

Main Street Church - Life Group Guide

Series: **God's Plan A :: Part 13** – (Acts 15)

The Day Christianity Almost Died, But Didn't

July 24, 2016



Connect

The Rio Olympics run August 5-21. What is 1 of your favorite Olympic Events to watch?

Sunday Message Feedback

1. * **What impacted you from Sunday's message by Pastor Shawn?**

: What challenged or encouraged you, and why?

: What can you apply to your faith & life this week? How?

2. **The Council**

Read [Acts 15](#)

This passage is important for Jews & Gentiles (non-Jews).

*What stands out to you from the following passage? (key words, phrases, names, teaching...)

***The Big Picture** - How do Peter & James connect the story (laws, prophecy, God's plan & purpose...) of the Old Testament with the Gospel & accomplishments (Good News) of Jesus – for both the Jewish & Gentile Christians?

3. **Jesus + _____ = _____**

*Have you ever believed, been taught...that it's *Jesus + something that = Salvation?*

What might that something be for you?

One of the examples in Acts 15 is the issue of *Jesus + Circumcision*.

Read [Acts 15:8-11](#) & [Ephesians 2:4-10](#)

*What does Peter confirm about how we are Saved?

4. **Restored People Restore People – Read [Acts 15:16-17](#)**

What is a primary reason for God restoring the people of Israel (House of David)?

How might this purpose and plan continue inspire us today?

Saved people Share Jesus & help others Seek the Lord.

5. Keep it Simple

Read [Acts 15:19-21](#) (also **15:28-29**)

*How can we make it 'less difficult' for people who are turning to God?

*What do you think of the clarified instructions given in Acts 15:28-29?

(note: 'sexual immorality' is a general term used to describe sexual activity outside the boundaries of marriage between 1 man and 1 woman).

*Pastor Shawn briefly addressed the difference between [Moral Law, Ceremonial Law & Judicial Law](#) in the Bible. If it's repeated in the New Testament (often reinforced or even magnified by Jesus) then it applies today. How do you think this applies to us today?

6. The Result

Read [Acts 15:30-33](#)

*How does the Decision and Letter from the Council impact the early Christians in Antioch?

*How should it inspire and guide us today?

Application:

Remember HOW & WHY you were Saved by God!

Share the Gospel (Good News) of Jesus in a way that clear, respectful (1 Peter 3:15-16) and less difficult for those who are turning to God.

Ask Questions if you are unsure! The Christian journey requires grace and growth.

Read through the Book of Acts this Summer (July/Aug). There are 28 Chapters.

(If you have completed Acts, start reading through the Book of [Romans](#))

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Prayer

JESUS, Thank you for Saving Me by Your Grace!

Please empower me with your Holy Spirit and help me to _____.

(learn, grow, share, pray, obey, trust...)

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BONUS Resources

*[Paul's Missionary Journeys - MAP](#)

*[Animated Explanation of The Law](#) (from The Bible Project)

*[Animated Explanation of Sacrifice & Atonement](#) (from The Bible Project)

*RECAP: Acts 15

After their missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to seek out the answer to a major dispute (v. 2). One group of believers taught that you cannot be saved unless you are circumcised (v. 1). Another group disagreed. This issue was increasingly important as more and more Gentiles were coming to the faith (v. 3-4). In order to maintain unity, the church had to discern the will of God on this matter. While the assembly was debating, Paul rose to speak. He reminded them that God had shown His acceptance of Gentiles giving them the Holy Spirit (v. 8). He reminded them that throughout history people had tried wholeheartedly to fulfill the Law, and thereby make themselves pure before God. But even the greatest efforts had not made one person right before God (v. 10). If circumcision were made a requirement for salvation, they would only be continuing the system of the law. They would be denying that we are saved by the grace of Jesus, not by our good works (v. 11). Paul closed his argument by quoting Amos 9:11-12 (v. 16-17). According to this prophecy, Paul believed that they should not make it difficult for Gentiles to receive salvation (v. 19). The Council agreed to keep the lifestyle requirements for believers to a minimum and sent word to the churches (v. 23-30).

Acts 15 closes with an introduction to Paul's second missionary journey. Paul and Barnabas disagreed over whether to take John Mark on the journey (v. 37-39). While we are not told the specific reason why they disagreed, we are given the result. Barnabas and John Mark went to Cyprus to share the gospel (v. 39). Paul chose Silas and went to Syria and Cilicia (v. 40-41). This set a wonderful model. Even strong disagreements do not have to hamper the progress of the gospel. Paul and Barnabas could have argued forever or thrown up their hands and quit. Instead they agreed to part ways and they were