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## Chapter 2 – No Confidence in Man

### Distinguishing Not According to Appearance (vs.6)

**Galatians 2:4-6:** “But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you. But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.”

Well, in case it's not clear by this time, Paul is speaking to the Galatians and saying that this wonderful gospel that we have has nothing to do with man in the sense of it wasn't his thought, his imagination, or what he devised; this is solely of God. It wasn't anything and it is not anything that man can do to really save people. This is somehow lost in the sense of humanity that perceives we're the answer to everything. Man has a tendency to be pretty grandiose. Of course, it will ultimately end in Revelation in which he will become like a beast. I feel like in some way that comes from Psalm 49 because it talks about the fact that those who have a lot perceive themselves as being great. They don't even worry about dying because they're not going to die, they're “great.” They name their property after themselves and so they're “great.” The whole process of the particular Psalm 49 is that they perceive themselves in this way, but he says, “No. They're like the beast that perishes, and the day is going to show that.” Really, when you begin to think in terms of the fact that you're in control, you become a beast that consumes. Once again, I think it's probably one of the reasons why in the book of Daniel you have these nations described as beasts because nations began to consume one another as they began to conquer each other. They didn't care about the concerns of others, but only concerned about what they wanted and their desires. This is probably one of the reasons why we in America are called “consumers,” but it is that attitude of beast that we begin to see that is culminating throughout humanity.

When we come to this passage, Paul makes it very clear right at the beginning in Galatians 1:1 that this gospel is not of man. He states that this was “not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ”. He will ultimately then go on and say in chapter 1 that if there's another gospel that is preached, that is to say, the power of man, let that gospel

be accursed; let that person be accursed because that is not the message of God. He's going to show this in a lot of different ways. One of the ways that he demonstrates was that this gospel of truth that we have can really not be conveyed by a pastor or people individually but can only be conveyed by the Spirit of God moving in your hearts. Now, God uses pastors, I hope, and He uses the people around us for the purpose of proclaiming that wonderful gospel. However, even with me proclaiming the wonderful gospel, you would not embrace it had not the Spirit of God opened the eyes of your heart, and you began to see this revealed. So, this is not a work of man. It's one of the reasons why, as Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 1, that God chooses the weak and the foolish things to confound the wise; the things that are not to nullify the things that are. Why? That no man would boast; that man wouldn't say, "That was me. I saved this person." You didn't save anybody. They heard the voice of the Shepherd as you were sharing the gospel, and they came. So, what a miraculous and wonderful thing this is. Paul is wanting to emphasize this because once you put man in the equation, then it becomes segmented and divisive, and people begin to devour each other.

In fact, that's one of the statements that he makes as you go on into Galatians 5, "Take care that this freedom isn't used to devour one another." Unfortunately, that's what man has a tendency to do. Paul is acutely aware as well how religion can take a strong role in this and can have people pontificate certain things in almost an intimidating way that controls humanity.

So, he was aware of this and one of the statements that he makes in 1 Timothy 1:7 is that he knew firsthand that many in the day will become teachers of the law, wanting to declare that they're wise and powerful. He says, "They make confident assertions about things that they don't understand." You say, "Man wouldn't do that." Oh, he does it all the time. When we begin to talk about what we think God is thinking, unless you're quoting Scripture, you have no idea what God is thinking. Who can have the mind of God? His ways are higher than mine; as high as the heavens are above the earth. Man has a tendency to come in and say, "I've got this. I understand what God wants." What is it? "Well, God wants me to brow beat this person into heaven." That's not the gospel; it's not what it says.

So, Peter puts it this way in 2 Peter 2:19, there are literally people out there promising people freedom though they themselves are slaves to corruption. How does that happen? Well, it's the same way that it happens in Matthew 7. It's really easy to see the speck in somebody else's eye but you can't see the log in your own eye.

Also, Romans chapters 1 and 2, where Paul writes to a group of people that were highly acquainted with the rules of the law. They were so acquainted that they were really good at criticizing and pointing out everybody else's faults. So, he says, "What? You don't understand that you're going to be judged by the law? That understanding is that which God is going to use against you; not that you are using it against other people." Here again, we realize that there

are going to be people that pontificate with great power and are very condescending or critical; there are going to be people that perceive themselves as teachers of the law, and are telling you what to do, but if you're not hearing the grace of God, you missed the point. It's a wonderful thing that our gospel is simplistic in the sense "God loves you." It's crying out that.

