

Justification and the church's life

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Preacher: William Philip

- [0 : 00] Well, do turn up with me, if you would, Galatians chapter 2, and these verses 15 to 21. And tonight our theme is justification and the church.
- Last time we came to this section of Paul's letter to the Galatians, and to the great crux of what he's really on about, justification by faith alone.
- That's his great concern in this letter, and particularly all the implications of that doctrine. Most of chapter 1 and 2 in his letter he spends asserting his apostolic authority, his authenticity, and the authenticity of his gospel, against the charges of these new missionaries who have come to trouble the church at Galatia.
- But now in these verses he begins to turn from that and hone in very clearly on the very heart of the dispute with these Judaizers or missionaries from Jerusalem, whatever you want to call them.
- And he wants to show what is at stake here. It's not at all just a few minor matters, some food laws, circumcision, whether you do this or that.
- [1 : 17] No, what is at stake is the whole gospel itself, and indeed the future of the gospel and its mission throughout the whole world. It's a matter of life and death, quite literally.
- And that's why Paul is willing to stand up to the face of Peter in front of everybody. That's why Paul is willing to fight for the preservation of this gospel.
- And so we saw last time in verses 15 and 16 that Paul begins with a point of agreement. This is not just something for non-Jews, is it? That's what he's saying.
- We Jewish Christians, verse 15, we who are Jews by birth, that's you and me, Peter, the other Jewish Christians. We know that the gospel is only good news because it justifies us, it declares us acceptable and righteous and acquitted before God.
- It does it through Jesus Christ alone, by faith in him. Not by any works of ours, works of the law or any kind of thing at all. That's the only thing that makes it good news.
- [2 : 27] Not through any of our special food laws or regulations or being circumcised or indeed any merits at all of ours.
- Only by faith. And he's very clear, verse 16. We have believed once and for all in Jesus Christ in order to be justified by Jesus Christ.
- and his work on our behalf. Last time we expanded Paul's summary there of the teaching of the Old Testament. Remember, he's quoting there from Psalm 143, verse 2.
- By works of the law will no flesh be justified. There it is in your own scriptures. It's perfectly obvious. We know that. We've been brought up with it. Rather, Paul says, and this is what he goes on to expand in chapters 3 and 4 of the epistle.
- Rather, the law, the law for us Israelites, did two things. It showed up our sin. It showed us just how bad we really were.
- [3 : 35] It showed us our need for something more. And therefore, secondly, it led us. If we understood it at all, to seek our righteousness in God's promised Saviour.

It led us to Christ. Now, this is the heart of the gospel. And Paul, we saw last time, repeated it three times. Not by works, but by Christ.

Not by works, but by faith. Martin Luther said, to beat it into our heads. Because of our human tendency, always, to self-justify.

To want to show that somehow or other we can do it ourselves. Now, Paul has established this ground. And it's vital, because it's vital for everything else that he's going to argue.

We all agree on this, says Paul. Peter, Paul, Jewish Christians, even the Judaizers, everybody has agreed that we're justified by Christ alone, by faith, alone, at least as far as beginning the Christian life is concerned.

[4 : 42] But what Paul, you see, is saying is, look, it's all very well saying that you agree with that doctrine, with the gospel. It's all very well saying you believe it in theory, but the fact is, in practice, you're actually living as though you don't believe it.

And because you're doing that, in effect, you're actually destroying the gospel itself. You've totally misunderstood the implications of this doctrine of justification by faith.

And that's why you're in the mess that you're in. So now in verses 17 to 21, Paul confronts the point of disagreement. The vital implications of this doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith.

That's where the heart of the problem is here in Galatia. They don't understand the implications of what they think they believe. Justification by God's grace received through faith in Christ, Paul is saying, has huge implications.

It changes absolutely everything forever, in history and in your own personal lives. That's why, as we said last time, this little section is the propositional statement of Paul's letter.

[6 : 00] It's what he unpacks in the rest of the letter to come. Verses 15 to 18 really are unpacked theologically in chapters 3 and 4. Paul tells us the true place of the law in the history of the people of Israel and how it was always about the supremacy of faith.

For all Christians, whether Jew or Gentile, you're all one in Christ Jesus. And then verses 19 and 20 really are expanded, I think, in chapters 5 and 6.

Expanding the new life that is yours in Christ because of justification by faith. It's no longer I who live, it's Christ. He lives in me by his spirit.

