

Big Drift

Big Church, Part 5

Acts 15

Pastor Ken Ritz * July 28, 2013 * New Life Vineyard Church

Review

- The church (grk. *ekklesia*) is a gathering or movement, not a building, location, hierarchy, or organization.
- The first recorded prayer of the brand new church:
Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." Acts 4:29-30
- How a church prays shows whether it has strayed... we need to pray "big prayers."
- Our culture of comfort has eroded our boldness.
The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. Acts 5:41-42

The controversy:

- Who should be a part of the church?
- How good do you have to be?
- How many rules do you have to keep?

The one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth...

the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:14,17

Acts 15:1-11

Certain individuals came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved."

This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. Then some of the believers who belonged to

the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses."

The apostles and elders met to consider this question.

After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them:

"Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.

God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

Verse 19-20

It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.

Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.

Verse 30-31

So they were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message.

Our Response To God's Grace

1. _____ Grace To Others.
2. _____ Grace With Others.

But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God. Acts 20:24 NLT

**All scriptures from TNIV unless otherwise noted*