

Sermon Discussion – 15 October 2023

Read Acts 15:1-35

Getting Started *Sharing from personal experience*

Have you ever had one of those “Sixth Sense” moments where everything you thought you knew changes? Share a personal experience where you had to deconstruct and reconstruct your understanding of a certain belief or concept. How did it impact you?

Observation *Discovering the context*

- What is the context of the passage? What was the question that desperately needed answer?
- Who were the Judaizers? Explain their view on the Gospel. Why was it so difficult for them to accept that Gentiles would be saved outside of the Law?
- To help, discuss the shift in understanding that Peter experiences through his vision and encounter with Cornelius in Acts 10-11. How does this challenge the previous beliefs of the early church?

Interpretation *Discovering the meaning*

1. Define "religion" based on the sermon. In what ways do people often try to reach God through their own efforts or actions? Why is it crucial to recognise that our acceptance by God is not based on our own merits or efforts?
2. Discuss the significance of the debate surrounding circumcision. Why was it a point of contention, and how did it relate to the idea of salvation?
3. How does the church play a role in reconciling people to the truth, especially in the face of differing beliefs or interpretations? Share an example from your own life.
4. How does mutual respect for each other's differences contribute to a healthy and unified church community? Share examples of how this has been demonstrated in your own church or group.
5. How important is it that we remain faithful to the purity of the Gospel? How is the Gospel easily distorted in our day?

Application *Putting knowledge into practice*

- What role do “works” play in our lives as Christians? Do “works” determine salvation or give evidence of salvation? Why is the answer to this question so important?
- Can you share how God has personally changed and transformed you? Like the things that the Gentiles needed to abstain from, what things did you understand you needed to give up when God saved you?
- Try memorising Acts 15:9...
“and He made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.”
- How has God blessed you and answered prayer this week?