That's true for all Christians, whether you're a Jew or a Gentile, and that's the only thing that counts. So here we have this central statement that the gospel of grace has definite implications in two directions.

Firstly, for the church. It has corporate implications for the life of every believer in Jesus Christ, now united, one in Christ Jesus.

[7 : 07] Justification demands things for the church together as God's people. And secondly, justification demands things for our personal lives. It has personal implications for the Christian.

It has implications for the church because every believer in the world is now united in Christ. And it has implications for us personally because every believer in the world is united to Christ by faith.

And it's vital to grasp the enormity of these two implications for the Galatian church, and for every church, and for the Galatian Christian believers as individuals, and for every Christian believer.

To put it another way, we've got to consider the objection that is here in verse 17 against Paul. We've got to consider it on both of these levels as regarding the church and the individual.

Because these two problems were at issue in Galatia. The first problem was in relation to the corporate life of the church. You see, the Judaizers were saying this. You've really got to become full Jews, as well as believing in Christ.

[8 : 22] If you want to have the full experience, the full status, to be true sons of Abraham like us, to have true fellowship in our church, of course we all believe in justification by faith through Jesus Christ.

But Paul's gospel alone isn't really enough for the full experience. And look, here's one good reason why, Galatian believers. Here's one good reason why.

You see, verse 17, this gospel of Paul's, well, it turns him into a sinner. It turns other Jewish Christians into sinners. Because it teaches people to break the Jewish law.

It teaches them to, well, to eat with Gentiles. And to eat unclean things. And to do things that's clearly against God's command. You see, Paul's gospel forces you into sin.

And worse than that, verse 17b, it makes Christ an accomplice to sin. Literally, the word is, a servant of sin, a table waiter. You see, if the gospel of Paul makes Jews and Gentiles eat together, well, then Jesus is the one who's serving this.

[9 : 29] You're making him a sinner. So Paul, you see, is a sinner. And so are the rest of you. And Paul's answer, of course, is absolutely not.

Never. No, the gospel unites us in Christ, Jew and Gentile and everybody else. The gospel itself has clear and unmistakable implications for all believers.

Because it's one faith, one baptism, one Lord. Justification by faith alone, says Paul, demands nothing less than the union together.

It demands that there should be no barrier whatsoever to Christian fellowship. Due to ethnic grounds, Jew or Gentile, or whether you're a slave or free or male or female, we're all one in Christ Jesus.

And that's the first level that we have to look at this on. But secondly, Paul also is dealing with the level of individual Christian believers and their own personal holiness.

[10 : 33] It's clear when we get to chapter 5 and 6 of this letter that there was a libertine streak in the church in Galatia. Paul says, the works of the flesh are evident among you.

Idolatry, sensuality, sexual immorality and so on. That was clearly a problem in the Galatian church. It's a problem in every church because we're sinners and we're like that. But you see, the Judaizers said, oh well, look, look!

That proves how right we are, you see, that's what Paul's gospel gets you. His gospel's dangerous. You see, if you remove all the restraints that God gave us through Moses to holy living, well, it's going to promote sin.

You'll be left with antinomianism, against the law, love God and do whatever you like. You see, you ignore the Mosaic law at your peril, Galatian believers. You need Moses to help you live holy lives.

You think you can ignore circumcision and holy days and the food laws? Well, before you know it, you'll be ignoring the commands about adultery and murder and everything else. It's a slippery slope, you see.

[11 : 44] Paul's gospel's dangerous. It's the same argument that Paul really is answering in Romans chapter 6, verse 1. Shall we sin so that grace may abound?

You see, that's the charge. Oh, there's free grace. Well, look at it. It'll make you sin. That's what's happening among you, isn't it?

And Paul says, no, no, no, absolutely not. Because the gospel has definite implications for individual believers personally and spiritually.

It unites you with Christ. It's a totally new life and that's what verses 19 and 20 are all about. It's him living in us. It's no longer I who live, it's Christ in me by his Spirit.

It's a new creation. The old is gone, the new has come. You're no longer living in this evil age. You've been rescued from this evil age. The only thing that counts, says Paul, is new creation.

[12 : 49] You can't be a slave to sin because you're now in Christ. You're a slave to Christ. And see, that's the two issues that are to the fore here in Galatians.

And the Galatian believers were confused in both of these facts. Many believers since, many believers today are confused in both of these areas. What justification means for the church and what it means for our individual lives.