Well, complication has come within the church at Galatia, and Paul is having to deal with this. It's one of the reasons why he's set the stage in chapter 1. He then goes into dealing with the specifics in chapter 2. As we read the first part of this, you began to realize that Paul was willing to submit to the church in Jerusalem. I think one of the reasons why he puts that within the text is he's virtually saying, "Look, I don't even trust myself." So, there's a point where I guess people perceive, "Well, I've gotten so far that I have all the answers." Look, you and I shouldn't trust ourselves. As Paul will say to the Corinthians, "I can't think of really anything that I'm guilty of right now, but I'm not by this acquitted because the Lord is the one who judges me." There's that constant sense of "I just want to be right with God; I want to please Him." He will oftentimes use the phrase, "my conscience bearing witness," and what he's saying is "I'm right with God, and I'm very strong now and can speak confidently, but when I'm not right with God, I don't speak very confidently." Where the Spirit of God is, as Acts 4 will say, we speak with great boldness. If there's not the Spirit of God, well, you might speak with your boldness of self-confidence, but it's not going to last. So, we come to a passage in which Paul is very much aware of all these interplays that are going on around him and that man has a tendency to try to control and boast.

He makes this statement, and it's verse 6 that I want to focus on. As Paul begins to respond, he gives us a fundamental point that I would say is one of the great issues in humanity, and oftentimes debated within the political realm as well as within the churches; that is the thing of prejudice. It's pretty interesting.

(Galatians 2:6) "But from those who were of high reputation..."

Probably the best way to translate that within the original would be "those who are seemingly in a class that are deemed important." Once again, we put people in segments. I remember doing that with people in school. You know how you have cliques? "These are the important kids. These are the non-important kids." Nothing new under the sun.

"But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me) ..."

I did a lot of investigation into the phrase "makes no difference to me," and I came up with it doesn't make any difference to him. He just didn't care.

"... God shows no partiality..."

Ah, “partiality.” That’s an interesting word, isn’t it? Actually, the direct translation of that is “excepts no face.” Now, what he's talking about with that is the outward appearance of man. I mean, man looks at the outward appearance; God looks at the heart. Fundamentally, there’s nothing that we can do in the flesh that can in anyway impress God. So, we need to just stop trying altogether.

As you come to this passage, you begin to see that Paul is very dogmatic in verse 6, “But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.”

Now, what I wanted to talk about specifically in this is that whole sense of “partiality” because it’s that whole partiality that we’re dealing with; that really becomes very divisive in the church, and much of the verbiage that’s going out in our society today. You know, there’s all kinds of partiality because of the fact that we tend to judge people according to the flesh; we don’t judge people according to the Spirit. So, I was looking at this and, well, people form groups, don’t they? They form groups, cliques, clubs; they declare themselves “special” and “superior.” In fact, one of the things that Paul writes as a conclusive thing in Galatians 6. Once again, if you don’t have this verse underlined, it’s a very humbling verse. So, you probably ought to underline it.

Galatians 6:3 is a very simple verse, “For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”

That pretty much takes you out of the club and that sense of importance. One of the definitions and words that we oftentimes use is “sectarianism.” “Sectarianism” is that which is excessive attachment to a particular group or organization. Sometimes it is political or religious denominations. I mean, “I’m a Baptist. You’re a Methodist. You’re a Catholic...” and they define themselves this way. They don’t stop to think about what they actually believe. They just are loyal to that no matter what. The point is that it creates this false sense of confidence. I was really asking myself, “Why do people join these particular groups, and why do they latch onto them? Why do they become this?” There are multiple answers. One is that sometimes the groups are just hateful and they’re hating; sometimes it’s an act of defense mechanisms which they were maybe hurt by somebody else and maybe this group accepted them for a moment, and they became attached to it. So, their devotion goes to that particular group. Maybe it’s just pride, “I’m unique. I’m better. I’m different than everybody else.” The fundamental point of these groups is that they shut out other people, and that’s what it does. It could be academic fraternities and sororities; it could be political parties. You just shut out people because they’re not of this sectarian group, and you begin to see how isolating and divisive it is. It literally defines the people around you based on where you are, not who they are. You think in terms of the prejudice that we have, obviously, “racial” and “bigotry.”

