



The Acts of the Spirit

TURNING TO THE GENTILES



FAITH
CHURCH

ACTS 15:22-35

"THE RESPONSE"

JUNE 9, 2024

SUMMARY

This week, Pastor Jeff continued discussing "the debate that turned the world upside down." The issue arose when some Jewish believers claimed that faith alone was not sufficient for Gentiles to be saved – to be part of the people of God, they must obey the Mosaic law. Others, pointing to the teachings of Jesus and the obvious work of the Holy Spirit, defended Jesus' finished work on the cross that frees us from the requirements of the law. This debate – over who's "in" and how – nearly tore the church apart and is no less important today.

Pastor Jeff said this debate can be summarized into two questions:

1. How does someone gain access to God's grace?
2. How does someone give evidence of God's grace?

Three different camps attempted to answer these questions. They were:

Legalism: We are saved by faith AND following the Mosaic Laws

License: We are saved by faith and therefore free in Christ to demand our rights and freedom regardless of its impact on others.

Love: We are saved by Grace through faith and, therefore, use our freedom to lay down our rights for others' good.

In the text, Love prevailed. Gentile believers chose to obey some Mosaic law out of love for their Jewish brothers. They did this not in connection to their salvation, but so as not to be a stumbling block for others' faith. This wasn't an external limit on their Christian freedom, instead, it was a voluntary surrender of their freedom in love.

Pastor Jeff stressed that these three types of answers exist today, but the biblical and mature response is that of love because those who have received grace can extend it to others for their well-being.

In the text, we see that this news was received joyfully by those whom this debate impacted most: Gentile believers. Overjoyed by the news of their freedom in Christ, these people turned around and extended grace to their Jewish brothers.



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In light of this display of grace, Pastor Jeff rightly challenged us to consider how we can lay down our rights for others' salvation and spiritual well-being.

As we journey through this discussion today, let us answer that question honestly as we seek to let Grace produce grace in us.

DISCUSSION

Acts 15:22-35

What jumped out to you from the text?

What impact do you think this debate had on the church? Specifically, what do you think it was like for the Gentile believers waiting to hear news of the council's decision?

- In your own words, what do you think Jeff meant when he said, "Grace produces Grace?" Where do you see evidence of that in the text?

Pastor Jeff said there were three responses to this debate:

- **Legalism:** We are saved by works = slavery, anger, and exclusion
 - **License:** We are free in Christ and therefore free to demand our rights = Selfishness, uncaring, and division
 - **Love:** We are saved by grace through faith and therefore free to use our freedom for others = community, care, and joyful maturity
- We are all prone to legalism or license. Which one has been more of a temptation for you, and how has it impacted your life?
 - What do you think our culture leans towards, and why?
 - Which does Faith Church lean towards and why?
 - What allows someone to move toward the "Love" response of laying down their rights?
 - What do you think that explicitly looks like among our church family? What does that look like for our missions both locally and abroad?
 - What is one big takeaway from this conversation?
 - What is one thing you want to put into action this week?



This document can be used for either personal or group reflection.

Group facilitator: you do not need to ask every question but can select the best ones for your group dynamic.

Prayer

Pray for love to prevail and for the Holy Spirit to empower us to fight our responses of legalism and license.