Tonight, we're going to deal with the first of those things then, justification and the church, the fact that we're all one in Christ. And next time, we'll deal with that second issue, justification and the Christian life, the implications of what it means that we are, each one of us, united to Christ.

But tonight, let's think about this then. What does it mean for the church that we are justified by faith alone in Christ alone? What are the implications of this doctrine for the church?

Everyone's agreed that we're saved by the free grace of God, by the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us by faith for salvation. That's all agreed, says Paul.

[14 : 00] But, you see, to accept that means, first of all, acknowledging your need for that.

However privileged your upbringing might be, however much of a believing background you've come from, however much of a privileged background as Jews, the recipients of divine revelation, you too are absolutely dependent on God's grace.

And you have a total inability of yourself in any way whatsoever in beginning the Christian life and in going on in the Christian life.

It's not that God gets you in by his grace and then somehow you work your way up in it. No, says Paul. First of all, you've got to admit whoever you are, all my own efforts at righteousness are hopeless.

All my works of the law are irrelevant. whether that's as God had commanded under Moses, that the people should keep the law.

[15 : 09] Whether it's that, their duty that was right for them to do, that can't save you. Or whether it's all kinds of Gentile moral codes or whatever they are. No, wherever you come from, whatever your background, justification by faith means coming to terms with the fact that righteousness, acceptance with God, comes from totally outside yourself.

It's something that comes to you, not from within you. It's all over to you, Lord. All that I can do counts for nothing. It's rather like the situation where you have a company that goes bankrupt and has a rescue takeover.

once you've been taken over by another company and rescued from bankruptcy, there's no point pretending your assets are worth anything. You don't have any assets. All your assets are just debts that have been taken over by the new company.

There's a new ownership. There's a new management. There's new names. All the old names of your company are relevant. They're scrubbed off the wall and the new name is stamped on top of it. The implication is that what that failed company was previously is just gone.

It's finished. It's been swallowed up by the new. It only exists as something new. It's got a new name. It's got a new uniform for its staff.

[16 : 33] It's totally new. And that's what Paul's saying is here. That's the way it is for Jew and Gentile. You see, Gentiles had to admit that all their previous ways, all the light of reason that they had, all that they wanted to do morally and religiously, all of that was useless.

Chapter 4, verse 8, Paul calls it weak and miserable principles of the world. But you see, Jews, Jews, Paul says, are in the same boat.

You've also got to admit that all your laws, your circumcision, your food laws, your holy days, in fact, the whole era of salvation under Moses, well, it's now passé.

It's finished. Chapter 4, verse 3, Paul calls all of that also basic principles of the world. He equates all of that that God himself had given with just the preliminaries, the basic things, things that happened before the cataclysmic event that now has changed everything, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

None of these things, if you like, could save the company. Both Jew and Gentile were in the same boat, well, there were different boats, but both the boats were sinking. Only faith could save the situation, only a total takeover by grace, by the grace of God in Christ.

[18 : 04] And the days of all these preliminary things are over, says Paul. They're past. Any identities that were there before were just temporary.

They're now gone, swallowed up, finished. These things have all given way to a permanent reality, a new great company in Christ.

And that's what history was always moving towards. That's what the promise was always moving towards. But the point, you see, of verses 17 and 18 here, is that the false teachers, the Judaizers, or whoever, they were denying this.

They were denying this central implication of justification by faith, by saying that the law was still binding, by saying that the Mosaic system for salvation was still necessary.

Effectively, they were saying you must still become Jewish to be a proper New Testament Christian. that's rather like saying you've got to become English to become properly British.

[19 : 15] It's preposterous. No, there's been an act of union, hasn't there, in 1707. And since then, I as a Scot am as British as any Englishman.

Some of our brothers and sisters down in the south don't seem to have quite realised that. Proves a bit of irritation to us.

But that's the reality, isn't it? Paul says by saying that you've got to also become Jewish to be Christian, you're denying the very gospel that you claim saves you.

That's God's act of union in Christ and you're rebelling against it. Now, it's very clear Peter didn't believe this falsity.

We're told he acted hypocritically. He acted against what he knew was right. But by his conduct, he was denying effectively his true belief.

[20 : 13] People could only see what he did and work out what he believed from what he did. And worse, he led the whole church astray. We saw that a couple of weeks ago. And worse still, he allowed these teachers who were coming to Galatia to trouble them, he allowed them to appeal to Peter's authority.

