

Unity and Disagreement

1. They Celebrated Their Unity in the Jerusalem Letter (30-35).

2. Paul & Barnabas Had a Huge Fight and Separated (36-40).

3. How Can We Have Confidence in Church Leadership?

CONCLUSION: Right on the heels of one of the high points of unity in the Church's history two of its greatest evangelists separate over a vehement conflict. How can the Church survive, let alone thrive, with sinful leaders and our great propensity to fall apart in spectacular as well as mundane ways? And yet, we see God continue to work through frail, broken people. He accomplishes ministry through us in spite of our failings. Praise the Lord! Christ will build His Church.

Jeremiah 35: 15

I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, sending them persistently, saying, 'Turn now every one of you from his evil way, and amend your deeds, and do not go after other gods to serve them, and then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to you and your fathers.' But *you did not incline your ear or listen to me.*

Matthew 5: 21 – 24

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’²² But I say to you that *everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment*; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. *First be reconciled to your brother*, and then come and offer your gift.

Proverbs 22: 17 – 19

Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise,
and apply your heart to my knowledge,
for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you,
if all of them are ready on your lips.
That your trust may be in the Lord,
I have made them known to you today, even to you.
and all the nations who are called by my name,” declares the Lord who does this.

Acts—Series Overview

The Expansion of the Gospel Witness with Power

Acts records God’s faithful accomplishment of all that He promised in taking the gospel to the nations. It lays the groundwork for all that will take place as His Church awaits His return. Just as Jesus lived and spoke as the Father commanded, we now are called to do in the power of His Holy Spirit. While Jesus did this perfectly, we will strive imperfectly, constantly in need of the Holy Spirit’s direction, power, and correction. Nevertheless, our faithful God will work even through our failing efforts and His gospel witness through us will prevail and penetrate every nation, tribe, & territory. For the praise of our King!

Taking Gathered Worship Home

Right in the middle of the unity celebration the church's two leading stars get into a knock-down-drag-out fight and go their separate ways. What's going on here?! The Church is full of sinners saved by grace and God's Word won't let us forget it. The only true star is Jesus. He, and He alone, will build His Church. Praise be to Christ!

Please use the devotional material below each day this week to praise Christ. Ask Jesus to teach us His ways that we may walk in them to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday Morning

READ **Acts 15:30-40; First Thessalonians 2:11-13; Matthew 5:21-24**. DISCUSS, Have you ever struggled after a mountain-top experience? How can we guard ourselves against such disbelief? How does this challenge your thinking about following Jesus? PRAY "Jesus, Thank You for working through Your Church and leading Your elders to instruct us in Your ways."

Sunday Evening

Young Adults Fellowship at **6:00** pm. *Please come to FCCW's Library!*

Monday

READ **Acts 15:30-40; Jeremiah 35:15-19; Proverbs 22:17-19**. DISCUSS, Why is it important to incline our ears to God? Why are we so inclined not to? How can we encourage one another to listen to God instead of ignoring Him? MEDITATE on **First Thessalonians 2:11-13**. PRAY, "Father, make us delight in You so much that we would joyfully listen to You first and gladly do what you bid us do."

Tuesday

READ **Acts 15:30-40; First Kings 18-19**. DISCUSS, What happens to Elijah following his great victory on Mount Carmel? Why does he want to die? Can you relate? Do you know others who get swallowed by despair? Or anger? Or jealousy? Or ? How does faith in Christ's promises for His Church help us? MEDITATE on **First Thessalonians 2:11-13**. PRAY, "Jesus, thank You for loving us and for being so patient with us."

Wednesday

READ **Acts 15:30-40; Matthew 15:29-16:12**. DISCUSS, What are the disciples upset about on the other side after the feeding of the 4,000? Why is it ridiculous? How are you (we) likewise often ridiculous? How does faith in Christ free us to live according to God's commands? MEDITATE on **First Thessalonians 2:11-13**. PRAY, "Lord Jesus, forgive us for the many times we just don't get it. Teach us to trust You!"

Thursday

READ **Acts 15:30-40; Mark 14:1-72; Colossians 1:15-23**. DISCUSS, After all that Peter witnessed how could he deny Jesus? How is Christ going to present us? How are you anticipating that now through your thoughts, words, and actions? MEDITATE on **First Thessalonians 2:11-13**. PRAY, "Jesus, enable us to walk in Your ways."

Friday

READ **Acts 15:30-40; First Thessalonians 2:11-13; Matthew 5:21-24**. DISCUSS, How has God been teaching you from these passages this week? MEDITATE on **First Thessalonians 2:11-13**. PRAY for renewal and revival across our land.

Saturday

PREPARE today for the worship service tomorrow. *Both live-stream & in-person services are available.*

READ **Acts 15:40-16:40**. Invite others to join you tomorrow for either the *live-stream or in-person service*. Ask Jesus to help us love our neighbors well.

First Thessalonians 2: 11 – 13

"For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to **walk in a manner worthy of God**, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, **you accepted it** not as the word of men but **as what it really is, the word of God**, which is at work in you believers."