

## What Only God Can Do

David Baumgartner

Acts 15:1-35

November 6, 2011



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# SETTING THE SCENE

- » Share with the group the biggest argument you've ever been a part of (family, work, etc). What was the key issue at stake and how did everything play out? Looking back, is there anything you would change about how you dealt with the issue? What was the end result of the situation?
- » How do you typically handle conflict when it comes up in your life? Are you the type who deals with it head on or do you prefer to try and avoid it at all costs? Why do you think you handle conflict the way you do? How do you wish you handled conflict? Is there anything you can do to start doing that or are you stuck in your ways?

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# THE STUDY

- » Share your overall thoughts and impressions from the sermon this morning. What things stand out to you? What did you learn? Where did God most challenge you? What questions do you still have about the passage or the sermon?
- » What was the issue that came up in Antioch when the men from Judea showed up? Why was this issue so critical? Why do you think Paul & Barnabas reacted the way they did? Were they right to react so strongly?
- » Read **GALATIANS 2:11-16**. What does Paul say in this passage that Luke doesn't include in his narrative? Why is the Galatians passage important for your understanding of the overall issue at stake? How does Paul handle Peter? Do you think he was right to respond so publicly? How would you have handled it?
- » How does the church in Antioch deal with the conflict that arises between the men from Judea and Paul & Barnabas? What can we learn from their response (personally and as a church)?
- » Why is the issue of Grace Alone or Grace Plus so important theologically? Is this still an issue today? Give examples of how even Christians today struggle with adding to God's grace. Why is it so important to understand that there is nothing we can do to add to God's gift of salvation?
- » What does Peter say in his speech (**ACTS 15:7-12**) that is so important for the topic at hand? What does he say that the Judaizers might not like? What does he say that still applies today? Why is **ACTS 15:11** so important? Why do you think this is the last time that Luke ever mentions Peter in the book of Acts?
- » In **ACTS 15:13** Paul & Barnabas share what God had been doing through them with the Gentiles. Why was this important to the issue at hand? Why do you think the group was silent during their speech? How do you see God working through the church today?
- » What does James add to the conversation in **ACTS 15:14-21**? Why do you think he added the prohibitions for the Gentiles and how is this different from those requiring circumcision for salvation? Do you think we should still be following the prohibitions James outlines here? Why or why not?
- » Read the letter that is sent to the churches in **ACTS 15:22-30**. What's important about the letter (think about the content as well as the context)? Why do you think it was important for them to send a letter as well as delegates to the church in Antioch? What did Judas & Silas do once they got to the church in Antioch and why was that significant?
- » How did the church in Antioch receive the letter and the delegates? Why do you think they accepted the message so joyfully even though it included some prohibitions? What lesson can we take away from how this entire situation was handled by the church and the church leaders?
- » What one thing do you personally take away from this passage and the story Luke is telling? How can you use that in your daily walk with Christ? What lessons does the church need to take away from this story and how it all unfolded?

# APPLICATION

- » How do Christians today try and add to God's grace? How have you (or are you now) tried to earn God's favor or tried to add to God's grace in your own spiritual journey? Write it down below...
- » Share with the group one thing you took from the message this morning that you need to put into practice in your life. Discuss how the group can help you do it and stay accountable to it.
- » Who do you know that needs to accept God's grace without trying to earn it or add to it? What did you learn through the message this morning and the group discussion that you might be able to share with them? Pray as group for each situation and discuss how you can have these conversations.
- » Discuss how you felt during the prayer healing service this morning. Did you struggle having faith that God would heal? Was it hard for you or easy? If you were being prayed for, share your experience with the group and pray together again...asking God to do what only He can do!
- » Share any unanswered questions or comments you have as a result of the group discussion or sermon...

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## PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- » Next week we finish out **ACTS 15:36-16:15**. Read the passage (or at least the first portion). What were the key issues in the story? Why do you think Paul includes these stories in the narrative?
- » Are you surprised that Paul & Barnabas disagree about John Mark so much that they separate? How should they have resolved their differences? Do you think it affected their ministry? How so?
- » Read this passage several times during the week and ask God to show you what He wants you to learn from the passage. Take notes and journal your thoughts and ideas (and questions) throughout the week. What did He show you throughout the week that you need to put into practice?
- » What questions do you still have after reading and studying this passage? Bring them with you next week...

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## CARING COMMUNITY

- » **SHARE** with the group how God has been speaking in your life or challenging you this past week (this may be as a result of the sermon or something in your personal journey). Is there anything from this week's LifeGroup discussion you need to work on?
- » Are there any **NEEDS** you have coming up in your life that the group can help you with (this may include spiritual needs, life needs, pretty much anything...)
- » **PRAY** for one another. Share your requests and praises with one another. Write them down here. If you commit to praying, please be sure you do it...