None of this is new under the sun, once again, according to Ecclesiastes. When you think of partisanship, you think, "Wow, partisanship just recently happened." Pharisees and Sadducees? Really? They didn't like each other, and they didn't get along with one another. Prejudice, well, let's go back to Miriam and Aaron who got mad at Moses for marrying a Cushite. So, all the way through you see this. Even when we consider economic issues, one of the reasons why we're prejudiced is because this group of people have the have and the have nots. All you have to do is go to the book of James, and he goes, "Ok, so you tell these people that they can sit in this important seat because they have something, and these people sit back there because they don't? You're making distinctions. Isn't that distinction evil? You're not considering their feelings or the truth.

I've oftentimes thought about the regional contempt that people have. "Are you from this place? Are you from this place?" and "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"; but it does. When you consider prejudice, bigotry and all these things, it's also bizarre how trendy it can be. I actually remember when the military and soldiers were literally despised. It wasn't that long ago, and now, they can't do wrong. The same thing with, we'll call them special needs kids, how kids made fun of them, and it was just a terrible thing. Now, special needs kids are almost heroes. The pendulum goes so far to extremes that it's more a trend. Why do people lift up certain people at a certain time, and why didn't they do it before? There's only one answer, it's popular now. It's not because they really care about those particular things. In the meantime, all these people are being ruined. I mean, there's a certain color that's hated at one time, and then another time they're exalted. "How wonderful, these are the best people. They can't do anything wrong." It doesn't matter what they do, they can't do anything wrong. That's not true. It doesn't allow you to make an appropriate decision because you're judging everything by the external, and not by the heart. Christ doesn't say that you're not to judge, He says don't judge according to the appearance, judge according to the heart.

The same thing is true in Matthew 7. Ok, so you've got a log in your head. Get it out, and then go help get the speck that's in the brother's eye. We want you to be discerning. Once again, we don't want you to be judgmental in the sense of condemning people, but we do want you to know what's right and wrong and make those distinctions. Everybody's afraid of doing these kinds of things because of prejudice. Once again, the pendulum swings, and everybody goes, "I don't want to offend anybody." So, then they just don't say anything. Well, that's also prejudice because you're deciding based on external appearance. Why is it that you would correct this person, but you wouldn't correct this person? "Well, did you see who this person was?" What does that matter? Is it right or is it wrong? That's fundamentally the point that we're going to look into.

I guess, ultimately, the question is what's so bad about being partial? What's so wrong about having these thoughts of prejudice? I'm going to give you three reasons. First of all, it's wrong because it's unjust. So, that in and of itself is a foundation that you ultimately should live by. It rewards and punishes the wrong people for the wrong reasons.

An example of this is in Romans 2, but first we're going to go to Leviticus 19 because both of these are great passages that are complimentary.

It says this in verse 15, "You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor..."

Wow, talk about pendulum swinging. "Let them rob. Let them steal. They're poor." Ok, but that doesn't mean that stealing isn't wrong.

"You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great..."

Bow down to the great and say, "Oh, you're great. So, we'll just let you have a pass because, well, you're great." So, great people don't have to pay any price.

"... but you are to judge your neighbor fairly." Scripture is telling us that there is a tendency to judge according to the external.

Romans 2, one of the passages I had referred to earlier, re-emphasizes this. Within this particular text, God is talking to those that are going around judging everybody else; because hey, they're experts of the law. You know, if you can quote the law, then you can really put people in a corner because a lot of people go, "I don't even know what the law is." So, they're throwing out all these things. Now, they can go and do whatever they want to, but they're getting you.

So, if you look in chapter 2, God's response to that is "You know the law," verse 1, "you're without excuse." In the fact that you pass judgement upon everybody else, you're judging yourself by virtue of knowing. He goes on and says, "Are you thinking lightly upon the kindness of God that He is patient towards you, not realizing that God's going to render to every man according to his deeds? You're going to have to stand before God." You go, "Well, does God know who I am?" God's going, "Yup."

It says in verse 5, "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

(Romans 2:6) who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:

(Romans 2:7) to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;

(Romans 2:8) but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation."

