

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 28TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

THE LETTER (ACTS 15:22–29)

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE

After James spoke, the church responded with unity and sent Judas and Silas, trusted leaders, to accompany Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. Their presence helped confirm that the message came from the whole church, not just a few individuals.

- Their mission was to bring clarity, encouragement, and unity.

A LETTER OF CLARITY AND PEACE

False teaching had unsettled the Believers. They wrote to restore peace and confidence, reminding Gentile Believers that salvation is by grace, through faith in Christ.

- **We must know God's Word so we can easily detect false teaching. Scripture is the standard by which we evaluate every message and teacher.**

A LETTER OF ENCOURAGEMENT

The church knew these new Believers were struggling, and they wanted to help them grow strong in their faith. They also affirmed Paul and Barnabas as trusted and beloved servants who had faithfully risked everything for Jesus.

- **God often uses other Believers to remind us of truth when we are discouraged or confused.**

A LETTER OF GRACE

The church emphasized that salvation comes through God's grace, not by keeping the law. The few instructions were not requirements for salvation but practical steps to preserve unity between Jewish and Gentile Believers.

- **The gospel frees us from legalism, but it also calls us to lovingly consider others before ourselves.**

THE RESPONSE (ACTS 15:30–35)

REJOICE!

The Gentile Believers gathered with anticipation. They had likely been carrying questions, uncertainty, and even fear. As the letter was read, **they heard the wonderful news that they were fully accepted by God through faith in Jesus Christ because of what He has done.**

- **They rejoiced! Do we still rejoice?**

JUDAS AND SILAS

Judas and Silas did more than deliver a letter; they stayed to encourage the Believers. Through their teaching, exhortation, and care, they strengthened the church and helped the disciples grow in their faith.

- People need more than information—they need encouragement. **Judas and Silas invested in people. We should do the same.**

MAJOR ON MAJORS, MINOR ON MINORS

Judas and Silas returned to Jerusalem, and peace was restored between the churches. The gospel was protected from legalism, unity was preserved, and the good news of Jesus continued to spread among the Gentiles.

- **Don't allow secondary issues to become primary issues. Keep the gospel at the center.**

PAUL AND BARNABAS

This section ends with a beautiful picture of what God desires for His church: unity around the gospel. Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch. But God was preparing to send them out once again.

- **A church centered on the gospel will always be a church moving toward people who need Jesus.**

THE DISAGREEMENT (ACTS 15:36–41)

PAUL'S PLAN

Paul's heart was to go back and encourage the Believers they had already reached. He wanted to strengthen their faith and help them continue following Jesus.

- **Paul understood that making disciples is not just about reaching people for Christ; it is also about helping them keep following Christ.**

BARNABAS'S SUGGESTION

Barnabas embraced Paul's plan and wanted to bring John Mark along with them. Barnabas was willing to give Mark another opportunity. Paul, however, was concerned because Mark had previously departed from the team.

- **We need both people who encourage restoration (Barnabas) and people who value faithfulness and readiness (Paul).**

SHARP DISAGREEMENT

Paul and Barnabas disagreed and went separate ways. Even mature Believers can disagree. While the situation was painful, God continued to use both men. Instead of one team sharing the gospel, there were now two.

- **Following Jesus does not eliminate conflict, but it changes how we respond to it.**

RECONCILIATION

The encouraging part of the story is that this was not the end. Later, Paul and John Mark served together again, and Paul even spoke highly of Mark's ministry (Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11).

- **God worked in both of their lives, reminding us that failure is not final and broken relationships can be restored.**

JESUS' FINISHED WORK AND HIS WORD

- **Refuse to add anything to what Jesus finished. When we add rules to the gospel, we rob the cross of its power.**
- Saturate our lives with God's Word. Truth is our anchor in a world full of distortion—**without it, we will drift.**
- Let the grace we have received overflow into the lives of others.

REJOICE AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS

- The Believers rejoiced because they were reminded of the gospel. **Never lose our wonder at what Jesus has done for us!**
- The church should be known for encouragement, not criticism; for building up, not tearing down.
- Be intentional about community. Show up, engage, and look for ways to lift others up.

GRACE AND FAITHFULNESS

- Conflict is inevitable, but how we respond is a choice. **Choose to reflect Christ in our words and actions.**
- Look for opportunities to pursue peace without compromising truth. Unity matters, even when we don't see eye to eye.
- Faithfulness means continuing to follow Jesus, even when relationships are strained.

THE CROSS HAS THE FINAL WORD

- Our worst moments do not have to define the rest of our lives.
- Be careful not to permanently label someone by a temporary failure.
- **The gospel is a story of restoration.** God takes broken people, broken failures, and broken relationships and makes them beautiful again.