

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 05.02.2021

THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID— Act 15:1-21

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Ray brought us a message on dealing with conflict in the Christian life. Paul and his team were overseeing a tremendous move of the Spirit planting Churches all throughout the Roman Empire. Whenever there is obvious Growth and Blessing the enemy will try and Distract and Discourage the work of God, by bringing Disputes & Division (20 years after Pentecost). These were Pharisees who were believers in Jesus. But they were trapped in Legalism/Performance as the way to salvation. They were trying to re-stitch the Rent Veil, blocking the new way to God Jesus opened when He died on the Cross and Rose from the dead. They were saying, "In order for a Gentile to become saved you must 1st become a Jew. Unless you become a Jew you are a 2nd class citizen if you are saved at all. The Church often creates its own list of Rules in order to be saved. Hair styles, clothing, women can only wear dresses, cards, movies etc. To be clear. We are not saved because we follow the rules, but by placing our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ for us on the Cross! Ephesian 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. God allows disputes to make things perfectly clear. Let's get into our study...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion:

1. What struck you or stood out to you from this week's sermon in Zechariah?
2. What is your gut reaction when conflicts arise? Do you run away, fight back or ignore?
3. What are the most common issues that cause conflict in today's churches?

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 15:1-5

1. What things did the teachers in this passage say the Gentiles must do? If you were a Gentile hearing that these regulations were required, how would you feel about your new faith? As a strict Jew, why would these rules be important to you?
2. What were some of the expected, extra-biblical rules you were supposed to follow in the church where you grew up?
3. Is there anything in our church that a new believer might view as an extra rule or requirement? If so, what should we do about it?

The debate centered around one question: Did Gentiles who believe in Jesus have to convert to Judaism to be saved? All the first believers were Jews, and Christianity was a movement which began within Judaism. Jesus Himself was a Jew. For these reasons and more, some believers viewed Christianity as an extension of Judaism and its legal requirements. They were concerned because the Antioch Christians had not entered the process of becoming Jewish converts. That process required circumcision of males and obeying the Mosaic laws.

Visitation/Restoration in 2021

1. Why should we expect conflict within the church? In what ways can conflict be productive? Why is conflict resolution important in a church?
2. What was in jeopardy if the church couldn't reach an agreement about these issues? How would things be different for Christians today if the people in Acts 15:5 had been successful?

Conflicts are inevitable. When we are in conflict with others, we need to work with them to understand the problem with all its implications and to agree to resolve it. Paul and Barnabas understood that to add keeping the Mosaic law to the requirements for salvation was to deny that salvation is by faith alone. The conflict described in these verses involved theological as well as practical concerns. The integrity of the gospel and the unity of church fellowship were at stake.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 15:6-21

1. What action indicates Peter's leadership role among the apostles? Who do you look to in our church for leadership and guidance? Have you ever had to seek out that person for help resolving a conflict?
2. Knowing Paul's Pharisaic background and Peter's desire to keep the law, how would their testimonies have made a difference? How much influence does the testimony of another believer have on your opinions? How much influence should it have?

After Peter's speech, the gathering fell silent. Barnabas and Paul recounted their work among the Gentiles, emphasizing what God had done through them. They had performed signs and wonders by God's power. These miracles impressed the Gentiles and validated the gospel Paul and Barnabas proclaimed. The reports of Barnabas, Paul, and Peter had great impact because they were Jewish Christians who had witnessed God's grace in action.

1. What was James's recommendation? How did his compromise satisfy both parties?
2. What roles do experience, theology, and practical considerations play in the decision-making process of this council? Why are all three important?

James announced his opinion, perhaps as a formal motion: Gentiles would not have to become Jewish converts to become Christians (v. 19). Then James suggested a letter be sent to Gentile churches instructing believers to keep four ritual requirements in deference to Jewish Christians. Many Gentile converts and God-fearers had become familiar with Jewish rituals and regulations. Also, by being sensitive to the beliefs and practices of Jews, Gentile Christians might reach them (vv. 20-21). To resolve conflict, we should always look to the Scriptures' wisdom for guidance. We should never accept any resolution that violates God's Word.

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

It was God's plan from the beginning to have a people for Himself! The Truth about the Church was a MYSTERY (a sacred secret) hidden in past ages and revealed to the Church after the Resurrection. The Heart of God was to bring the whole world into His House (Jews and Gentiles) to know Him and Worship Him and be Fathered by Him, to share His Glory & Kingdom with us. The Tabernacle of David was a Tent, made of animal skin. Jesus is the Temple, His flesh and blood the Tent of God's Eternal Glory. There will be a third Temple in the Last Days on the Temple Mount and it is called the Tabernacle of DAVID. Isa 49:6 states "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved

Visitation/Restoration in 2021

ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth."

1. What risks are involved in seeking to resolve conflicts? Why should we accept those risks and work to resolve conflicts?
2. Have you ever lost a friendship because of a religious dispute? What happened?
3. What is the Lord asking you to do or obey from this passage from Acts 15?
4. Make an "I will statement" from this lesson. For Example: After hearing this message, "I will be sensitive to my tendency to judge others based on how the dress or look. I will seek to see others the way Jesus sees them."

PRAYER - Thank God for the opportunity to do life in community with others. Pray that God will bring to light this week any areas in our church life or individual relationships where reconciliation is needed.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Eph. 2:8-9