



SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week of October 5, 2025

Acts 15:12-21

[12] And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. [13] After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. [14] Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. [15] And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, [16] “After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, [17] that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things [18] known from of old.’ [19] Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, [20] but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. [21] For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.”

1. Our passage this week continues the critical debate between some Jews who wanted the gentile believers to follow the Mosaic law, and the disciples who argued that God saves only on the basis of grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Why is it difficult for some to accept that salvation is based solely on God's grace and not upon anything a person can do to earn it? How would you counsel such “works-based” believers?
2. It was difficult for some Jewish believers to accept gentiles into the church. Centuries of animosity separated the two groups. How do cultural, political, and socio-economic differences between people negatively impact the church today? If you saw this happening in our church, how would you personally address this?
3. When Peter, Paul and Barnabas proclaimed God's miraculous work in saving the gentiles, why do you think the arguing stopped and everyone was silent? Who is ultimately responsible for salvation?
4. Why would it be hard to hear that God loves your enemies just as much as He loves you? Why should we be thankful that God loves our enemies just as much as He loves you? How does this kind of thankfulness to the Lord lead to humility and unity within the church?
5. In v.13-18 James points his listeners back to the prophets who foretold that God would one day restore all of mankind, including the gentiles. God's plan was always to save the entire world through the Gospel. What encouragement and hope comes from knowing that God's plan of salvation began long before you were born, long before you ever did anything good or bad?
6. Although the disciples taught that gentiles did not need to live like a Jew to be saved, they also taught that believers needed to turn away from their old way of living. As Christians we can no longer “worship” the same things we once did as unbelievers. James lists *idols, sexual immorality, that which is strangled, and from blood*. What are some modern day “objects of worship” that believers today must turn away from?

7. Are you still chasing after the things of the world? Or are you different from your old pre-Christian self? Why is it sometimes hard to make a definitive break from our past life? Does God's grace, patience and mercy make it easier or harder to turn away from our sin? Explain. Why is the love of Christ so much greater than anything the world has to offer?