



Sunday Sermon Discussion Outline

Pastor Philip Thomas, February 28, 2021

Acts 15:1-41 – Handling Conflicts

We Learn:

Acts 15 describes two kinds of conflicts – one related to doctrine and practice, the other interpersonal. The question of whether Gentile believers should be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses was handled by the council of apostles, elders, and believers in Jerusalem by considering God's direct revelation, the witness of the Holy Spirit, and the fulfillment of scripture. An accommodation was made for the sake of the Jewish believers. The question of whether John Mark should accompany Paul and Barnabas on their next missionary journey was not as readily resolved. The disagreement between Paul and Barnabas became so heated that they ended up parting ways. Both conflicts provide lessons for us on how to handle conflicts.

- Why did this controversy about keeping the law of Moses arise in the Church?
- How did the Church deal with the issue? Why was the resolution an accommodation of the “weaker brother”? (See 1 Corinthians 8.)
- What were the matters of primary importance that the Jerusalem Council focused on? Why is it important for us to do the same?
- What caused the sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas? What was the result?
- What happened to Paul that he later changed his mind about John Mark? (See Colossians 4:10, 1 Timothy 4:11, and Philemon 24.)

We Respond:

- When handling conflicts, we tend to want to prove ourselves right, the other person wrong, and how we can get others to support us. How can we give up our rights?
- How should we think about doctrinal differences or interpersonal conflicts? Why is it important to seek to resolve these conflicts in God's and not our own wisdom?

We Apply:

- Why and how are repentance, forgiveness, and being willing to admit our mistakes essential for resolving conflicts?
- What can we do to turn to God every time we have a conflict?
- How can we receive God's help to handle conflicts?