

A HILL TO DIE ON! [Sermon Notes contd.]

(b) UNITY IN COMPANIONSHIP; 2:9;

The extension of the right hand of fellowship showed solidarity.

(c) UNITY IN COMPASSION; 2:10.

The church at Jerusalem faced a difficult situation due to the number of poor people in the city, many of them pilgrims who had been converted to Christ. On many occasions Paul pleaded with the other churches to alleviate this need (cf. **Acts 24:17, 1 Corinthians 16:1-3, 2 Corinthians 9, Romans 15**).

Our challenge is: if God worked so assiduously to preserve the truth of the Gospel for those who needed it, does this not implore us to defend and spread the Gospel without compromise?



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 22-23 October: **Harvest Services** in Martyrs; Lord's Day 11.30am & 7.00pm; Monday 8.00pm.
- 27 October @ 8.00pm: Presbytery **Reformation Rally** in Martyrs Memorial FPC.

MEETINGS TODAY

- Sunday School & Bible Class – 10.15am
- Morning Worship – 11.30am: *Fourth Message in our Studies on the Book of Galatians*
- Evening Service – 7.00pm; Fellowship Supper – 8.20pm.

INSPIRATION IN A SENTENCE

“Now the truth of the Gospel is, that our righteousness cometh by faith alone, without the works of the law. The corruption, or the falsehood of the gospel is, that we are justified by faith, but not without the works of the law.”

[Martin Luther]



NO MORE DEBATE: GIVE THE LIES TO THE FLAMES!

On 10 December 1520, when Martin Luther took the Pope's bull of excommunication outside the Elster Gate of Wittenberg and publicly burned it, this *“was the fiery signal of absolute and final separation from Rome”* – the confirmation that his teachings and Rome's were irreconcilable and that the Catholic Church was what she proudly claimed to be – irreformable.

Given the fact that the Papacy has not altered, but added to, its errors over the course of the last 500 years, recent decisions by the Irish Presbyterian Church to engage in joint seminars and conferences with Roman Catholicism on the subject of the Reformation, plus officially explore the topic of Justification together, reek of spiritual adultery. **2 Corinthians 6:14-18.**



A HILL TO DIE ON!

Text: **Galatians 2:1-10.**

Good military strategy dictates that the best generals will choose the correct hill for which to fight – and, if necessary, die.

The apostle Paul was doing precisely this when he penned this letter to the Galatians: personal opinions and personal honour were not worth contending for – but the truth of the

Gospel was ‘a hill to die on.’ Which was why he defended (i) His Credibility as a Messenger, but especially (ii) The Content of his Message.

[1] THE EXISTENCE OF UNITY IN THE GOSPEL; 2:1-2.

Paul stresses the points that he neither received the content of the Gospel from those in Jerusalem, nor did those in Jerusalem reprimand him because of the message he had preached for 14 years in Syria and Cilicia; rather, he held a private meeting with reputable apostles to ensure that both he and they were running together, working off the same page, in terms of Gospel proclamation. This encounter underlined the unity of the Gospel.

[2] THE EMISSARIES AGAINST THE UNITY OF THE GOSPEL; 2:3-5.

Bishop Lightfoot dubbed **Galatians 2:3-5** “a shipwreck of Greek grammar” – not only difficult to translate, but even more difficult to interpret. Paul’s emotion shows through at this point in that he begins sentences that he does not finish (cf.

Ephesians 1:3-14 when Paul lists blessings without a pause), demonstrating how a passion for truth was burning in his soul.

(a) THE ARRIVAL OF THE FALSE TEACHERS.

These men were secretly smuggled in – the typical strategy of Satan to surreptitiously sow tares in the middle of the wheat (cf. **Matthew 13:25**). The devil still pursues this objective by infiltrating the pulpits of churches with unconverted preachers.

(b) THE AIM OF THE FALSE TEACHERS.

Their target was liberty; their weapon legalism. These false teachers were trying to take young Christians who had been liberated by the Gospel of grace and put them into the handcuffs of Jewish legalism. The most difficult recognition to make with respect to God’s salvation is to accept that man can **do absolutely nothing to justify himself** before a holy God.

It was Martin Luther’s contention: “For a true and steadfast faith must lay hold upon nothing, but Christ alone, and in the terrors of conscience it hath nothing else to lean upon, but this diamond Christ Jesus.” (cf. **2 Corinthians 3:17; John 8:36; ct. 1 Peter 2:16; Galatians 5:13**).

(c) THE ANSWER TO THE FALSE TEACHERS.

This came through:

(i) *Paul’s Resistance*. Paul was determined to deny these men any house room: “no, not for an hour” – with “hour” being the smallest increment of time in the Greek language.

(ii) *Jerusalem’s Recognition*. Paul brought Titus with him to Jerusalem (Titus was an uncircumcised Greek, effectively Paul’s ‘Exhibit A’) and, contrary to what the Judaisers taught, the Jerusalem church did *not* insist that Titus needed to be circumcised in order to be converted. This confirmed that Paul’s Gospel and the Gospel they proclaimed was one and the same.

[3] THE EXERCISE OF UNITY IN THE GOSPEL; 2:6-10.

Paul laid out the proof that he and the key figures in the church stood on the same Gospel grounds:

(i) *Negatively, 1:6*: they made *no additions* to his message;

(ii) *Positively, 1:7-10*: the Jerusalem Church and the Gentile Mission were preaching *the same* message.

They shared:

(a) UNITY IN CONTENT; 2:7-8;

Liberal theologians walk today in the footsteps of the Judaisers, claiming there is more than one Gospel. What Peter gave to the Jews, Paul gave to the Gentiles. There was only one Gospel!

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