

Acts of the Holy Spirit  
“God of the Impossible” – Series

NOTE TAKERS...

- I've titled today's message: **“Don't Stop The Momentum”**
  - (Acts 15:1-41) NKJV.

**~ INTRO ~**

NOW...

- As we come in (Acts 15)... Paul & Barnabas...
  - Had returned to Antioch of Syria from their 1<sup>st</sup> missionary trip...
    - With excitement & celebration of what God had done...
      - (Acts 14:27).

THE CHURCH WAS **ONBOARD**...

- Things were looking good...
  - BUT THEN... a crack in the unity erupted (Acts 15:1).
- A group of people wanted to manage the work of God...
  - By placing rules around the moving of God's Spirit.
    - (It was some Pharisees) (v.5)

AND WHILE THERE'S MUCH TO LEARN IN (Acts)...

- 85% of this chapter is spent on dealing with the cracks of unity...
  - And then another 10% on division between Paul & Barnabas.
- We read about (2) major arguments in this chapter...
  - (1) about God's grace & (2) about God's goals.

**HERE'S A FEW THINGS WE CAN GROW IN:**

**IDEA #1 – WHICH HILL TO DIE ON** (vv.1-5)

IN THE MODERN CHURCH...

- It's been said... that most church fights happen because of...
  - Methods & priorities:
    - How things are done & where money is spent.

AND... WHAT WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND...

- **Is the differences** between Essentials & Non-essentials.

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FOR EXAMPLE:

- *Essentials* = Center on the person & work of God. <sup>1</sup>
  - Deity of Christ (John 10:30)
  - Salvation by grace not by works (Eph. 2:8-9)
  - Salvation thru Jesus Christ alone (Acts 4:12)
  - The Gospel message (1 Cor. 15:1-4)
  - The resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:14)
  - Faith in God alone (Heb. 11:1 & 6)
  - The triunity of God – found all thru scripture!

ON THE OTHER HAND...

- *Non-essentials* = Focus on church methods & practices.
- It's OK to have preferences in our churches...
  - But it's never proper to **create an enemy IN the faith...**
    - Because we don't agree on the:
      - 1) Calendar of church events (Small groups)...
      - 2) Sanctuary chairs are too tall...
      - 3) Worship instruments (I want brass)...
      - 4) Why don't we have a choir?
      - 5) Why DO we charge for breakfast in the café?
      - 6) Why DO we have 1<sup>st</sup> time visitor parking?
      - 7) Why DO you talk so long ☺

THESE ARE PREFERENCES...

- *Non-essentials*.

AND... WE SHOULD NEVER DIVIDE OVER *non-essentials*!

THIS CHAPTER OPENS UP WITH AN ARGUEMNT... (v.2) NLT

- Over gentiles keeping the law of Moses (vs.) responding to grace alone.
  - So a delegation is sent to the Apostles in Jerusalem.

**IDEA #2 – THE SPIRIT / THE WORD / THE CHURCH** (vv.6-35)

a) *The Holy Spirit is the proof*

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<sup>1</sup> Got Questions Ministries – *What are the essentials of the Christian Faith?* Sourced on 05/18/2024 from <https://www.gotquestions.org/essentials-Christian-faith.html>

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(vv.6-9) – Peter with Gentiles 14-yrs earlier in Caesarea Maritima (Acts 10).

(vv.10-11) – This is happening in (AD 49)...

➤ Later in (AD 52) Paul wrote (Gal. 3:1-5) NLT

**HERE’S THE POINT:**

THE POWER OF SALVATION...

- Rests in placing faith in Jesus Christ alone...
  - In which the believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit.

b) *The Word is my direction*

(vv.12-18) – We have a quote from (Amos 9:11-12)

THE KEY TO ADVANCING THE GOSPEL...

- Is Grace not religion!

(vv.19-20) – The direction these believers got was simple:

- i. Avoid useless Old Covenant religious practices.
  - Don’t make it hard for others to get saved.
- ii. Live a life that avoids immorality.
  - Christ purified you... follow Him!
    - Don’t follow the practices of culture.
      - (Eph. 5:8-11) = Learn / live / & leave

c) *The Church is where I learn how to follow Jesus*

(vv.22-29) – The leaders of the early church cleared up the confusion.

➤ And made it simple to follow Jesus!

(vv.30-31 & 35) – The church rejoiced when they understood God’s will.

➤ Paul & Barnabas continued to teach & preach to them.

**IDEA #3 – ROUND TWO** (vv.36-41)

ANOTHER MISSION IS AT HAND...

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- As Paul and Barnabas gear up to hit the road again.

**HOWEVER...**

- Some team dynamics caused a dispute that got heated.
  - The same silly stuff we get tripped up on today.

**THAT’S WHY IT’S IMPORTANT...**

- To know *which hill to die on*...
  - And the difference between the essentials & non-essentials.

**THERE ARE TIMES...**

- When conflict will arises in our churches, and it seems dumb!

**YET...**

- God is at work, and He’s probably directing servants...
  - Into areas where help is needed...
    - And new growth will happen!

**SO... DON’T DISCOUNT...**

- What He’s doing in your life.
  - And don’t despise change.

**HIS PROMISE IS TRUE... (Rom. 8:28) NLT**

*“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purposes for them.”*

**~ IN CLOSING ~**

**HERE’S THE TAKE AWAY...**

- 1) **Persecution** (Acts 8:1) spread the work of the Gospel.
- 2) **Conflict** (Acts 15:39) divided the work of the Gospel.
- 3) **Learning** (Acts 15:32) strengthened the individual in the Gospel.

**~ LET’S PRAY ~**

**GOD CARES ABOUT YOU PERSONALLY...**