Now, what we're talking about is not knowledge of the truth, but obedience to the truth.

(Romans 2:9) "There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,"

Why do you think he says it that way? Because the Jew knew; they had the law given to them.

In fact, if you look in Romans 3:1, "Then what advantage has the Jew?"

(Romans 3:2) "Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God."

So, it actually tells you within the passage why the Jews will be judged first. It's because they knew better.

It states this in Romans 2:11, "For there is no partiality with God."

God's going to judge according to what you know. As he goes onto explain within the passage, if you just have conscience, then God's going to judge you according to your conscience.

Romans 1 tells us that there are things around us that are telling us of the glory of God. So, you're going to be judged according to that, but you're not going to be judged according to what you don't know. God's going to be fair.

I think it's interesting in verse 16, "on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."

God knows your heart, and God is going to judge the heart. It doesn't matter where you're from or who you know, God's going to judge righteously. God is a righteous judge. So, fundamentally, why is it that we don't go into this whole thing of prejudice? It's plain unjust and wrong.

The second reason is that it's really counterintuitive to what God is doing. Now, obviously God is just and He's doing that which is just. A great passage is found in Luke 9. I love this passage because of the fact that oftentimes we take the disciples and apostles, and we almost make them so saintly like they've never sinned in their life, but you see in the gospels how weak they are and how they need a Savior. Now, it doesn't mean that they were wicked and nefarious people; that they were trying to do wrong, but we all have sinned and fallen short. There are some of us who are looking for truth; by virtue of that, God rescues us and saves us and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. In Luke 9, we actually have an interesting example of prejudice and bigotry.

It starts off in Luke 9:49, “John answered and said, ‘Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us.’”

Now, that’s sectarianism that we’re talking about. “They’re not part of our group. So, they can’t be good.”

(Luke 9:50) “But Jesus said to him, ‘Do not hinder him; for he who is not against you is for you.’”

(Luke 9:51) When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem”.

The question is why was He determined? The answer is “to save.” That’s why He’s going.

(Luke 9:52) “and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him.”

Yet, the Samaritans, which by the way are kind of outcasts already, did not accept Him because He was journeying to go to Jerusalem, and they believe it’s on their mount that you worship. So, the fact that you’re going to Jerusalem, you’re going against this. So, they were trying to hinder Him. One, we already don’t like Samaritans. Two, Jews try to walk around Samaritans. They don’t want anything to do with them because they’re not only traitors, but they’re also half-breeds. So, how do they respond?

(Luke 9:54) “When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?’”

It says in the text that Jesus rebuked them. Other texts refer to, “You have no idea what you’re saying. Fundamentally, this is not the plan of God.” The point of the passage is saying that any kind of prejudice goes against the fundamental plan of God. So, we’re dealing with a counterintuitive move. “Counterintuitive” meaning “that which is obvious. For instance, if the light is green, you go. Now, if you stopped at a green light, that would be counterintuitive. The same thing is true with you going against Christ saving. Once again, our gospel is fundamental, He came to save; to seek and to save that which is lost. So, any kind of prejudice at all that goes against the gospel becomes the gospel of men; that loves to be exclusive and segmented; “us four no more” type of mentality. God says, “You’re not even thinking like Me. The whole reason I’ve set My face to go to Jerusalem is to save.” Isn’t it interesting how subtly it creeps in? Quite frankly, there are groups of people that give us good reason not to like them, but there are individuals that give us good reason not to like them; there are family members that give us good reason not to like them. What does it matter? It makes no difference to us. I get sick and tired when people begin to identify themselves as a race or a particular group. We’re believers, or you’re not, but that’s it as far as we’re concerned. I mean, we all came from Adam; we all came from Noah. So, we must be related somehow.



Then, the last reason, I would say is this, and probably the greatest within the passage, is that it literally goes against the gospel. This is really fundamentally, Paul's point in putting this in the book of Galatians: the gospel not according to man, but according to God. What is the gospel according to God? Well, if you look in Romans 3, just in case you forgot this wonderful passage. We were talking about this in the new member's class. There's none righteous, no not one. There's none who understand; there's none who seek God. You can put people in groups, but there's none righteous. By the works of the law, no one's going to be justified. The only thing that the law is going to do is reveal their sinfulness, but we've all sinned. In fact, that's the point of the gospel.

