

Life Group Notes
Sunday 26 May 2019

Speaker: Andy McCullough

Title: Best Served with Grace

Passage: Galatians 2:11-14

Who you eat with reveals what you believe. "Our meals express our doctrine of justification." *Tim Chester.*

1. ADVANCE. Look how far we've come!

Peter is eating with the Gentiles. This was unthinkable when he was a little boy in Galilee. Jesus had to do something new *in* Peter before he could do something new *through* Peter. You can't break new ground externally unless you are breaking new ground internally. Has following Jesus got you to a place you would never have dreamed?

2. DOUBT. A voice from your past.

The men from James are like a voice from Peter's past. They give voice to all his old prejudices and fears. They remind him of who he used to be, and who he is supposed to be. Peter's old identity seeks to re-assert control, and he retreats.

Who were you? What prejudices did you used to have? How has Jesus moved you on from that place? In what ways has the gospel made you different than the people you grew up with? What voices are calling you back?

3. RETREAT. He pulled back and separated himself, fearing...

Retreated is a military term. He had taken ground, now he loses that ground. He retrenches to a safe position. *Separated himself*. It is sometimes easier to separate yourself than to deal with a diverse church. *Fear*. The verse touches Peter's fear. If we take a moment to reflect on INVITED, what fears are coming to the surface? Peter returns to his factory settings. He is restored to his defaults. He retreats. What do you find difficult about being a diverse church? On the flip side, what do you love about it?

4. CONFRONTATION. Paul shamed Peter.

Paul breaks the silence. He speaks up about the issue. Silence is a strategy for the status quo; but speaking up precipitates change. Is there something you need to speak up about? Do you need to be Paul to someone's Peter? Is there someone that needs to confront you? Are you "walking in step with the gospel"?

5. CRUCIFIXION. It's a gospel issue! (2:20)

If it had just been an issue of preference, or culture, Paul had no right to confront Peter. But he says he confronted him because it was *a gospel issue*. Paul says that who you eat with, diversity, Jew eating with Gentile, one new man in Christ, is a *gospel issue*. If you back off, you are denying Jesus! Chapter 2:20 tells us that our defaults were completely re-set at the cross. Our old tribalism died. We have a new life, a new family. **You can't go back, because back is gone!** **Everyone's invited** is a gospel issue.

Questions for Discussion

- Were you surprised that Peter, after all that God had done, withdraws and stops eating with the Gentiles?

- Have you ever found yourself withdrawing from fellowship because of misunderstandings or prejudice?
- In what ways has the gospel made you different than the people you grew up with? What voices are calling you back?
- Is there a gospel issue you need to confront/speak up about?