

Galatians 2

Galatians 2:7-21

Based on NLT

Introduction

God sent Paul to share the good news about Jesus to all the people who were not descendants of Abraham. God even showed Peter that anyone could become a follower* of Jesus when he sent Peter to Cornelius' house. Peter and the leaders of Jesus' followers agreed that anyone, anywhere could become a follower of Jesus, no matter what their religion, or language, or ethnicity may be, but there were some people who were teaching that anyone who wanted to become a follower of Jesus had to follow the religious laws of Abraham's descendants. Paul strongly opposed these people, and he wrote a letter to the new followers of Jesus in Asia to remind them about the truth about following Jesus...*

Galatians 2:7-8

The leaders of Jesus' followers saw that God had given me the responsibility of sharing the good news about Jesus with everyone---even those who were not descendants of Abraham, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of sharing with those who were descendants of Abraham...The same God who worked through Peter as God's messenger (apostle) to Abraham's descendants also worked through me as God's messenger (apostle) to others.

Galatians 2:9

In fact, Peter and the other leaders... encouraged me to keep sharing with those who were not descendants of Abraham...

Galatians: 2:11-13

But when Peter came to *your area*, I had to oppose him to his face, *because* what he did was very wrong. When he first arrived, he ate with the *all the believers**. But afterward, when some *descendants of Abraham* came, Peter wouldn't eat with *those who weren't descendants of Abraham* anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on *following their religious laws*. As a result, *others* followed Peter's hypocrisy...

Galatians 2:14-16

When I saw that they were not following the truth of the *Good News about Jesus*, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "...we know that a person is made right with God by *believing** in Jesus..., not by obeying the law. And we have believed in *Jesus*, so that we might *have a right relationship** with God (*So that we might be a part of his kingdom*) because of our *belief in him*, not because we have obeyed the law, *because* no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law."

Galatians 2:20-21

Instead, my old self was killed alongside of Jesus as he was nailed to the planks of wood. It's not me who lives anymore---any life I have is Jesus living in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not treat the grace* of God as meaningless, *because* if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for *Jesus* to die.

Example crafted story (transcribed from a told story)

We know that God sent Paul to tell the good news about Jesus to everyone, especially people who were not descendants of Abraham. And he went to a place in Asia, and he began to teach the good news about Jesus. A lot of people who were not descendants of Abraham believed and became followers of Jesus.

And Peter came---and he saw this happening, and he also saw that this good news about Jesus was for everyone, not just the descendants of Abraham. So he spent time with these new believers.

There were some people who were followers of Jesus who thought that everyone who believed in Jesus had to follow the religious laws of the descendants of Abraham. They came to this area and they made Paul very angry because they were saying things that were not true about the good news about Jesus, and they were trying to enslave people with this religious law; but Peter was afraid of them. He was afraid that they would start to criticize him so he stopped even eating with these believers who were not descendants of Abraham.

Paul saw that and he came right up in front of Peter's face and said, "Why are you acting like such a hypocrite? You don't follow these laws---why are you expecting these people to follow the laws? You know that religious laws don't make you right with God. We believed in Jesus---and our old self and our old ways and our old religious laws---they were nailed to the cross next to Jesus. That old person is not alive anymore---any life I have is Jesus living

in me. And if you start to say you have to keep some religious law to make us right with God, then there's no reason why Jesus would have had to die, and the grace of God is meaningless."

Why This Story?

This story is part of a long-term discipleship set taken from Luke, Acts, and the Epistles, but can be told as part of any advanced or in-depth discipleship program. The Epistles stories are best understood when the audience is familiar with its corresponding story from Acts. We've included some of the "back story" of the epistle in the introduction to the story, in order to establish the setting for the audience and help the audience better understand the reason behind the writing of the epistle.

This story criticizes following religious law above experiencing the grace of God.

Story Crafting

In order to clarify the concept of *being made right with God*, in some places we have used the phrase **right/good relationship with God** to describe what happens when we are *made right with God*.

You may choose to, as we have, to describe the *cross* as **planks of wood** to clarify for an audience who may not know what a *cross* is.

You may choose to say **have a relationship with God**, or **be a part of God's kingdom**, depending on what the theme of the rest of your story set is. **Being a part of God's kingdom** implies having a good relationship with God, so both phrases are interchangeable.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Descendant of Abraham*

We've chosen to use this in place of "Israelites," "Jews," and "Hebrews" to show the epic storyline from Abraham. This term helps connect the stories, and helps the audience see that all of these different terms for the Jews really refer to the same people. In addition, it alleviates any prejudices people or cultures might have towards the Jews.

Follower/believer*

These words may be interchangeable in these stories. **Follower/believer** denotes a person who has chosen to believe in and follow Jesus exclusively. We have chosen to not use a word such as *Christian*, which may have unwanted connotations in certain cultures, and may even be understood wrongly. In some South Asian cultures, **believer** may refer to a person who worships outside of the "traditional," historical church.

Belief*

This describes man's response to God's promise. It probably implies more than mental agreement, but putting one's faith/confidence in God.

Relationship*

Some languages may not have one term for 'relationship,' or the term has unwanted connotations. Some languages express the idea in terms of action. TEV translates Genesis 15:6 as 'Abram put his trust in the LORD, and because of this the LORD was pleased with him and accepted him.'

Grace*

The term "grace" needs to be translated carefully, according to its context. In these contexts, "grace" refers to God's

favor shown to undeserving people, in regards to his salvation freely given. One of the best ways to translate this is "God has acted towards me in a loving and kind way," or "God has shown his love for us by accepting us as his people through Jesus."

Worldview

In this biblical culture, eating together was a symbol of equality and acceptance. The original audience understood that for Peter to eat with the believers, it meant that he accepted them even though they were not descendants of Abraham. If your audience will not automatically understand this, you may need to explain it in the story.

Intra-Story Cohesion

This story is best understood if your audience has already heard the Acts story of Peter and Cornelius.

Use the same terms you have been using for **descendants of Abraham, grace, belief, believers/followers, relationship.**

Story Set Themes

Epistles

Freedom (from the law)

Grace

Relationship

New Life