Oh, you see, you can't trust Paul. No, look, he fell out with Peter, you know. Peter, the pillar of the church in Jerusalem. He had a big argument. I mean, Peter must agree with us because, well, now he's refused to eat with Gentiles and seen the error of his ways.

You see, Peter's conduct allowed his name to be hijacked and used by these false teachers. It's a vital lesson for us, friends, that hypocrisy and inconsistency in the Christian life can so often lead other people astray.

Isn't that right? It so often plays into the hands of false teachers. And peddlers of false doctrine can say, well, look at that, you see, it must be right.

Movements arrive that take great delight in hijacking some sort of authority figure and say, well, you know, so-and-so teaches this, so it must be right. These kind of movements play on, love to play on hypocrisy in the Christian church.

[21 : 32] Look at that, you see, look at that, look at the church there, fudging the issue over homosexuality, fudging the Bible, you see, come and join us. I remember meeting somebody on my doorstep, a Jehovah's witness, when I was working as assistant in a church in Aberdeen.

I asked them how they came to be a Jehovah's witness, and said, well, I used to go to church, but nobody ever taught the Bible, and these people were the only ones that did. I said, which church was it? I discovered it was the church that I was working in.

It had been some time before, I hasten to add. But you see, the falsehood, the hypocrisy in the church of God can have devastating consequences for the gospel.

Look at verse 17, you see, the Judaizers were saying this, they were saying, look, Paul's gospel makes you sin, it makes Christ an accessory to sin. He says you can ignore the law, you can eat with Gentiles, but that makes you guilty of sin.

Look, we can point to you in the Bible. Paul says, no, verse 18, that is rubbish. We might be sinners, quote, in your eyes, but that isn't sin at all, no, not in God's eyes, in fact, the opposite is true.

[22 : 49] To move on from these temporary laws is a gospel requirement. To refuse to eat with Gentile believers now, now that Christ has come and united the two, to refuse to eat with them, that's the sin.

That, verse 18, you see, would be to build up again that which Christ has taken away. It would be to build up the ethnic barriers that Christ is destroyed.

We're all one in Christ Jesus. There is no Jew and Gentile. Remember in Ephesians 2, Paul talks about the dividing wall of hostility that's been torn down.

The wall in the temple courts that kept the Gentiles out from the place where only the Jews could go. That's been done away with, with the coming of Christ. There's a new shared identity, and that is the reality.

We're in a new united kingdom in Christ. All the preliminaries are in the past, says Paul. There can't be any rising again to be nations or separate groups.

[23 : 58] There can't be any devolution, if you like, from this kingdom. That would be ridiculous. It would be inappropriate, it would be preposterous, but worse, it would be utterly sinful. It would be to go back.

You know the story of the green and the brown caterpillars. The green and the brown caterpillars that once all turned into butterflies and were released together, and the most magnificently coloured butterflies.

And then one group wanted to start a get-together for the green caterpillars and the other for the brown caterpillars. And they separated off. People looked at them and said, what are you doing? They said, well, we're the green ones and they're the brown ones.

They looked at them and said, but that's ridiculous. You're all beautiful multicoloured butterflies. And they said, but that's what we used to be. You see, it's preposterous. What unites you is that you're wonderful multicoloured butterflies.

What does it matter whether you were a green caterpillar or a brown one? God is so you see, in breaking the law in the Judaizers' eyes, Paul is actually fulfilling the real law, where the law was always going, where the heart of the law always was, to fulfil the promises of God and to unite people from every tribe and nation in the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ.

[25 : 23] And now that he has been made fully known and ultimately known, and God's revelation is complete in Christ, how can you possibly go back? Things that are to do with specifically Jewish matters, that belongs to the age of the caterpillar.

It was just temporary until Christ, that's what he says in chapter 3 verse 19. All of that era of Mosaic salvation, that was only ever subordinate.

It was only added for clarity's sake, but with the gospel, the age of the butterfly, the age of fulfilment that's come, the new age has come, the life to come is upon us.

And so you see we have this paradox. It's not violating the Jewish law that makes you a lawbreaker now, rather it's hanging on to the Jewish law that makes you the real sinner.

You're calling me the sinner says Paul, but no, you're the sinners. Because you haven't recognised that Christ has come. And Paul showing the Galatians that behaving as they were was just total hypocrisy, that it was against what all Jewish believers themselves said they believed.

