The Spirit Rhythm

week 03
Live Dead
Galatians 2:11-21

opening prayer (2 min)

Father, thank You that Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. Tonight, show us where we are still trying to prove ourselves to You or to others. Set us free from the pressure to perform, anchor us in the truth of the gospel, and let the life of Jesus be lived through us by Your Spirit. Amen.

highlights (13 min)

Big Idea: Because Christ loved you and gave Himself for you, you can die to proving yourself and live free in Him.

opening reflection

- Where do you feel the "always on" pressure of our culture most: work, family, social media, or even church?
- When have you felt you had to prove yourself to be accepted?

Bridge Statement: Our society is exhausted, always on and always proving. Paul knew that grind. He spent years building a religious image and was convinced he was right with God. But when he met Jesus, he counted all of it as loss to gain Christ (Philippians 3:7–9). The Galatians had begun by the Spirit and the gospel, and now they were turning back to performance. In this passage Paul shows that even Peter fell into the same trap, and he explains how the gospel sets us free.

Key Line: The "But God" moment sets you free from the tyranny of performance.

scripture focus

Read Galatians 2:11–21 aloud.

Context: Paul has shown that his gospel came by revelation and was confirmed by the apostles in Jerusalem. Now he describes a confrontation. In Antioch, Peter had freely shared meals with Gentile believers, but when certain men came from James, he withdrew and separated himself out of fear. Other Jewish believers followed him, even Barnabas. Paul opposed Peter to his face, because his actions contradicted the truth of the gospel. Paul then explains that we are justified by faith in Christ, not by works of the law.

time to consider (30 min)

Reflect on what God has spoken through this week's sermon by discussing the key truths together. Take this moment seriously: slow down, listen, and respond to what the Spirit is saying.

1. The Pressure to Live Against What You Believe (Galatians 2:11–13)
Peter shared meals with Gentile believers, then withdrew, influenced others, and contradicted the gospel he knew. To preserve his image, he played the game, and the pressure drove him to do what was wrong even though he knew what was right. His hypocrisy became their bondage. We may not face pressure about the law of Moses, but we feel it in other ways: how much we serve, how faithfully we attend, how much we know, how spiritual others think we are, whether our children behave, or whether church leaders recognize us.

discussion questions

- What do you need people to believe about you in order to feel secure?
- Where does being accepted by Christ still feel insufficient unless certain people accept you too?

Insight: You can believe you have nothing to prove to God and still live as though you have everything to prove to people.

2. Truth That Pressure Cannot Change (Galatians 2:14–18)
Paul took a stand. The conflict was uncomfortable, but it was necessary because of what was at stake. He corrected Peter by anchoring him in the truth: we are justified by faith in Christ, not by works of the law. Our religious background and accomplishments do not justify us before God or others—not our baptism, pedigree, service, Bible knowledge, giftedness, or belonging. Faith in Christ admits that the law cannot save us. When you say yes to Christ, you say no to earning your own righteousness, and there is no going back to rebuild what we abandoned.

discussion questions

- Which of these are you most tempted to lean on for your standing: background, service, knowledge, giftedness, or belonging?
- When has turning to Scripture helped you stand firm under pressure, or when has not turning to it caused problems?

Insight: I died to the law so I could live to God—free from trying to establish my own righteousness, free to give my life to the God who has accepted me in Christ.

3. Crucified with Christ—Free to Live for God (Galatians 2:19–21)
When Christ was crucified, our need to establish our standing before God through religious performance, and to secure our identity through people's approval, was crucified with Him. The pressure will return, but it can't rule us; we are ruled by God's love. The fear of "What if I'm not enough?" dies, because perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). Now the risen Jesus lives in us through His Spirit: He sources our life, shapes our desires, empowers our obedience, and directs how we live. And the life we now live, we live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

discussion questions

- What would you finally have the courage to surrender if you believed you were already fully loved and had nothing left to prove?
- Where do you feel tired, inadequate, or afraid? What changes when you let "Christ lives in me" settle into that place?

Insight: You can stop treating every success as proof that you matter and every failure as evidence that you don't.

renewal

Reflect: Faith means total dependence on Jesus. He is the Son of God: there is no greater place for your faith. He loves you: there is no greater relationship. He gave Himself for you: there is no greater demonstration. Whose acceptance controls you—the Christ who gave Himself for you, or the people you're afraid of disappointing?

Key Line: Freedom to live comes through believing in and receiving His death.

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missional living (30 min)

1. Each day this week, notice one moment when you are trying to prove yourself, and pray Galatians 2:20 over it.
2. Have one honest conversation where you choose truth over protecting your image.
3. Take one step of obedience you have been holding back, not to earn God's love, but because you already have it.

follow-up

Where did you feel the pressure to prove yourself this week? How did remembering that Christ loved you and gave Himself for you change your response?

closing time of prayer (15 min)

Pray for freedom from people-pleasing and performance, courage to live what we believe, rest for those who are weary, and a deeper confidence that Christ lives in us.

final takeaways

- The pressure to be accepted by people can push us to live against what we believe.
- Our background and accomplishments don't justify us; faith in Christ does.
- When we say yes to Christ, there is no going back to earning our righteousness.
- Our need to prove ourselves was crucified with Christ, and His love casts out fear.
- Christ lives in us, and we live by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Memory Verse: *Galatians 2:20 — "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*