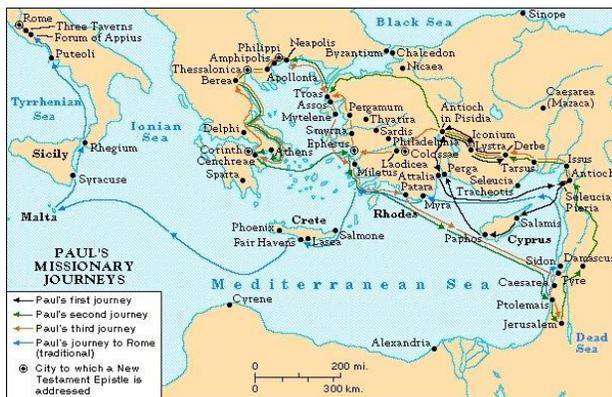




Background

- Paul and Peter met as brothers in Christ in Jerusalem the first time 3 years after Paul's conversion.
- Paul and Peter met a second time as brothers in Christ in Jerusalem 14 years after Paul's conversion.
- Paul and Peter met again at Antioch.
- Paul's calling was to share the gospel with the Gentiles.
- Peter's calling was to share the gospel with the Jews.
- The following story took place in the city of Antioch.



Gal 2:11-21

11 But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. 12 When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. 13 As a result, other Jewish Christians followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

14 When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?"

15 "You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles. 16 Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus,

so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law."

17 But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin? Absolutely not! 18 Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already tore down. 19 For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God. 20 My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.

- The question
- The appeal
- The accusation
- The explanation

In spite of many prophecies and the great commission, it took a miracle at the home of Cornelius for Peter to believe that gentiles could be justified by faith in Christ and become members of Christ's church without adhering to the Jewish law. In spite of that miracle while Peter was visiting a gentile church at Antioch he withdrew from eating with the gentiles when Jews arrived from the church in Jerusalem.

What does this tell you about Peter?
Paul said he feared the Jews. (Verse 12)

Why did he fear the Jews?

From the moment we are born we begin to form in our mind our understanding of who we are based on our humanity.

This understanding comes primarily from what others tell us about your humanity. Words are very powerful.

Your understanding of who you are is also called your sense of self or your understanding of your identity.

Your first sense of self or identity comes from your name and your gender. From these early beginnings your sense of self or identity expands and will include your understanding of your appearance, your physical and mental abilities, and your family. Eventually your sense of self or identity will include your experiences, your nationality and race, and your social status. From there your sense of self or identity expands to include your associations, what you do, who you marry, your children, and grandchildren.

After you are an adult, if someone asks you to explain who you are, you explain by saying...I am _____. (Name, family, where you are from, where you went to school, what you do to make a living, what you are good at, what you enjoy, what it is about you that makes you important, your experiences, your religion, your character).

If you met Peter before he met Jesus, before he understood the gospel, and before he received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and if you would have asked Peter, "Who are you?....Peter would have answered something like this.

I am Peter. I am the son of John. I am a Jew. I am from Galilee. I am a fisherman like my father before me. I enjoy fishing and am very good at what I do. I am very zealous for our religion as Jews. I am a follower of John the Baptist.

From the time we are born our entire understanding of who we are is based on our humanity.

We may feel very proud of our human identity or we may feel ashamed.

We may feel very loved based on your human identity or very unloved.

We may feel very significant based on our human identity or very insignificant.

We may feel very secure based on our human identity or very insecure.

We may feel very meaningful based on your human identity or very meaningless.

We may have a lot of mixed feelings as circumstances change in our life. These mixed feelings about who we are, are the reason there is so much mental illness in our nation.

When we receive Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, there is a change in our personal identity.

Our identity in the Spirit is revealed by the Word of God.

In His Word God clearly describes who you are to God now that you are in Christ and how this changes your personal identity.

I am chosen and adopted by God. (Romans 8:15; Gal. 4:4-5)

I am a child of God. (John 1:12)

I am a citizen of God's Holy nation. (Eph. 2:19)

I am an heir to God through Jesus Christ. (Gal. 4:7).

I am seated with Christ by His throne in the heavenly places. (Eph. 2:6)

I am a royal priest in God's household. (I Peter 2:9)

I am the dwelling of the Holy Spirit. (I Cor. 6:19)

I am one with the Holy Spirit. (I Cor. 6:17)

- His righteous nature is my nature(2 Peter 1:4)
- His mind is my mind(1 Cor. 2:16)
- His purpose is my purpose(Eph. 3:10-11)
- His fruit is my fruit (Gal. 5:22-23).

I am a saint, a holy one of God (Eph. 1:1)

I am gifted by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:7).

I am a significant member of the church, the body and bride of Christ (I Cor. 12:12-14)

I am called by God to make disciples for Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20)

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:16)

Just because you have believed in Christ and this change has occurred, you can still find your sense of self or identity in your humanity.

That is exactly what Satan wants you to do. That is what the world wants you to do. That is what your flesh wants you to do.

That is what Peter did. In that circumstance at Antioch he fell from grace. He switched. He forgot who He was in Christ. He betrayed the gospel.

If your theology does not affect your meology than your theology is just mythology!

Gal. 3:26-29

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

NKJV

There was no one in Israel who could make a better case for being proud of who they were based on their humanity then the Apostle Paul.

Phil. 3:4b-6

4b If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

But Paul turned his back on everything that he was in his humanity for who he was in Christ.

Phil. 3:7-9

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

NKJV

Gal. 2:20

20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

NKJV

Paul knew who He was in Christ. He found his sense of self and identity by faith in Jesus and being found in Him.

Where do you find your sense of self and identity?

Are you like Peter in this story who forsook who he was in Christ and fell from grace?

Do you find yourself constantly compromising with people; compromising with your flesh; compromising with sin; compromising with the devil; because you fall from grace and find your identity in your humanity?

STOP IT!

Turn your back on everything in your humanity that has been the source of your identity and find your identity only in Christ?

What a change this will make in you?

When you pray, you will pray Abba Father.

When you read the Word of God, you will read it as a love letter from your Father to you.

When you hear the Word of God, you will hear the Holy Spirit calling you to be who you are.

When you get with other believers, you will see them as new creations in Christ.

When you hear your calling to make disciples, you will see how much you need your brothers to fulfill your calling.

When you think about home, you will think about heaven.

Do you need to receive Jesus Christ this morning and become a new creation in Christ?