

Galatians 2:7-10 – Real Action is Required for the Church to Grow

Rienecker, Clarke, Luther, TSK, GreekLexicon, Henry, JFB, Trapp, Robertson, Poole, PNT, Abbot, Barnes, Handfuls, Calvin, Eadie

Beloved in the Lord: Apostle Paul proved to the Galatians, who were being lied to by the Judaizers, that he had the authority and the true message of salvation.

Salvation came by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone – not by any works or ceremonies. (Those ceremonies were all fulfilled in Jesus.)

The **Apostles in Jerusalem confirmed Apostle Paul's authority was valid and his message was true.**

Now today you will see how **the Apostles in Jerusalem put their talk (that they were united) into action...**and **so did the Apostle Paul.**

This would prove they were working for the same King!

Our headings are:

A Right Hand of Fellowship from the Apostles

A Right Hand to help the poor from Apostle Paul

Our goals are: **You will show you are on the same team - in the same family of the Savior - by your closeness to other brothers, and you will learn to care for brothers in need.**

A Right Hand of Fellowship from the Apostles

7 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 8 (for **He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship** to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), 9 and when **James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me**, they gave me and Barnabas **the right hand of fellowship**, that **we should go to the Gentiles** and they to **the circumcised.**

1. Because the Judaizers were teaching some new Christian converts in the Galatian churches they needed to be circumcised to be saved, they started to doubt what Apostle Paul had first taught the church: Salvation was by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Many went further to **think Apostle Paul was shorting the Gospel by denying any human effort.**

These false teachers, the Judaizers, expected the other Jewish Apostles had the same view as theirs and expected they would demand that all non-Jewish Christians adopt all Jewish laws and become Jews.

In fact, they expected the Apostles in Jerusalem to rebuke Apostle Paul.

(Some of them had reported on the Apostle Paul to the Apostles in Jerusalem.)

2. But after Apostle Paul went to Jerusalem, met with the other Apostles, told them what he was saying, and showed the effect of what he was saying, they acknowledged Apostle Paul had the same Gospel and the same authority as they.

Look at the proof of equality among Apostles in our text.

Apostle Peter preached the Gospel to the Jews, but he preached to the Gentiles as well. He even went in Cornelius' house, something a Jew ordinarily would not do. There were no limits on him as to where he would preach.

Apostle Paul was sent as a missionary by the Lord to the Gentiles, but he preached to Jews also. In fact, he would start at the Jewish synagogue when he went to a Gentile city.) He, like Apostle Peter, had the full commission of Christ and had the same Gospel! There were no limits put on Apostle Paul as to where he would preach.

Apostle Paul claimed equality to Peter (Cephas), and was given equality too, even for material things.

1 Corinthians 9:5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

God's power was evident on Apostle Paul's preaching, just as he was in Apostle Peter's. They saw evidence of it. He did many miracles as Apostle Peter did, all from the power of Spirit of God, as Apostle's Peter's miracles were.

Acts 15:12 Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles.

Acts 19:11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

1 Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching were **not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,**

(Notice how even the Apostle James was listed before Apostle Peter (Cephas). (This was James the son of Alphaeus.) James, Peter, and John were of the same authority as Apostle Paul, not greater.

This claim of equality was not boasting by Apostle Paul. This was showing the Galatians the truth so they would believe what he was saying. It stopped their mouths.

3. Apostle Paul then called-out what seemed like a new but dangerous thing - to assign more power to the Apostles in Jerusalem.

A geographic location of residence did not make any one of the Apostles greater.

4. Knowing and agreeing with the Apostle Paul, the Apostles in Jerusalem extended a right hand of fellowship to him AND Barnabas, acknowledging they were called by God to go to the Gentiles.

What “does right hand of fellowship” mean, and why did they not give “the left hand of fellowship?” Look at Apostle Peter’s kind words.

2 Peter 3:15 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,

Right hand of fellowship was a token of friendship, closeness, and unity. The left hand would have meant an insult.

5. This wonderful unity of the leaders of the church, committed to a common cause with a common Gospel, would have brushed aside and shut the mouths of the Judaizers in Galatia who were insisting on the need to fulfill the ceremonies of the Old Testament in order to be saved.

With this resolved, they could work together for the kingdom. Christians in Galatia would no longer be misled. The world would get a clear message of the Gospel truth and be saved.

