

EMPOWERED

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF ACTS

Empowered Part 9 – Welcome Home Pastor Dave Patterson 10.16.2022

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to discuss the weekend message.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. Give priority to the needs and pace of your group members.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

[Acts 11:19; 21, NLT]

¹⁹ Meanwhile, the believers who had been scattered during the persecution after Stephen's death traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. They preached the word of God, ... ²¹ The power of the Lord was with them, and a large number of the Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord.

[Acts 14:1, NLT]

Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish synagogue and preached with such power that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers.

[Acts 15:1-11, NLT]

¹ While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers: "Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved."

² Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question. ³ The church sent the delegates to Jerusalem, and they stopped along the way in Phoenicia and Samaria to visit the believers. They told them—much to everyone’s joy—that the Gentiles, too, were being converted. ⁴ When they arrived in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the whole church, including the apostles and elders. They reported everything God had done through them. ⁵ But then some of the believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and insisted, “The Gentile converts must be circumcised and required to follow the law of Moses.” ⁶ So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue. ⁷ At the meeting, after a long discussion, Peter stood and addressed them as follows: “Brothers, you all know that God chose me from among you some time ago to preach to the Gentiles so that they could hear the Good News and believe. ⁸ God knows people’s hearts, and he confirmed that he accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. ⁹ He made no distinction between us and them, for he cleansed their hearts through faith. ¹⁰ So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? ¹¹ We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus.”

Legalism = Trying to earn your way through rules and regulations.

[Matthew 23:2; 4-5, NLT]

² “The Pharisees do not practice what they teach. ⁴ They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden. ⁵ Everything they do is for show.”

[Acts 15:12-18, NLT]

¹² Everyone listened quietly as Barnabas and Paul told about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. ¹³ When they had finished, James stood and said, “Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Peter has told you about the time God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for himself. ¹⁵ And this conversion of Gentiles is exactly what the prophets predicted. As it is written: ¹⁶ ‘Afterward I will return and restore the fallen house of David. I will rebuild its ruins and restore it, ¹⁷ so that the rest of humanity might seek the LORD, including the Gentiles — all those I have called to be mine. The LORD has spoken — ¹⁸ he who made these things known so long ago.’

Tabernacle of Moses = The law, the priesthood system, and limited access

Tabernacle of David = Grace, the Son of David's house, and a place of the presence

[Acts 15:19, NLT]

"It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God"

What removes the "difficulty" of turning to God?

1. When we encounter the grace of Jesus, not the law

[1 Corinthians 15:9-10, AMP]

⁹ For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church. ¹⁰ But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor (grace) upon me—and His grace toward me was not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace.

It's grace first then works will follow!

2. When we encounter the presence of Jesus, not a religious setting

There is no substitute to being in the presence of God

3. When we receive the unconditional love of Jesus

This love is not based on our performance or removed by our lack of performance!

[John 6:37, AMP]

All that My Father gives Me will come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will most certainly not cast out [I will never, never reject anyone who follows Me].

What removes the "difficulty" of turning to God?

1. When we encounter the grace of Jesus, not the law

2. When we encounter the presence of Jesus, not a religious setting

3. When we receive the unconditional love of Jesus

FOR MONDAY—

1. This week look for people that you can “welcome home.” Show the love of Jesus and grace through your words and actions.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas in your life that you are not living in the fulness of His love and grace.

TALK IT THROUGH

1. Share a time in your life when you felt “Welcomed Home” at church. How did that impact you?
2. What’s the difference between legalism and grace?
3. How does grace overcome the law? See Acts 15:12-18
4. What are some of the difficult hurdles in church we need to remove to reach those far from God? What can you do to make it easy for those far from God to have an encounter with Jesus?
5. How can we build a church that looks like Jesus?
6. Why is it pointless to follow a list of rules and regulations to earn God’s love? What is at the foundation of God's favor and grace in our lives? What qualifies us to be in God's presence?