



Sunday Morning, August 1, 2021 » Pastor Josiah Kagin

Message Title: Through the Problem

Message Text: Acts 15:13-35

Introduction:

When the Good News of total forgiveness and eternal life was preached to the Gentiles in Antioch by unnamed preachers (11:20-22), they gladly received it by faith alone in Jesus Christ. Their joy faded as a certain, unauthorized men travelled from the church in Jerusalem and began to teach that the Gentile believers needed to follow the law of Moses concerning circumcision in addition to placing their faith in Jesus Christ in order to be saved from their sin (15:1) This was a serious, spiritual attack on the Gospel from a “trusted source.” It was decided by the beliers at Antioch that Paul and Barnabus would travel up to Jerusalem to ask about this teaching (15:2). This is commonly called the Jerusalem Council. After describing the problem to James, the pastor, the church at Jerusalem choose to go through the problem in a way that leaves an example for us today.

NOTE: The only way through a problem, is through the problem.

1. With Spiritual _____ (13-21)

*James — not the half brother of Christ (Acts 12:2); perhaps James the Less, Son of Alphaeus
“Wherefore my sentence is...”*

A. Rooted in _____ (13-18)

Acts 15:13–17 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

NOTE — James was quoting from Amos 9:11-12

Acts 15:18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

NOTE — The greatest attribute of any leader is _____ to God.

B. Applied with _____ (19-21)

Acts 15:19–21 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. 21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

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DEFINITION—SENTENCE: to be resolved; to be or become determined in mind of a fixed opinion or purpose.

TROUBLE — vex (only here in NT)

Next Step — to write a letter taking ownership of a problem that had been started by *rogue* members (15:24) as well as giving practical direction.

2. As a _____ Church Family (22-29)

See 15:22, 25, 28; Philippians 1:27; Ephesians 4:3

A. They _____ Spiritual Leadership (22a)

Acts 15:22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church...

DEFINITION—PLEASED: to seem good; to resolve positively in favor of some course of action.

Hebrews 13:7-8 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. 8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

Our submission to God's will often be _____ by our willingness to follow the spiritual leaders God has placed in our lives.

B. They _____ toward the Solution (22a)

Acts 15:22b ...to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

DEFINITION—SEND: to dispatch; to send away towards a designated goal or purpose.

NOTE — Antioch was 320 miles away from Jerusalem

Romans 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

NOTE: Judas and Silas were leading men in the church at Jerusalem. James, as well as the church, had confidence in these men to represent them in Antioch. (See 15:27)

C. They _____ with One Voice (23-29)

Acts 15:23a And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto...

THE LETTER FROM THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM

- Greeted the Gentiles as brethren in Christ (23)
- Explained what had happened with the members who were spreading wrong doctrine (24)

DEFINITION—SUBVERT: to upset; to overturn; to cause to lose one's composure; conceived of as physically overthrowing or ravaging

- Communicated the unity of the whole church together and verified Judas and Silas as dispatched representatives (25-27)
- Highlighted their submission to the Holy Spirit and the church's agreement with Him (28)

QUOTE: Significantly the letter referred to the Holy Spirit as the "Prime Mover" in this discernment of truth. —BKC

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

- Communicated necessary truths for *holy* and *harmonious* Christian living (29)

PRACTICAL _____ — abstain from eating meats offered to idols, blood and things strangled

1 John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

PERSONAL _____ — abstain from fornication

1 Corinthians 6:18–20 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

QUOTE: "The avoiding of fornication is necessary to all Christians at all times; the avoiding of things strangled, and of blood, and of things offered to idols, is necessary at this time, for the keeping up of a good understanding between you and the Jews, and the preventing of offence;" —Matthew Henry

Titus 2:11–12 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

- Commended those that would heed the admonition (29b)
- Communicated a goodwill and tender love for the Gentile believers to be strong and do well. (29c)

3. With _____ Words of Truth (30-35)

Acts 15:31 ...they rejoiced for the consolation.

DEFINITION—CONSOLATION: a source of comfort a person feels when consoled in times of disappointment.

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

A. _____ Words (30-31)

Acts 15:30–32 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: 31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

NOTE — Truth brought _____, because truth brought _____.

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

B. _____ Words (32-35)

Acts 15:32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

DEFINITION—CONFIRMED: to strengthen; to make more marked by firm determination or resolution.

NOTE — This is discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20)

Acts 15:33–35 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. 34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still. 35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Conclusion — The Church at Jerusalem went through the problem with God's _____ and Christ's _____ and there was rejoicing again.

Questions to Consider

How would the problems you are facing be affected by approaching them with God's truth and Christ's love?

Are there some problems in your life, family or church that you need to step up with spiritual leadership that is rooted in Scripture and applied with care?

Are you in *submission* to the Holy Spirit and thereby *contributing* to the unity of this church family?

Does your handling of problems have the fingerprints of the Holy Spirit upon it—bringing comfort? Do your words liberate and strengthen other believers?

