedom from sin and guilt and shame.

B. I want to stop and talk about the church plant for a moment.

- a. We've been working hard getting ready for our preview services and launch in October.
- b. The harder I grasp this plant and think it's all about me the more anxious I become.
- c. The more I let go and remember this is God's church plant, the more freedom I know.
- d. If you're on the Cornerstone team, remember that this is God's plant.
- e. And for the rest of you as you plan for ministries (Awana, VBS) or life, remember they are God's.
- f. The gospel defeats our self to win our freedom.

Conclusion:

1. Contrast the joy a bride experiences seeing herself with seeing her groom.
2. These are pictures of Grooms seeing their Brides for the first time on their wedding day.²
3. The Bible calls everyone who believes in Jesus the bride of Christ.
4. The best way to prepare ourselves for Jesus is to stop looking at ourselves.
5. We can only do this by looking at the gospel and Jesus.
6. Jesus looks back at us and declares us beautiful.
7. We don't need self reliance or righteousness when we have him.
8. The gospel defeats our self to win our freedom.

² BuzzFeed (accessed 6.11.15): <http://www.buzzfeed.com/mattbellassai/24-grooms-seeing-their-brides-for-the-first-time-6z51#.glBV2r6va>

Benediction: Philippians 4:19 “And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” (NIV)