

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 28TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

### THE LETTER (ACTS 15:22-29) SENT BACK TO ANTIOCH

Luke says that the whole church in Jerusalem made a decision to send a letter back to Antioch. We don't know how they came to this agreement, but it's good to know that the church was unified.

- To give validity to the letter, Barsabbas and Silas, respected teachers, would accompany the missionaries back to Antioch.

#### "THEY WROTE"

The whole church made the decision, but the letter was specifically from the apostles and elders.

- When difficult issues challenge essentials of the faith and are addressed, leadership should not be silent.
- The letter is written to Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, but it will be delivered to any city affected by the Judaizers.

#### WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION

The leaders in Jerusalem admitted that some men had traveled from there with an unauthorized message of salvation.

- The "Jesus Plus" theology had brought trouble to the congregation and grief to their hearts.
- **The Holy Spirit agrees with the truth, and false teaching never sits well with an authentic Believer.**

#### "DEARLY LOVED BARNABAS AND PAUL"

Along with the respected teachers, the leaders affirmed their admiration of Barnabas and Paul as men who had risked their lives to deliver the truth of the gospel.

- The church in Antioch would easily believe Barnabas and Paul. Barsabbas and Silas would be there to offer confirmation to those who may still have been teaching the unauthorized message.

#### "THE HOLY SPIRIT'S DECISION"

Before the letter was written, Peter had shared how the Holy Spirit was delivered to each Believer, Paul and Barnabas gave testimony of how the Holy Spirit had worked, then James shared that God had declared the salvation of Gentiles in the OT.

- **They weren't just claiming the guidance of the Holy Spirit; they were citing historical and scriptural evidence for their unity.**

#### "YOU WILL DO WELL IF..."

The letter acknowledged that Gentile Christians are not obligated to live under the yoke of the law. At the same time, it challenged them to exercise their freedom with wisdom, restraint, and love, recognizing the concerns of some Jewish Christians about contamination through idolatrous practices.

- **Fellowship and unity among Believers may require compromise. It's worth it if you care enough to love your fellow Believers.**

#### RESPONSE (ACTS 15:30-35)

##### "THEY REJOICED"

When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch with the letter from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, the church rejoiced because of its encouragement.

- **This encouragement wasn't exclusive to Paul and Barnabas "being right" in their position. There was encouragement because the truth was clear and compromise would heal.**

#### BARSABBAS AND SILAS ENCOURAGED

Barsabbas and Silas encouraged and strengthened the brothers and sisters with a long message.

- Luke doesn't say it explicitly, but most likely, these men spent time explaining the decision and clarifying the recommendations in a way that each Gentile understood and accepted.
- **Explanation and application are vital parts of understanding God's instructions.**

#### "SENT BACK IN PEACE"

After spending some time in Antioch, Barsabbas and Silas were sent back in peace.

- This is more than just everyone liking them; the implication is that there was restoration in the fellowship, and real growth had occurred.
- **Here we see a new pattern revealed in the church: conflict, resolution, growth.**
- **Challenges will come, but with them, the Holy Spirit will guide us in resolution. Welcome to church growth!**

#### MISSION (ACTS 15:36-41)

##### "PAUL SAID TO BARNABAS"

Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch for some time and continued to teach. Then, Paul encouraged Barnabas to return with him to the towns they had visited on their first missionary journey.

- It seems that Barnabas was ready to continue their journeys together and suggested bringing John Mark along to make it more interesting.

##### "THIS MAN WHO HAD DESERTED THEM"

Paul wanted nothing to do with John Mark because he had left them back in Pamphylia, when the journey got a little tough.

- In Paul's eyes, the last journey was filled with tribulation that John Mark left to avoid. This journey would be no different. A guy like John Mark would be a liability and hinder the work.

##### "SHARP DISAGREEMENT"

Luke doesn't give details about the disagreement, but ultimately, Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed off to Cyprus.

- It seems that Barnabas was willing to invest in Mark and give him a second chance. It may have meant that he would have to spend more time discipling, but it would be worth it to see Mark grow in his faith.

- **Sometimes, we are part of someone's second chance.**

##### "COMMENDED BY THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS"

Paul departed with Silas to Syria and Cilicia to share the letter and strengthen the churches.

- Just like their first missionary journey, these men were sent out from Antioch in the grace of the Lord.
- But this time, the teams were multiplied by God's design, even in the midst of difficulty.
- **God doesn't stop when we face trouble.**

#### TROUBLE

- We all face trouble.
- **There are good days and bad days.**
- **Pessimism will find trouble everywhere it looks. Optimism is good but sometimes tries to sweep trouble under the rug. So, how should we face trouble?**

#### HELP

- We all need help.
- **Saying we don't need help isn't strength; it's denial.**
- **One of the strongest things we can do is to ask for help when we are facing trouble in our hearts, souls, minds, or strength. Where do we need help? Where can we offer help? Are we really seeking what we need?**

#### PEACE AND JOY

- We can have peace and joy in this life.
- **We will have to listen, believe, and obey.**
- **It begins with what God has given to us. It continues as we love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. It grows as we love others as ourselves. Are we prepared to receive what the Holy Spirit is telling us about ourselves and the people around us? How are we going to handle our "trouble" this week?**
- **"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).**