



SCRIPTURE

ACTS 15:12-35

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.”

22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, 23 with the following letter: “The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. 24 Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, 25 it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: 29 that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

30 So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. 31 And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. 32 And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words. 33 And after they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. 35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

BIG IDEA

In Acts 15:12-35, we see that our experiences and feelings are insufficient for determining what is authoritatively true. However, the Bible is sufficient for determining truth because it is not simply a word about God, it is the Word of God. We need to study the Bible by ourselves, in community, and also receive preaching and teaching from the Word of God. When we try and determine what truth is, according to our experiences and feelings, we are starting down a path that leads to hatred and injustice. However, when the truth of the Bible is submitted to, it leads to love and unity. Why? Because at the heart of the Bible is Jesus, the God-man. He didn't come to make truth claims and take power. Rather, He came as the Truth and *gave up* power in order to love us and unite us as the church. When you *get* that Jesus is the truth that came in love, you will be able to hold fast to the truth for the love of God and neighbor.

DISCUSSION

1. Was there anything from the sermon, the big idea, or Acts 15 that **stood out** to you, **challenged** you, or **confused** you?

Our experiences and feelings are insufficient for determining what is authoritatively true. However, the Bible is sufficient for determining truth because it is not simply a word about God, it is the Word of God.

2. How do we see these things in Acts 15?

3. What are the dangers of looking to your own experiences and feelings to determine what's right or wrong? Why can we trust the Bible when it comes determining what's right or wrong?

We need to study the Bible by ourselves, in community, and also receive preaching and teaching from the Word of God. When we try and determine what truth is, according to our experiences and feelings, we are starting down a path that leads to hatred and injustice. However, when the truth of the Bible is submitted to, it leads to love and unity.

4. Why is it important to **study the Bible by yourself** (can you think of any Scriptures that highlight this importance)? Why is it important to also **study the Bible in community** with others (can you think of any Scriptures that highlight this importance)? Why is it important to **study the Bible by sitting under preaching and teaching** (can you think of of any Scriptures that highlight this importance)?

At the heart of the Bible is Jesus, the God-man. He didn't come to make truth claims and take power. Rather, He came as the Truth and gave up power in order love us and unite us as the church. When you get that Jesus is the truth that came in love, you will be able to hold fast to the truth for the love of God and neighbor.

5. Jesus is the Truth (see [John 14:6](#)). But why did we need Him to come to us more than the Truth? What does it mean that Jesus loved us by giving up power? How is this different than most of our current world's leaders?