

## **ACTS: Church On Mission**

### **Part 41- What to be Serious About**

Acts 15:1-35- "But some men came down from Judea & were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." And after Paul & Barnabas had no small dissension & debate w/ them, Paul & Barnabas & some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles & the elders about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia & Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, & brought great joy to all the brothers. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church & the apostles & the elders, & they declared all that God had done w/ them. But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up & said, "It is necessary to circumcise them & to order them to keep the law of Moses." The apostles & the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up & said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel & believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, & he made no distinction between us & them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." And all the assembly fell silent, & they listened to Barnabas & Paul as they related what signs & wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. And w/ this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, "'After this I will return, & I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, & I will restore it, that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, & all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.'" Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, & from sexual immorality, & from what has been strangled, & from blood. For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues." Then it seemed good to the apostles & the elders, w/ the whole church, to choose men from among them & send them to Antioch w/ Paul & Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, & Silas, leading men among the brothers, w/ the following letter: "The brothers, both the apostles & the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch & Syria & Cilicia, greetings. Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us & troubled you w/ words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men & send them to you w/ our beloved Barnabas & Paul, men who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas & Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit & to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, & from blood, & from what has been strangled, & from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, & having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. And Judas &

Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged & strengthened the brothers w/ many words. And after they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. But Paul & Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching & preaching the word of the Lord, w/ many others also.”

#### 1. Serious About People (VS. 1-4)

- **Huge Insecurity For Gentile Believers**
- **Huge Sense Of Arrogance For Jewish Believers**
- Galatians 2:11-13- “But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating w/ the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back & separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along w/ him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.”

#### 2. Serious About The Gospel (VS. 5-12)

- Galatians 2:14-16- “But when I saw that their conduct was not in step w/ the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile & not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews? We ourselves are Jews by birth & not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ & not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.”

#### 3. Serious About Letting Scripture Have The Final Say (VS. 13-21)

- VS. 19- “Therefore...” based on that, what’s in the Bible, we are going to

#### 4. Serious About Resolving Conflict (VS. 22-23)

- Titus 3:9- “But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, & quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable & worthless.”

#### 5. Serious About Protecting New Believers (VS. 24-35)

- **How Did They Encourage Them?**
- VS. 24-27- We heard these guys were giving you a hard time, we have met about it (it mattered to us) & we have sent you brothers/leaders & this letter to show you that we see you as...
- This was a key moment...what was the conclusion...why all the...
- VS. 23b- “brothers who are of the Gentiles...greetings”
- VS. 26- These men have risked their lives to be w/ you....
- VS. 27- We didn’t want to leave it to written communication, because that can get confusing, so we sent you guys to tell you
- Now that’s encouraging!!!
- **How Did They Strengthen Them?**
- VS. 28-35- Wasn’t just a letter of “good job...” it was instructive
- VS. 29- “but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, & from sexual immorality, & from what has been strangled, & from blood.”
- Philippians 1:27- “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ...”

**RESPONSE:**

- How about you & I? What would be revealed in conflict for us?
- Are we serious about People?
  - Have they become expendible?
  - If they're more trouble then their worth, do you abandon...
- Are we serious about the Gospel-
  - Is it enough for us to fight over/a hill we'll die on?
  - Or, is it not that big of a deal?
- Are we serious about Scripture Being The Final Say-
  - When you have an issue at home in your marriage or w/ your kids are you going to the Bible to see the way fwd?
  - Or do you value tradition more as shown by your strict adherence to "the way my family did it"
  - Or do you employ tactics like, "the silent treatment" & other forms of manipulation to get your way
- Are we serous about Resolving Conflict-
  - Has your marriage become about conflict?
  - Are you stuck in a black hole scenario?
  - If so, forgive one another & move on
- One more thing, some are here & need Encouragement or Strengthening- let me try & do that
  - Encouragement: the enemy loves to come & cause us to wonder if we "fit here"- if you've surrendered to Jesus you are "brothers" to us.
  - Strengthening: have you surrendered to Jesus but now have ended up back at the altar of your old "god?" If so, you need to run back to Jesus & get some brothers/sisters around you