6. Lessons:

a. Unity in working together for the kingdom’s cause is essential and a true blessing. It doesn’t matter if the preacher speaks English well, it doesn’t matter if he

speaks with an accent, and it doesn't matter if there are different cultures. It doesn't matter if he is from England or Ethiopia! It doesn't even matter if there are insignificant differences in doctrines. **We have a greater goal: building Christ's kingdom.**

Wherever you are, the Gospel of Christ is the same.

b. Don't be jealous of your brother's work in Christ. You are all working for the same cause and heading the same direction. Applaud those who are doing well. Encourage them. Pray for them. Support them.

c. There are diversity of gifts and skill.

1 Corinthians 12:6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

Some do apologetics, others might show hospitality, others might preach on the streets, some might be praying in the background.

d. Anyone however, who speaks anything but the Gospel of Jesus Christ for salvation, even if he were the nicest person in the world, is accursed by God and waiting for hell.

e. Rome is wrong. Peter is not the leader of the church. Apostle Paul claimed and proved equality with him and the other apostles. In fact, **the plurality and equality of elders is essential to a properly functioning church.**

A Right Hand to help the poor from Apostle Paul

10 They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

1. The Apostles in Jerusalem then encouraged Apostle Paul, Barnabas, and Titus to remember the poor.

Literally, they should "keep on remembering" the poor. This always had to be on the mind of God's people, especially at that time.

This encouragement was not a quid pro quo. The Apostles in Jerusalem weren't saying, "We will say you are the Apostle to the Gentiles if you would raise some support for the poor Jews.

That's how politicians work, but not preachers! **This was a genuine call to help the poor...whether Jews or Gentiles.**

2. Why did the Apostles make this particular request for help for the poor?

a. At this time there were severe food shortages, so food was expensive in the Jerusalem area. Much of the food had to come from outside of Judea.

b. Giving characterized the life of the Jews before and it had to characterize the life of the Gentiles.

Romans 15:27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

God had even codified the helping of the poor by commanding the leaving of the gleanings for the poor, and because of that, we had a Savior through Ruth.

c. Many of the Jews in Judea who believed in Jesus were severely ostracized from their fellow Jews at home. Many non-believing Jews refused to employ Christians, so some help was necessary.

3. Apostle Paul said helping the poor was what he wanted to do anyway, as he had most likely observed the needs of the people of Judea at the time.

4. Apostle Paul did this before as well.

Acts 11:30 This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

And then he did it again later.

Acts 24:17 "Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation,

5. Apostle Paul encouraged others to show kind benevolence to the poor and they did.

2 Corinthians 8:1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 3 For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

He was referring here to the Philippians who gave though they were extremely poor themselves.

And do you know in the east giving was done with the right hand? Isn't that remarkable?

6. Lessons:

a. You received so much from Christ...eternal, emotional, and financial benefits, so it is only logical you will share with Christ's children wherever they are!

Giving should be as easy as breathing.

b. Your giving should never be limited to your own circles...people who have the same color as you...the same nationality...the same social standing...the same financial bracket...the same church...the same denomination.

Giving should be for all of God's people wherever there is need.

c. When you show charity across the whole spectrum of Christ's kingdom, you show the equality of brothers and promote unity among all.

Talk of equality means little!

Talk of love means little!

d. Luther: "True religion is ever in need of money, while false religions are backed by wealth." *Let not this be true for you!*

Conclusion:

Apostle Paul and the other Apostles reached out and **extended the right hand of fellowship to each other**. This was not just a token thing. This meant **they were committing, and indeed did so, to the joint proclaiming of the Gospel** of Jesus Christ. This caused true blessings. The church grew.

Then Apostle Paul committed, as the Apostles in Jerusalem had been doing, to **extend their right hands and help the poor.**

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Unity – grounded on truth is necessary for the kingdom. A divided army cannot stand. All Christians need unity. They must show unity with other Christians. They must pursue unity with other Christians.

2. There may be differences in minor things, but they must not divide the people of God. Salvation by grace, through faith, in Christ alone is not a minor thing. Don't be close with those who reject his. But if some think they need a whole lot of water to baptize and we just need a little, that smaller thing should not separate us.

3. Preaching and diaconal work always go together. This is what make the church strong. The church must be careful it doesn't do one and ignore the other. Love is seen in more than preaching. Love is seen in more than digging wells and building hospitals.

Finally: Do you want to be saved? If you don't want to be, it's your choice, but if you do, God offers grace...and he will give you faith to receive what Jesus did on the cross. Ask him...ask him genuinely. He will hear and answer.