

“How to Solve Problems”, Part 3 – Galatians 2:13-14 – August 6th, 2017

- Today’s teaching will be part three of a series I’ve titled, “How to Solve Problems.”
- In the text before us, the Apostle Paul will actually get to the core of the problem in the Galatian churches in order to resolve it.
- Up to this point, he’s approached the matter very carefully and even prayerfully given the seriousness of the problem at hand.

- The problem that Paul has to deal with is that of legalism, and I don’t think it’s possible to overstate how dangerous this can be.
- I would submit that next to selfish ambition, legalism is both dangerous and deadly for the Christian and the Christian church.
- The reason being is because it’s so insidious in the sense that it slithers in like the serpent and you don’t even know it’s there.

- Enter the Apostle Paul, who by the Spirit crushes the head of the snake of legalism before it destroys the Galatian churches.
- It’s not so much that he does this, as much as it is how he does this, such that, the way he does this provides us a template.
- By a template I mean a Biblical way to approach the problems we face in our relationships with other people in our daily lives.

1. Tact (Verses 1-2)

- Paul is very tactful in approaching the problems there in the Galatian churches by meeting privately with the esteemed leaders.

2. Discernment (Verses 3-5)

- Here, we’re told that Paul used his spiritual discernment to expose the false believers who had infiltrated them to spy on them.

3. Impartiality (Verses 6-8)

- Paul wisely demonstrates his impartiality and shows no favoritism in dealing with those who were held in very high esteem.

4. Compassion (Verses 9-10)

- Paul shows both his passion and compassion concerning the impoverished believers in Jerusalem, which he had a heart for.

5. Boldness (Verses 11-12)

- Paul confronts Peter with a holy boldness opposing him to his face, and he does so publicly because of his public hypocrisy.

6. Authenticity (Verses 13-14)

13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. 14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

- After saying he opposed Peter to his face in his hypocrisy, he says other Jews along with even Barnabas were also led astray.
- He then tells them that when he saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, he rebuked Peter publically.
- He said; You’re a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not a Jew, how is it then that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?

- What Paul is saying here is their hypocrisy is making an already serious problem infinitely worse, because of what’s at stake.
- Namely, that of their hypocrisy leading others astray, which is why the Apostle Paul takes such a bold posture against them.
- It’s important to understand what hypocrisy really is and does, and perhaps more importantly why and how hypocrisy begins.

- In order to know what hypocrisy really is, we need look no further than to the original language of the New Testament Greek.
- The English word “hypocrite” comes from the Greek word “hypokrites”, which literally means “an actor” and a “stage player.”
- It’s interesting to note that actors in ancient Greek theater wore large masks to mark which character role they were playing.

- This understanding of what a hypocrite was provides us the much-needed context of what was happening in these churches.
- Simply put, they were all wearing masks and pretending to be something they were not and as such had become hypocrites.
- I suppose you could say they were all putting on an act, while underneath their mask they were hiding who they really were.

- That’s what hypocrisy is and does, which brings us to the origin of how hypocrisy begins, which in a word is that of “legalism.”
- Legalism leads to hypocrisy by virtue of the fact that you simply can’t keep the law, which in turn forces you to become an actor.
- Lest you think such a fate is only reserved for immature Christians, let me hasten to say that even Barnabas got caught in it.

- Here’s where I’m going with all of this, if we ever hope to resolve relational problems hypocrisy cannot be named amongst us.
- Whether the pastor in the pulpit or the person in the pew, our walk must match our talk and we must practice what we preach.
- I’m reminded of the harshest words ever to come out of the Savior’s mouth, were that of a curse upon the legalistic hypocrites.

Matthew 15:7–9 7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’” (In Matthew 23:13-29 Jesus pronounces seven woes to the scribes and Pharisees He called hypocrites.)

James 3:17 (NKJV) — 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

- I’d like to close with a question for all of us myself included, and the question is this, “what would happen if I took my mask off?”
- Perhaps better asked, what’s the worst that can happen if I was just honest and transparent about who I really am and am not?
- From my own personal experience, people that may have had a problem with me are disarmed when I become the “real deal.”