

# Share the *Experience*

**Week of January 17, 2021**

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How have you seen people complicate the message of Jesus?
2. Describe some of the requirements in Jewish Law (Deuteronomy and Leviticus) to become right with God. What do other religions teach about having a relationship with God? Contrast that with the simple message of Jesus.
3. In 2-3 minutes, describe your spiritual journey. At what point did you understand that salvation is by grace alone? Were there times when you were told grace was not enough -- that you needed to do something additional?
4. Read Acts 15:7-11. Imagine that audience as they were reminded of the Jewish system of religious practices which none of them was able to keep. How would this "simplification" of their religious culture have felt to them? How might some have struggled with it?
5. Paul Smith said, "God has made us stewards of the grace of God". How do you feel having that responsibility? What questions do you need to wrestle with to steward that well?
6. This year, how can your group remind each other to share this simple message?

## **Moving Forward**

While grace is simple, it is not free. Spend some time thanking God for His extraordinary grace in sending Jesus to pay the price for your sins. Then as a steward of that grace, who needs to hear that message? Pray for an opportunity to share with them.

### **Acts 14:27**

On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

### **Acts 15:1-15,19,30-31**

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”<sup>2</sup>This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.<sup>3</sup>The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad.<sup>4</sup>When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

<sup>5</sup>Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”

<sup>6</sup>The apostles and elders met to consider this question.<sup>7</sup>After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.<sup>8</sup>God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.<sup>9</sup>He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.<sup>10</sup>Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear?<sup>11</sup>No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

<sup>12</sup>The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.<sup>13</sup>When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me.

<sup>19</sup> It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.