

Living Water Fellowship

5th Sunday after Pentecost

27th June 2021

COME TO JESUS

PRE-SERVICE MEDITATION *Breakthrough (Red Rocks Worship)*

SONG: *Dwell in Your House*

WELCOME and PRAYER OF THE DAY:

SONG: *Blessed be Your Name*

GROW IN HIS GRACE

BIBLE READING: *Acts 15:1-21*

FAITH CHAT:

SONG: *Be Unto Your Name*

THE MESSAGE: *GETTING OUR ACTS TOGETHER: DISCERNING ACTS*

PRAYERS:

The Communion:

Words of Institution & The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, & the glory are yours now & forever. Amen.

Worship Video during Communion: O Come to the Altar (Elevation Worship)

GO IN HIS POWER

BLESSING:

**† _____, (Name), † child of God, the Holy Spirit make you
an open passage to life in Christ!**

Amen.

Announcements:

SONG: *Blessed Assurance*

SHOW HIS LOVE

ACTS 15:1-21

While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers: “Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved.”² Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question.³ The church sent the delegates to Jerusalem, and they stopped along the way in Phoenicia and Samaria to visit the believers. They told them—much to everyone’s joy—that the Gentiles, too, were being converted.

⁴ When they arrived in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the whole church, including the apostles and elders. They reported everything God had done through them.

⁵ But then some of the believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and insisted, “The Gentile converts must be circumcised and required to follow the law of Moses.”

⁶ So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue.⁷ At the meeting, after a long discussion, Peter stood and addressed them as follows: “Brothers, you all know that God chose me from among you some time ago to preach to the Gentiles so that they could hear the Good News and believe.⁸ God knows people’s hearts, and he confirmed that he accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us.⁹ He made no distinction between us and them, for he cleansed their hearts through faith.¹⁰ So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear?¹¹ We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus.”

¹² Everyone listened quietly as Barnabas and Paul told about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.¹³ When they had finished, James stood and said, “Brothers, listen to me.¹⁴ Peter has told you about the time God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for himself.¹⁵ And this conversion of Gentiles is exactly what the prophets predicted. As it is written:

¹⁶ ‘Afterward I will return and restore the fallen house of David.

I will rebuild its ruins and restore it

¹⁷ so that the rest of humanity might seek the Lord, including the Gentiles—
all those I have called to be mine.

The Lord has spoken—¹⁸he who made these things known so long ago.’

¹⁹ “And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.²⁰ Instead, we should write and tell them to abstain from eating food offered to idols, from sexual immorality, from eating the meat of strangled animals, and from consuming blood.²¹ For these laws of Moses have been preached in Jewish synagogues in every city on every Sabbath for many generations.”

Group Bible Study/Discussion:

1. Read Acts 15:1-21. What questions immediately come to mind? What do you hear God say to you as you read it a few times to yourself? What do you find most important in this text? Why?
2. Why did conflict & dissension arise at the church in Antioch? How did Paul & Barnabas respond? Why was this so serious (note Gal 1:6-10)? What would Paul consider the heart of the gospel? (note Gal 2:16-21)?
3. Imagine being a new Christian rejoicing in God’s saving love for you, & someone comes to tell you that you need to do something else before you are really saved. How would you feel? What might you do?
4. What proof was given that God had accepted the Gentiles solely on the basis of their faith? How did God “cleanse their hearts”? How has he cleansed yours?
5. What did Peter remind the Jewish believers about the law? How were they now “challenging God” by adding to the gospel? How is adding to the gospel actually a denial of the gospel’s power to save?
6. The real issue was not whether Gentile might become believers, but whether they must first become a Jew & follow Jewish Law. What impact might it have had on the church then, & today, if the decision had been that Gentiles must follow Jewish Law in order to follow Christ?
7. Why was the working of miracles also important to confirm the reports? How does James (Jesus’ brother) respond? What did James say that the church should **NOT** do?
8. What things **DID** they ask the Gentiles to do? Why did James offer this compromise (Acts 15:21)? What does this tell us about the reason behind this request? How do these requirements set these new disciples apart from their past? (see also 1 Pet 4:4)
9. Do you believe Christ actually transforms lives? How is he transforming you? Do your not-yet-Christian friends notice the difference? How do you explain it?
10. Think about your freedom in Christ. Share what you are **FREE FROM** and what you are **FREE FOR**. How are those important distinctions? How do both “freedoms” grow over the course of your life in Christ? With whom can you share that this week?