

king's chapel

Community Group Discussion Guide

Week of May 18, 2014

This Week's Focus: The gospel is to be received by grace alone through Christ alone, yet there are things that we must turn away from and leave behind as we seek to walk with Jesus.

This Week's Text: Acts 15:13-35

"Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness;" **1 Timothy 4:7**

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. **Philippians 2:12-13**

"Faith cannot help doing good works constantly. It doesn't stop to ask if good works ought to be done, but before anyone asks, it already has done them and continues to do them without ceasing. Anyone who does not do good works in this manner is an unbeliever...Thus, it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light from fire!" **Martin Luther**

Related Texts: Jude 1:3; 2 Peter 1-16-19; Ephesians 2:13-15; 1 Corinthians 8:7-13, 10:14-22; 1 Thessalonians 1:9

Observations and Questions for Discussion:

- How has God spoken to you regarding the sermon and/or text?
- Who is James? What does the text suggest his role is in the Jerusalem Council?
- Read Amos 9:11-12. Why would James use these words to describe the work of the gospel among the gentiles? What is the difference and significance of James' use of the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew text?
- While Peter and Paul use experience to confirm the work of the Gospel among Gentiles, James uses scripture. What does that say about James' evaluation of what was happening? What does that say about God?

- What does this entire debate and event teach us about what to do when Christians differ?
- What are the four things they ask the Gentiles to abstain from? What is the significance?
- Read 1 Corinthians 8:7-13 and 10:14-22 as well as Romans 14:13-23. Discuss the problems that culture faced because of pagan meat sacrifices. What are some of the principles Paul teaches in these passages?
- What are some cultural differences you see around you?
- How would you define idolatry? What are some of the idols of this culture?
- If you feel comfortable, share with your community group some of the idols you had to turn from and leave behind?
- How does one grow in their sanctification without becoming self-righteous?
- In what ways do Christians elevate non-biblical cultural customs and traditions to the level of absolute principle?
- Are you willing to make some concessions for the sake of unity? If so, what kind?
- Have you ever labeled others as legalists because they were deeply committed to holiness?
- Do you repent of sin regularly because you are convicted about your sin?
- What is the one thing you walked away with from the deliberation and decision of the Jerusalem Council?
- How can we as a community continue to contend for the central truths of the gospel but be willing to concede on non-sinful cultural practices? Why is this important?
- Why do you think the church received the letter with joy and encouragement?

Gospel Celebration:

- Our salvation is not based on what we do (Praise God) but all that Jesus has already done.
- Because of the gospel, we get the privilege and joy of repenting of sin and receiving complete forgiveness.
- Salvation is a gift that cannot be earned, yet Jesus calls us to turn from idols to worship, love and serve the one true God.

Next Week's Text: Acts 15:36-16:5