

## **Acts 15:22-35**

1. Housekeeping
2. Observation and exposition
3. The take-away for us?

### **Housekeeping**

1. Jordan wanted me to let you all know that Larry was right last Sunday about Hope Lutheran Church being Wisconsin Synod and not ELCA. [SLIDE]
2. Eleven Sundays with Sunday school (June - 4, July - 3, August - 4)
  - a. No SS on June 23, July 7, or September 1

### **Observation and exposition**

1. Read the passage [SLIDES]
2. Observation and exposition
  - a. How can they claim the Holy Spirit as part of their decision? How did they know?
    - i. Peter's testimony of when Cornelius and his family believed, and the involvement of the Holy Spirit in that event/process.
    - ii. Barnabas and Paul's testimony of how God worked through them and their preaching, and especially the signs and wonders that God did.
    - iii. James's interpretation and application of Scripture to the situation (Amos 9:11-12)
    - iv. Their unity of decision.
    - v. Is this sort of claim normative for churches (or gatherings of Christians) today?
      1. Could a unified decision be made that was wrong, i.e. not in accordance with the Holy Spirit?
  - b. The four requirements:
    - i. To what extent were they "requirements?"
      1. Were they on the same level as commands or laws?
      2. Did Gentile salvation depend on keeping these requirements?
        - a. For that matter, did Jewish salvation depend on keeping them?
        - b. There are many commands in the New Testament that are not conditions of/for salvation.

- c. It's been suggested that these were the minimal requirements for communion/fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers, in a world/culture heavily influenced by idolatry and idol worship.
  - 3. Do they still apply to Gentiles in today's world?
- c. How was the letter received?
  - i. With rejoicing because of its encouragement.
  - ii. How were these requirements encouraging?
- d. Judas and Silas are described as prophets
  - i. This "suggests that prophetic ministry involved explanation and application of apostolic teaching, such as was found in the letter, and not simply prediction, as in the case of Agabus (13:28; 21:10-11), or special guidance, as with the commissioning of Barnabas and Saul for their missionary campaign (cf. 13:1-2)." Peterson, 441
  - ii. If that is true, what implications or bearing could this have on our understanding of the spiritual gift of prophecy and whether or not it continues today?

### **The take-away for us**

1. David Peterson quote [SLIDE]
2. Possible issues to consider next week:
  - a. To what extent is the Jerusalem Council a pattern for churches today in resolving conflict or theological differences?
  - b. Are the requirements for Gentiles still in force in today's world?
  - c. How does the Council's decision affect our understanding of the Mosaic Law and its place in our lives? Should it?
  - d. Is the gospel (i.e. truth of salvation) still at risk today?
    - i. Are there groups/churches/cults in our world that add to or subtract from the gospel?
    - ii. Do we ever do this, intentionally or unintentionally?

### **Resources**

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, F. F. Bruce, 1990
2. *The Book of the Acts*, F. F. Bruce, 1988
3. *The Acts of the Apostles*, David G. Peterson
4. *The Message of Acts*, John Stott
5. *The Acts of the Apostles*, Ben Witherington III