

The Church on Mission: Spirit-led Salvation
Acts 15:1-35

3-3-19

***Grace** is God giving Himself to the undeserving through faith in Jesus Christ.*

I. The Dispute: "Jesus Alone" vs. "Jesus Plus". Acts 15:1-11

~The Gospel is God rescuing rebellious sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, with the Word alone for God's glory alone.

Ephesians 2:5-9 - "...when we were dead in our trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ... to show the immeasurable riches of his grace... by grace you have been saved through faith... this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

***Religion** is belief in God or gods, combined with religious works, rituals and rule keeping.*

Matthew 23:1-5 - Jesus said "... (do not do) the works the (religious leaders) do... they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders...they themselves are not willing to move them ...They do all their deeds to be seen by others..."

1. Religious performance.
2. Self-reliance.
3. Desire for control.
4. Sense of superiority.
5. Legalism and inflexibility in relationships.
6. Seeking the praise of others.

7. Distortion of being an image maker.

II. The Discussion: Scripture vs. Tradition. Acts 15:12-18

John 17:17 – “Jesus said, ‘Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.’”

John 5:39 – “Jesus said, ‘You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; ... they bear witness about me.’”

George Müller *"I saw that the most important thing I had to do was ...making my soul happy in the Lord...and to the reading of the Word of God...to meditation on it... What is the food of the inner man? ...the Word of God... not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts."*

III. The Decision: Spirit-Led Freedom and Love. Acts 15:19-35

James 2:8 – “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing well.”

Galatians 6:2 - “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ”

Galatians 5:1 – “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

A Spirit-led Church of Freedom and Love is known by:

1. Grace is abundant.
2. Truth is spoken in love.
3. Sin is admitted and people are restored.
4. People are free to be different in the Gospel.

Discussion This Week

1. **Grace** is God giving Himself to the undeserving through faith in Jesus Christ. Why do some professing Christians still struggle to accept that salvation is by God's grace and we don't do anything to earn it?
2. What rules, do's and do not do, did you grow up with? How did they help or hinder your faith walk? (example - no card playing, no alcohol, calling Sunday the Sabbath, you must read only one translation of the Bible, etc.) What ways do we tend to "add to Jesus" and His truth today?
3. Read Galatians 5:1 and Romans 14:1-13. What does God say about the "gray areas" that are not clear Biblical commands? Why is it important to stand firm in our freedom in Christ?
4. Being "in Christ" is crucial to understand for our daily living. Read Psalm 16:11, 25:4, 119:35, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 1:5, 2:8-10, and Colossians 2:8-10 and focus on your identity being found in Christ. Make much of the Lord in prayer for who you are in Christ. Pray for others.