

Acts 15 – 16 August 2020

“Dealing With Disagreement”

Introduction

Paul and Barnabas have returned from the 1st Missionary trip thru Asia in chap 13-14

Christianity is simply the fulfillment to the Jewish religion

Now that there are many Gentile converts into this fulfilled form of the Jewish religion (that we call Christianity), a major question arises.

This brings up a disagreement on a major issue within the church.

We'll be discussing how to deal with disagreements

Although this will be a spiritual, doctrinal salvation question that needs an answer, the tips we learn apply to many, many forms of disagreement in life.

Today, 6 tips for dealing with disagreement

Vs 1-5 we receive the point of major disagreement

Read Vs 1-2

1. So a major question that still tries to creep into Christianity today; “do we have to keep the Law”?
2. Entire book of Galatians is about this subject

Read Vs 3-4

1. These are NOT enemies, these are friends w/ a disagreement
2. They’re still able to joyfully spread God’s work

Read Vs 5

1. Old habits die hard – Pharisees show that
2. Just b/c we’re saved doesn’t mean we don’t have bad habits or positions we need to shake off

1st Tip for dealing with disagreement is to look for the direction God is leading (Chap 15:6-11)

Read Vs 6-11

1. So Peter's testimony is based on looking at the activity of the Lord.
2. He says in vs 8 – “When God spoke His Word to them, they were given the H.S.”
3. Read Gal 3:2 – Based on God's past activity, won't He continue to do the same, thru faith?
4. Vs 10 – Peter concludes; the honest person will admit that none of us were ever able to keep the law anyway.
 - a. It points to helplessness & God's provision.
 - b. Why would we put that burden on Gentiles?
5. Burdens
 - a. Men always add burdens (Read Matt 23:4)
 - b. Jesus came to take the burdens away (Read Matt 11:30)
6. God is leading into freedom by His Holy Spirit

2nd Tip for dealing with disagreement is to be ready to be changed by God (Chap 15:12-13)

Read Vs 12-13

1. Paul supports Peter's 1st point that God has already been leading in this direction
2. Notice the people's response to Peter and then Paul and Barnabas.
 - a. Vs 12 – they kept silent
 - b. Vs 13 – they held their peace
3. Pastor Bonin – "When someone brings an issue to your attention, the first question you should ask yourself is, 'are they right'?"
4. Never go INTO a disagreement, unless you're willing to come OUT OF IN on the side of truth
 - a. Even when you're on the side of truth, you want to win the arguer, not the argument.
5. Have you ever gotten to the end of an argument and realized the only reason you didn't change to the other side is b/c you got emotionally involved?

3rd Tip for dealing with disagreement is to make a decision that the Bible supports (Chap 15:14-18)

Read Vs 14-18

1. Notice vs 13 – It's is James that answers, he gives the sentence (vs 19)
 - a. If you've been taught Peter was the 1st Pope, well he wasn't even the leader of the Jerusalem Church, James was.
2. James is quoting Amos 9:11-12 from Sepq
 - a. Read Amos 9:11-12
 - b. BEFORE God comes to reestablish the Kingdom to Israel, there WILL BE Heathen or Gentiles 'called by God's name'.
 - c. The passage in Amos says nothing of these Gentiles becoming Jews.
3. Judge current events by the eternal Word!!!
 - a. Church practice shouldn't just happen b/c it doesn't contradict the Word, but b/c it's supported by the Word

4. No Church Council can impose their will apart from making a Biblical decision
 - a. There's no authority apart from God's Word
 - b. Same for family matters
 - i. Can't just decide, "we're not in love now, so we're divorcing, God will understand."
 - ii. We can't just make things up as we go
 - c. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom
 - i. W/o reverence for God, we'll go astray
 - ii. W/ reverence we'll ask for His direction

4th Tip for dealing with disagreement is to live by the law of love (Chap 15:19-21)

Read Vs 19-21

1. James decision - No law keeping but refrain from a few things to not offend your Jew brothers
 - a. These guidelines are from Lev 17-18
 - b. They're daily lifestyles, that could easily offend
2. Don't have to keep law to be saved
 - a. But also don't have to forsake law to be saved!
 - b. You have to believe the law was given to lead us to the completed work of Christ Jesus!
3. No longer bound by law of Moses, now bound by the law of love
 - a. Read John 13:34-35 – Just b/c we're not under the law doesn't mean we go around meaningless offending others
 - b. Read Gal 2:9-10 – This isn't a law, it's a reminder of the benefits of restraining our liberties in order to love others

5th Tip for dealing with disagreement is to communicate conclusions clearly (Chap 15:22-35)

Read Vs 22-29

1. They authenticated msg w/ messengers & letter
2. Vs 26 - Clear communications help get back to the business of saving lives as fast as possible.

Read Vs 30-35

1. Strength, unity and encouragement abounds
2. This would have been totally different had the Pharisee believers not accepted the decision

6th Tip for dealing with disagreement is to be at peace disagreeing on minor issues (Chap 15:36-41)

Read Vs 36-41

1. Vs 39 – This ‘sharp contention’ does not necessitate raging, sinful anger.
 - a. It indicates a stark divide.
 - b. Their positions on the matter was 180°
2. Recognize that “Should we take John Mark?” is totally different than, “Should we keep the Law to be saved?”
 - a. One is essential to knowing God’s plan
 - b. The other is a matter of practice
 - c. Lots of flexibility in our methods of practice
3. Read Rom 14:2-4
 - a. We need to be at peace and able to disagree on matters of conscience and practice.
 - b. God has gifted us in different ways.
 - i. We’ll have different methods, but the same goal!

Conclusion

So we've had a great lesson of conflict resolution and dealing with disagreements

- 1. Look for the direction God is leading**
 - a. Is God already working in people's hearts?
- 2. Be ready to be changed by God**
 - a. Do you want your way or God's truth?
 - b. B/c they may just be different.
- 3. Make a decision that the Bible supports**
 - a. If we're doing things the Bible doesn't speak of, we're putting words in God's mouth
 - b. Bible shouldn't be neutral but support our decision
- 4. Live by the law of love**
 - a. Grace doesn't mean we can do anything
 - b. It means we do what it takes to help others
- 5. Communicate conclusions clearly**
 - a. Get the issue behind you in a clear way
- 6. Be at peace disagreeing on minor issues**
 - a. God may use the split to multiple the effort