

Paul's writing in Galatians is passionate because he cares deeply about his argument—you belong because of what Christ has done for you and what Christ is doing in you. Belonging in Christ isn't about conforming ourselves to one way of living, it is about being transformed into a new creation—we participate in Christ's life, death and resurrection, we are caught up in God. Paul is so passionate because Peter and the Galatians are putting their trust in things that cannot save them. # In what do we put our trust? The world around us is whirling, we hear all this stuff on the news and we are so busy. We say and can almost hear Peter saying, "I need one place to not change; where I can remember the stability of the past. I need it this way to comfort me? What is wrong with that?" and Paul responds, "Yes this world is a crazy place, yes we don't know how this will all play out, there are a million reasons to walk away but here is one good one to stay: you are saved by grace through faith—it is Jesus that loves you and cares for you and will never leave you."

Lady Gaga has a song, A Million Reasons, and as Paul and Peter's conversation was in my head I heard it differently. Lady Gaga sings with this deep emotion and raw-ness and hearing her sing gave me new insight into what might have been happening for Peter.

A Million Reasons-Lady Gaga

Peter knew he was saved by grace through faith and not by the works of the law. He was a part of the Jerusalem conference and spoke on behalf of the decision, that Christian don't need to follow all of the laws, but he has a hard time living out the decision. That's what Paul is talking about—Peter is eating with people in non-Jewish

ways, but when some Jews come he reverts to the old ways, following the law. Why? Is it that Peter is worried about upsetting the Jews? Do they pressure him saying, "this is the way we have always done it. Surely we can't have been wrong all this time?" Peter is a small town boy. He grew up in Bethsaida, a tiny fishing village on the north end of the Sea of Galilee. By the time Peter was following Jesus his mother had moved into Capernum, her home was across the street from the Synagogue in town. Being Jewish and following the law was Peter's base programming, it was comforting like going home. As he talks to Paul he is a world away from Galilee, in Antioch, and he begs Paul for one good reason to stay, he longs for the comfort of the law.

Are there ways we fall into the traps of the law? Are there things that we say we have to do or ways we need to act based on our past traditions that give us comfort? But that aren't the gospel. In what do we put our trust?

Yes, the world is a crazy place. Yes, we don't know how all this will play out. Yes, things might not always be quite like we like it. There are a million reasons to walk away, but one good one to say, one thing that joins us together, one thing in which to put our trust—you are saved by grace through faith, it is not of your own doing it is a gift from God. Jesus loves you and cares for you and will never leave you. Amen.