



Acts 15:1-2 – The argument about circumcision and the law

Acts 15:7-11 – Peter reminds them of God's grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit

Acts 15:13-21 – James affirms salvation by grace and offers guidelines for unity

Acts 15:28-29 – The final decision sent in the letter

Acts 10:44-48 – (Reference) Peter's earlier experience with Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit

Acts 16:6-7 – The Holy Spirit blocks Paul from preaching in certain areas

Acts 16:9-10 – Paul's vision of the Macedonian man calling for help

Acts 16:16-18 – Paul and Silas cast a demon out of the slave girl

Acts 16:22-24 – Paul and Silas are beaten and thrown in prison

Acts 16:25 – They pray and sing hymns at midnight

Acts 16:26 – An earthquake shakes the prison and opens the doors

Acts 16:27-34 – The jailer and his family come to Christ

Sermon Title: Grace, Guidance, and Praising in Tough Times

Main Scripture: Acts 15-16

Introduction: What's the Big Deal?

- Have you ever had a **big argument** about something in church?
- Have you ever felt **lost**, unsure of what God wants you to do?
- Have you ever gone through a **tough time** and wondered where God was?

- Acts 15-16 gives us **three big lessons** that help us in these moments:
 1. **God's grace is enough**—we don't need to add extra rules.
 2. **God leads us, even when we don't understand.**
 3. **Worship changes everything—even in hard times.**

1. Grace, Not Extra Rules (Acts 15:1-35)

The Argument

- Some Jewish Christians said, *"You have to follow all our rules (like circumcision) to be saved!"*
- Paul and Barnabas disagreed—Jesus already did the work.

The Resolution

- Peter reminded them that God had already given the Holy Spirit to Gentiles (**Acts 10**).
- Peter and James reminded everyone: *We are saved by grace, not by following a list of rules.* (**Ephesians 2:8-9, Galatians 2:15-16, Romans 3:28**)
- They wrote a letter to the churches to clear things up.
- The letter had guidelines for unity, but not requirements for salvation.

How This Applies to Us

- Sometimes, churches make following Jesus **more complicated than it needs to be.**
- Salvation isn't about how "good" you are—it's about **trusting Jesus.**
- **Are you trusting in rules or in Jesus?**
- Grace means **Jesus did the work**—we just believe and follow Him.

2. When God Says "Not Yet" (Acts 16:1-10)

Paul's Roadblocks

- Paul set out on his second missionary journey but had a **disagreement with Barnabas** and split up.

- He recruited Timothy and strengthened churches.
- The Holy Spirit **blocked** them from preaching in certain places—twice! (Acts 16:6-7).
- Then, Paul had the **vision of the man from Macedonia**, and they immediately left.
- Instead of forcing his plan, Paul **followed where God led**.

How This Applies to Us

- Have you ever wanted something **really bad** and God said no? God sometimes closes doors before He opens the right one. (**Proverbs 16:9**)
- Closed doors aren't always rejection—sometimes, **God has something better**.
- **Are you listening for where God is leading you next?**
- Are we **patient enough** to wait for God's direction?
- Are we **ready to move** when He calls?

3. Worship When Life Feels Unfair (Acts 16:16-40)

Paul and Silas in Prison

- In Philippi, they cast out a demon from a slave girl. Her owners were furious and had them beaten and imprisoned.
- They were **beaten and thrown in prison**—but instead of complaining, they **prayed and sang hymns!**
- Then, an **earthquake shook the prison**, breaking their chains!

The Jailer's Change of Heart

- The jailer was about to kill himself, thinking the prisoners had escaped.
- Paul stopped him and said, *"We're all still here!"*
- That night, the jailer and his whole family **became Christians**.

How This Applies to Us

- When life is unfair, do you **complain or worship?**
- Your response to hard times **can change someone's life**.

- **How can you trust God in your struggles?**

Conclusion: What Will You Do?

1. **Grace is enough** – Are you trusting in Jesus, or trying to follow extra rules?
2. **God guides us** – Are you frustrated with closed doors, or trusting that He has a better plan?
3. **Worship in hard times** – When things go wrong, will you complain or praise God?

Challenge for the Week:

- **Trust grace.** Stop worrying if you're "good enough"—Jesus is enough.
- **Be patient with God's timing.** When things don't go as planned, pray and wait.
- **Worship no matter what.** Praise God even when life is tough—you never know who's watching!