

Big Church

Week 5: big Drift

**Question:** How did the message of Jesus survive the first century?

**Big Controversy:** Who should be a part of the church?

Matthew 5:17

<sup>17</sup>“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

**Local Church Conflict:** The truth of the gospel, *it seems*, comes into conflict with the grace of the gospel.

Acts 15:1

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.”

Acts 15:2

<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.

Acts 15:4

<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.

Acts 15:5

<sup>5</sup>Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up...

Acts 15:5

...the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”

Acts 15:7

<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.

Acts 15:8

<sup>8</sup> God, who knows the heart,

Acts 15:8-9

<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.

Acts 15:10

<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?

Acts 15:11

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

**God can purify a heart before you purify your life.**

Acts 15:19

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

**We should not make it difficult for the ANYONE who is turning to God.**

Acts 15:20

<sup>20</sup> Instead 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.

Acts 15:21

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

Acts 15:31

<sup>31</sup> The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message.

**3 Drifts to avoid as the Local Church** (List them separately)

- 1) The drift toward insiders and away from outsiders.
- 2) The drift toward law and away from grace.
- 3) The drift toward preserving rather than advancing.

**Let's not make it difficult.**