

Best Place on Earth (part 5):
Oneness: “What Seems Right to Us and the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 15:1-29)
October 1, 2023

Acts 15:1–29 (NIV)

¹Certain 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.”

²This 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.

³The 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.

⁴When 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.

⁵Then 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.”

⁶The apostles and elders met to consider this question.

⁷After 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.

⁸God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.

⁹He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.

¹⁰Now 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?

¹¹No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

¹²The 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.

¹³When they finished; James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me.

¹⁴Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles.

¹⁵The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

¹⁶“ ‘After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,

¹⁷that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things’—

¹⁸things known from long ago.

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

²⁰Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.

²¹For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

²²Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers.

²³With them they sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings.

²⁴We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said.

²⁵So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul—

²⁶men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁷Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing.

²⁸**It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:**

²⁹You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.

I. How to experience oneness at VCPC?

1. The first way towards oneness is to _____ God's best rather than our own best.
2. The second way towards oneness is to _____ God's best as our best.
3. The third way towards oneness is to _____ God's best for VCPC.
4. The fourth way towards oneness is _____ God's best for VCPC.

II. Reflections:

1. Would you invite your friends to VCPC? Why or Why Not?
2. What are the top three things you love about VCPC?
3. What are the top three things you think is a challenge for VCPC?
4. What is an opportunity for VCPC?

Send your answers to text at 604.454.4919 or email at andy.gabruch@vcpc.ca.

Please NOTE your answers will be private and confidential.

Thank you.