[26 : 43] That it was truly Christ alone that justified, not the law, not works, nothing natural at all. Now the lessons in that are surely very clear for us, aren't they?

What begins very often with an inconsistency between doctrine and practice, between what we say we believe and how we actually act, can so easily lead and does lead to false doctrines slipping in and taking over.

That's what happened in Antioch. Peter's behaviour led the whole church astray, became a false gospel and became no gospel at all because ultimately it becomes you've got to do this yourself to really pass muster.

And that's so easy and so common in our day. So easy to give so much emphasis to one particular thing that some particular manifestation or cultural thing or theological thing or whatever becomes absolutely essential to really be part of our church.

Might be a particular theological view or practice that's just made so important but ultimately effectively we create another gospel. We create barriers to fellowship.

[28 : 07] Well you can't really be a proper member in our church unless you hold a particular view of limited atonement or particular redemption. Or you can't really be a proper member of our church and share fellowship with us unless you dot every I and cross every T of exactly what we believe about baptism.

Or what we believe about singing. Or what our particular line is on gifts of the spirit or whatever else it may be a thousand and one things. And it's so easy and so quick for these things to develop into just a two-tier Christianity upstairs downstairs.

Those who are really in those who are just well we tolerate them a bit peripheral. That's what happened here the Gentiles were second class there's no two ways about it.

Haven't got the full experience of Jewishness. Can never really be part of the heart of this. Friends it's so easy for two-tier Christianity to develop in our churches.

Cultural issues, theological issues, very often race issues, class issues, educational issues. But says Paul that denies the heart of the gospel.

[29 : 28] We're all one because we're justified before God by faith in Jesus Christ and that alone. And who are we to add conditions to whom God has accepted?

I may be a sinner in your eyes, says Paul, for eating with these Gentiles, but the fact is you are the real sinners. Not just in the letter, but in the spirit.

Here's a quotation from William Still. Whatever may be said about the effects on health of eating the flesh of swine to the Jews, an unclean animal, it's certainly a far greater sin to refuse to eat with a Gentile Christian to whom God has granted his Holy Spirit, just because he may be feeding on such flesh, than it is to eat with him while he does so, or even to eat the flesh oneself.

If Christ is the minister of sin in this, as the strict Pharisees said he was for picking and eating grains on the Sabbath, because that was to harvest them, that's to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

But it's not sin. The other is outrageous sin. The principle here is a huge one, isn't it? That which unites us with other believers, what we are spiritually, the fact that we are justified in Christ by faith.

[30 : 48] And as Paul goes on to say in verse 20, the fact that Christ is in you, having received the Holy Spirit, that totally transcends everything else. Every other possible barrier that it could be of any national, natural kind, whether it was ethnic, or family, or social class, or whatever it might be on any secondary issue of doctrine or anything, and to allow those kind of matters of the flesh, things which belong to this evil age which we've been rescued from, to allow any of these kind of things to divide true believers in Christ, is to be guilty of rebuilding what Christ has destroyed, is to be guilty of saying Christ died for no purpose, for nothing.

It's rejecting the gospel, it's scorning the cross, it's spitting and stamping on what our Lord Jesus Christ has done. It has very important implications for us as believers today.

I'm not, don't get me wrong here, I'm not at all pleading for some kind of naive, ecumenical movement. getting together with all sorts of people who pretend to be Christians, but actually, quite clearly, are utterly rejecting the gospel itself.

That's not what Paul's talking about here. He's talking about people who are one in Christ, who have accepted the gospel, who are being obedient to the truth. But to refuse to share fellowship around the Lord's table, or even informally with other true believers, obedient to the faith, just because of different beliefs about things like baptism, or church order, or whatever it might be, is utterly to deny the gospel.

To say, oh, you can't join our church and be a full member without dotting every I and crossing every T of our particular tradition, that's to deny the gospel. Just the same.

[33 : 05] To say, I won't join your church, because I can't dot every I and cross every T of all your traditions. That's to deny the gospel too. You see?

We just can't allow these things to separate what Christ has put together. We can't add faith plus our way of doing things as a condition of fellowship with believers.

If the Holy Spirit can dwell in a Baptist or an Episcopalian, then who am I as a Presbyterian to say I shouldn't have fellowship with them? To say that would be to utterly deny the gospel.

