Acts 15:22-41

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

James, the half brother of Jesus, and the Jerusalem leadership decide that the Gentiles do not need to be circumcised or to follow the law of Moses. In order to make their decision official they have two representatives deliver a letter to the believers in Antioch of Syria. The church is delighted to hear the good news as this not only relieves them from additional religious duties, it essentially acknowledges their equality with Jewish Christians.

However, this passage highlights a new division. Barnabas wants to bring Mark on a second missionary journey, but Paul doesn't want to bring Mark because he apparently abandoned them on their last journey. So Paul and Barnabas separate and Paul teams up with Silas one of the representatives sent from the Jerusalem council.

This passage illustrates that sometimes we won't agree with a fellow believer and we may even part company. If this happens we should look for other believers that we can partner with because God wants us to work as a team.

PRAYER

Each person prays for someone and offers a thanks to God for something positive that happened recently.

BIBLE READING

Acts 15:22-41

DRAMATIZATION

Play NLT Audio of part of passage: Acts 15:30-41, (start- 4:30, end- 5:48)

1. A letter is delivered to the church in Antioch by Silas and Judas (Barsabbas), and the people rejoice at the good news.
2. Paul and Barnabas argue about whether to let Mark join them.
3. Paul travels with Silas; Barnabas goes to a different place with John Mark.

QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the Christians in Antioch were so happy when they heard about this decision?
2. Why didn't Paul want Mark to join them? Do you think he was right or wrong?
3. What do we know about Silas?
4. What parts of this passage are most interesting to you?

POSSIBLE LESSONS

1. Jesus wants us to love him and refrain from sin. He does not command us to follow the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament. Our salvation is only by faith in Him.
2. Sometimes Christians can't always work well together, but as long as they serve God in their different ways that can be okay. Paul would later be thankful for Mark's help, see 2 Timothy 4:11.
3. Silas made it a point to encourage and strengthen other believers in Antioch. We should look for ways to do the same wherever we are.

VISUAL

"Saint Mark" by Frans Hals (circa 1627)

OBJECT

Greeting card to represent the letter from the Jerusalem council that encouraged the believers in Antioch of Syria. We should write notes of encouragement to others as well.

DRAWING ACTIVITY

Draw a quick sketch of an item or a scene from this passage. Then show it to the group and explain what and why you drew this.

WORSHIP

Sing the song- We Believe by Newsboys

PRAYER

One person close with a prayer that connects with this lesson.