(Romans 3:23) "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".

The gospel then is true and is to all the world.

(John 3:16) "For God so loved the world..."

There are no specific people groups in that, and this is the wonderful thing about the gospel.

When you see the beginning of Acts, the fundamental message that is given at the moment of Pentecost is they all began to speak in all these languages of all the earth. So, people were hearing from Rome in Latin, and people were hearing from hearing from Greek, Syrian language, Aramaic; all were hearing in their own language. That's the fundamental speaking in tongues by the way. So, just to let you know what it is. What was the message of God? "I'm going to everybody." The world is going to hear the gospel in all languages. It's not just going to be the law according to the Hebrews, and it was at Pentecost which was a Jewish feast; an indictment to the Jews because they rejected the Messiah, but a proclamation to the Gentiles.

So, as you go through Acts, when Paul was converted, a Jew, he begins going into the synagogue. Then, the synagogues rejected him. So, he shakes the dirt off his feet, and he says, what? "I'm going to the Gentiles" and that's the process. How does the book of Acts end? He's in Rome with the Gentiles. So, Scripture is revealing that you shall go into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, uttermost parts of the earth. That's the book of Acts and why you have all these epistles in all these different places because the gospel has spread to all the world. "For God so loved the world." It doesn't matter who you are.

Just to cement this, look with me in Galatians 3. As we go through this book, you're going to see Paul bringing up certain points. It's all going to be going back to the gospel of God is not the gospel of man; this gospel is according to God alone. That's what makes our foundation unique and wonderful. When you walk through those doors, I don't care where you've been; I don't care what's happened in your past. What I care about is will you receive Jesus today? If you'll

receive Jesus today, you're my brother. I don't care who you are. Paul will say, "We now therefore recognize no man according to the flesh anymore." I don't see it, do you? I don't know what the deal is. I don't even know what we're debating about. We're all in Christ. If we're in Christ, we're good. If you're not in Christ, things aren't going to go well, and I grieve for you. I pray for you because you're not going to get away with murder. No, no, far worse. Quite frankly, I wouldn't wish hell on anybody. God doesn't wish it on anybody. God is not willing that any should perish Scripture says.

In Galatians 3, at the end of the chapter, it reads this way, "We have now come under faith." He states that the law was a tutor to lead us to Christ. (Galatians 3:24)

He states this in verse 26, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

(Galatians 3:27) For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

(Galatians 3:28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female..."

I know people have mishandles this particular text saying, "Ok, so the gender confusion thing." What he's talking about is there's no prejudice. Here again, the context of the book is dealing with partiality; there's no partiality with God. When you think about prejudice and bigotry that happens, I think one of the things we're seeing as well is the misogyny that's going on. Of course, women are saying that men are hateful towards them, thus the word "misogyny" or chauvinist. I'm a borderline chauvinist, but not misogyny. I don't hate women, according to their definition. Then you have feminism, and everybody's against each other. Our gospel is so inclusive. How wonderful it is that it doesn't matter whether you are a Jew, Greek, a slave or free, a male or female. I mean, that covers all the categories, really, and we're all one in Christ. This is the gospel according to God. If we're preaching any other gospel, let him be accursed. That's what's so wonderful about our faith. It's so transforming to anyone. One of the statements that is made in Ephesians 2 is that God is tearing down the walls and barriers, and God does that. Let me tell you how God will do this. God will not do this through me arguing somebody that racially they're acceptable or not acceptable. God won't do this through me in some way educating somebody. The way that it happens is you receive Jesus, I receive Jesus, we just love each other. Outside of that, dialogue is just futile. The more people talk about it, the worse it gets. So, how wonderful it is our gospel. It's obvious that it's not of man because it actually works.

**Closing Prayer:**

Father, we give You thanks for this wonderful gospel that You have given to us. It is so clear that this is of You.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I would ask you to make a resolve, as Christ set His face to go to Jerusalem. Would you make a resolve to proclaim the gospel, to shed all of the other titles, and just be a Christian; a follower of Christ? How powerful this message is. We believe it's the power of God to every man that believes; that there is this power to save and transform; break down barriers and heal. Unless they come and have the Spirit of Christ within them, there is no hope; there is no cure. Would you make a commitment to proclaim that gospel unapologetically?