

July 31, 2022  
La Jolla Christian Fellowship  
**Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey // Ep. 1: The Council at Jerusalem**  
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**Acts 15:1-11**

<sup>15</sup> Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." <sup>2</sup> This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So, Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. <sup>3</sup> The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. <sup>4</sup> When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. **<sup>5</sup>Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses."** <sup>6</sup> The apostles and elders met to consider this question. <sup>7</sup> After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. <sup>8</sup> God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. <sup>9</sup> He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. <sup>10</sup> Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? <sup>11</sup> No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

**The enemy of the church and our souls makes his dwelling in disorder, discontent, and division.**

**Principles of Unity:** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **Mark 3:24**

1. **Not every hill is worth dying on.**
2. **Godly decisions are rarely made in a silo.**
  - **"Peace and unity are undervalued commodities."**
  - Better a small serving of vegetables with love than a fattened calf with hatred. **Proverbs 15:17**
  - "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." **Jesus Mt. 5:9**

**Question:** Do you love peace?

We live in a culture that surrenders its peace for its pleasures and unity for self-congratulating solidarity.

1. **Not every hill is worth dying on, but this one was.**
  - a. **The Question:** Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "**Unless** you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." <sup>2</sup> This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them.  
**Context:** We must remember that this was a church in transition, one moving from two thousand years under the sacramental system to one built solely upon the grace of the cross.
    - i. **Unless: Vs. 5** Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses."
      - ii. **Eph 2:8-9** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.
      - iii. **Vs. 11** " No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."
  2. **Godly decisions are rarely made in a silo. Vs. 2b** So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.
    - a. **Proverbs 11:14** For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.
      - b. **Proverbs 3:7** Do not be **wise** in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.

**Practical Takeaways:**

1. Die on no hill not first initiated by the counsel and Spirit of God.
2. Surround your life with a fellowship of wise counsel.
3. Practice living by grace.

**Questions for our small groups:**

1. Is your life led more by distraction, chaos and disorder or by grace, peace and life-giving margin?
2. What could you edit from or add to your life to offer yourself more peace, grace, and margin?
3. Are you choosing to die on the wrong hills at your own personal suffrage and how do we know what things we should truly fight for?
4. Do you have a wise counsel of Christ followers who surround you or have you been making decisions in a silo?
5. What are some ways you could practice living more by grace?