Here's William Still again. Peter is now guilty of the monstrous sin of putting swine's flesh before the feelings of his Christian brethren. Not only so, but he's despising the Holy Ghost and his brothers.

If the Holy Ghost can dwell in a body which eats swine's flesh, is it not colossal presumption on Peter's part to be holier than the Holy Ghost? There's a lot of Christians who want to be a bit holier than the Holy Spirit.

[34 : 23] Isn't that right? I'm like that sometimes. I bet you are too. And that denies the gospel of justification by faith. Not to pretend that we don't have differences and to pretend that we can somehow sweep all these under the table.

Of course not. We may have very strong differences on some of these issues. I most certainly do. I'm a vowed and determined baptiser of babies.

I will be to my dying day and I'll preach that in this church as long as I'm here. But I'm not going to allow a small amount of water or a large amount of water to divide me from Christian brothers and sisters who have been accepted by Christ.

That would be to deny the gospel. It's ridiculous. It's sinful. We must not divide.

We must not break fellowship for those for whom Christ has died and who he has accepted. These are not small issues today.

[35 : 28] We've said already there are many parts in the world where these very things are very very vital. Look at the Middle East and Israel. Christian churches and Jews and Arabs. Huge potential for division there.

There are some in the Messianic movement who deny that the mainstream church is properly Christian. There are some Arab believers who would refuse to have any fellowship with Jews.

We can all understand that of course, can't we? Paul would say we're denying the gospel. We've seen it in South Africa, haven't we? In the apartheid era where ethnic things become more important than the gospel.

people. It's often much more subtle than that though too, isn't it? There can be just that kind of rebuilding what Christ has destroyed right here in our own churches, right before our eyes.

With cliques of age or background, divisions of young and old or the in crowd and the out crowd.

[36 : 34] who do you sit with in church? Who do you ever talk to? Who do you ever invite to your home? Is there always just one group of people who are congenial to you?

Would you ever dream of inviting somebody else from a different social background, a different way of doing things, whatever? See, these are the kind of challenges that we face.

Well, the doctrine of justification by faith implies that these things must not be. It implies a true doctrine of the church where we truly are all one in Christ Jesus.

There's a lot of talk today in the church growth movement about homogeneous churches. That's the way to get your church to grow. You pick your cultural group and your area and your age group and everything else and you go for them.

Well, I think that denies the very heart of the gospel itself. Not saying that sometimes we must target particular people in evangelism and of course one type of person might come to this event and another might come to another.

[37 : 43] Not saying that, of course. But if we think we can have churches that are all made up of people between the age of 26 and 32, white, fair skinned or whatever it is, it denies the gospel.

It doesn't matter if it's the biggest church in the world. It's not a church. Another implication of this is that the church is now our first family.

It's very clear in the New Testament, isn't it? It's our new creation family. It's ties are stronger than all natural ties.

any brother or sister in Christ in many ways comes before even our natural family. Did Jesus say, these are my brothers and sisters?

Not his natural family, those who gathered around and heard his word. blood is thicker than water. But for Christian believers, it should be the blood of Christ that's thicker than any natural ties.

[38 : 55] That's what binds us together, whether we're Jew or Gentile or rich or poor, whether we've come from a good background or a bad one. Whether we have an upright past or a downright degenerate past.

Is that how you view things? More importantly, is that how we actually live and act? Nothing, nothing at all to bar fellowship with a brother or sister in Christ, no matter what, no matter what, maybe disagreements or differences we have on certain matters of belief.

Nothing that would keep us from sharing the Lord's Supper with others of the Lord's people just because, well, whatever, it might be from a different background. Even if you disagree with people, even if you disapprove of some of the things that your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ believe or do.

There are some Christians who won't really share real fellowship with other Christians because they drink alcohol. There are some who won't share real fellowship with other Christians because they won't drink alcohol and they think that's the bee's knees.

I've got to be able to share fellowship, true fellowship in Jesus Christ, with any true believer. Are you happy sharing fellowship with some young person with 15 bits of metal stuck through their eyebrows and their tongue?

[40 : 31] Well, they're your brother or sister in Christ. It's a filthy habit, by the way, if you have got one. Don't do it. Get it away. Your mother and father will be very delighted if you get rid of them.

Do you really share fellowship with Christian brothers and sisters in the run-up to a general election? If you're mad on one party and they're mad on another party? born of the mother and still