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Galatians

...to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Galatians 2:5

"To whom" is speaking of the false brethren of the previous verse. It was to these miscreants that Paul says, "...we did not yield submission." They had come in and tried to pervert the gospel of grace which says that there is no thing that man can do in order to be pleasing to God except exercise faith in what He has already done through Christ. They had tried to introduce a system of works for righteousness, but Paul and Barnabas refused to submit "even for an hour."

This term, "even for an hour" is his way of saying that they simply didn't budge. They rejected outright their false gospel and refused to even listen to what they proposed. It was a dilution of the truth, and any dilution means it is not the truth; it has become a perversion of it. Their stubborn refusal was so "that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." According to Charles Ellicott, "The words used in the Greek are expressive of undiminished continuance: 'Might reach to you and persist among you in its full extent.'"

In other words, they were to see the truth, take it in, and continue to act on it forever. As this letter to the Galatians has become a part of the Bible, the words of Paul continue to speak to all nations and at all times. It is God's Word which says that we are not to add in any demand as if a requirement to be pleasing to God.

We are not to be intimidated into being circumcised, observing a Sabbath day, holding a feast of the Lord observance, or giving up on eating some non-kosher food.

We may do any of these things in our freedom, but if we do them in an attempt to be pleasing to God, then we have fallen from grace. We are under no such restrictions and to proclaim otherwise is to be considered heresy and worthy of condemnation.

Life application: Again and again Paul shows his adamancy concerning the purity of the gospel of grace. To proclaim anything else is a heresy. Don't be a heretic; be freed from such things and be willing to proclaim, "What Christ Jesus did for me is sufficient! And it is sufficient for you too!"

But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed *to be something* added nothing to me. Galatians 2:6

Paul's words in this verse appear to be a little harsher than they are in the original Greek. It seems as if he is unnecessarily dismissive of the apostles, but he is simply being logical about his calling and their relation to it.

He is now tying his words back to verse 2 after his parenthetical thought concerning Titus which comprised verses 3-5. He begins with "But from those who seemed to be something." This is speaking of "those who were of reputation" in verse 2. However, the verb should be present tense, "those who are of reputation." They not only had authority in the past at the Council in Jerusalem, they continued to have authority at the present, even over those in Galatia.

Paul continues though. Despite this authority, "...whatever they were, it makes no difference to me." This is not intended as a statement of diminishing their authority. Rather, it is a statement concerning the Source of his. They had nothing

to do with where Paul received his commission. Instead, it came apart from them and directly from Christ. The words, "...it makes no difference to me" are intended to show this. Whether they approved of his message or not, the matter had been settled by the same One who commissioned them.

This is supported by his next thought, "God shows personal favoritism to no man." This is a Hebraism. The words "personal favoritism" literally means, "to accept the face." In the Old Testament, it could be taken in a positive or a negative way. In the New Testament, it is only used in a negative way (the other such use is in Luke 20:21).

What it means is that God doesn't look at a person and accept him based on externals; He is completely impartial in how He judges a person. In this case, God had selected Paul for His own sovereign reasons and that was the end of the matter. Because of this he says, "...for those who seemed *to be something* added nothing to me." There was nothing the other apostles could add to Paul's actual authority with their approval, and there was nothing that they could diminish from it with their disapproval. Instead, he stood approved by God through his selection as an apostle.

Life application: God doesn't look at externals when judging us. So why should we? How often we get caught up in following a teacher or preacher because he is famous, handsome, eloquent, a great orator, on TV, or for whatever reason! We get star-struck too easily. This is not a proper way of evaluating doctrine. Instead, we should evaluate doctrine based on how the presenter's words match with Scripture. Let us keep this valuable lesson near to us and always test what we hear based on the word of God alone.

But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as *the gospel* for the circumcised *was* to Peter...

Galatians 2:7

The words, "But on the contrary" are given to contrast his previous words of verse 6 which said, "...for those who seemed *to be something* added nothing to me." There was nothing deficient in Paul's gospel message, nor was there anything unsound or inappropriate. Instead, just as he noted, those in Jerusalem "added nothing to me." His message was complete, sound, and in line with the truth of Jesus Christ. His commission was valid and there was no need to add anything to it for it to be complete.

Because of this he says, "...they (meaning the leaders in Jerusalem) saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised has been committed to me." The light of what Christ was doing through Paul truly dawned on them at this time. It was already known that the Gentiles could be a part of the church. This was seen in the account of Cornelius' conversion in Acts 10 & 11. And even more than this, it came through Peter's evangelism rather than Paul's.

There could be no disputing that what Paul was doing was both correct and in line with the purposes of God because of this occurrence between Peter and Cornelius. And yet, the focus of the evangelism of "the uncircumcision" belonged not to Peter, but to Paul. He was uniquely qualified to carry out this ministry and it had been committed to him. The fact that Paul is specifically noted as the Apostle to the Gentiles is recorded both implicitly and explicitly numerous times in the New Testament, but three specific references are found in Romans 11:13, 1 Timothy 2:7, and 2 Timothy 1:11. These, along with this note in Galatians 2:7 are sufficient evidence of the specificity of Paul's ministry.

Continuing on, he next notes, "...as *the gospel* for the circumcised was to Peter." What this means is that Peter was not only an apostle to the circumcised (meaning the Jews), but he is the main apostle to the Jews. The singling out of Peter in this way is used to show this, and it is well attested to in the structure and layout of the book of Acts. Acts 1-12 highlight Peter and his ministry to an exceptional degree. However, chapters 13-28 highlight Paul and his ministry in the same way. Everything that Peter accomplishes in his section of Acts is repeated in a marvelous way by Paul in his section.

Having said this, it does not mean that Peter's ministry was solely one of evangelizing Jews (as was noted concerning Cornelius above), nor was Paul's ministry solely one of evangelizing Gentiles. There was also not a different gospel transmitted by Peter than that of Paul. Rather, there is, as the Bible scholar Lightfoot notes, "...a distinction of sphere, and not a difference of type." This is absolutely certain by Paul's comments in Galatians as well as Peter's comments in his second epistle -

"...and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, ¹⁶ as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures." 2 Peter 3:15, 16

Because of the sphere of influence which the Bible marks out between Peter and Paul, it cannot go without notice or mentioning that the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of Peter being the first Pope is simply nuts. The Bible clearly shows that Peter was the Apostle to the Jews. Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles. As Peter's message was to the Jews, then it would make as much sense as a baseball hoop for the Roman Catholic Church to claim its roots in the message of Peter.

There are many logical arguments for denying their claim concerning Peter, this being just one of them, but it is a convincing one. The structure of the book of Acts, the layout of the epistles in the New Testament, and the dispensational model of redemptive history, all show the truth that Peter's message was intended for the early church, followed by a time when Paul's letters would be church doctrine, and then Peter's letters would again take on added significance after the rapture of the church.

Life application: Paul's words are doctrine for the Gentile-led church age. All Scripture is God-breathed and all of it is useful for doctrine, reproof, learning about God, etc. However, not all of it applies in the same way at all times. Context is king in biblical interpretation and Paul's letters are specifically designed for this dispensation of time.