

Recap of 2/6/22 message by Chris Sommerfield – Acts 15:36-40

Faithfulness Amidst Disagreement

TAKE HEART, WE ARE NOT ALONE

- Disagreement among believers is not new. We see it all the way back in the early church among two leaders such as Paul and Barnabas. When we experience disagreement today, we can be encouraged because even this sharp disagreement did not halt the ministry of the relationship of Paul and Barnabas.
 - We are all broken instruments used by God, and sometimes that brokenness means there will be mistakes. These often come in the form of disagreement and even though it can be a painful experience at times, we can still be encouraged that the early church did not fail but blossomed amidst disagreement.

GOD IS WORKING EVEN IN DISAGREEMENT

- God uses this disagreement to do some amazing things.
 - God uses this to create two ministries in the place of one. The mission efforts of Paul and Barnabas are doubled.
 - We also see the wisdom of God in the pairings of Paul and Silas and Barnabas and Mark (John Mark).
 - Silas was uniquely positioned for the future ministry to Rome. Silas was a Roman citizen, as was Paul (Acts 16:37). He was a prophet and well respected in the church (Acts 15:32). He also was likely skilled in Greek as he helped Peter write his letters (1 Peter 5:12). These skills and qualifications would have helped a great deal in a ministry to the Gentile people of Rome.
 - Mark, having experienced what could be perceived as an early ministry failure in his leaving Paul and Barnabas in Pamphylia, likely needed encouragement. Being paired with Barnabas (son of encouragement, was probably helpful in his growth and his eventual writing of the gospel of Mark and coming to Paul's aid later in ministry.
 - God's ways are higher than our own. We may not see the whole picture and not understand what God is doing in the midst of disagreement, but we should have faith for His knowledge and perspective are perfect and far beyond what we can understand.

REMAIN FAITHFUL AMIDST DISAGREEMENT

- It would have been so easy for Paul or Barnabas to quit after experiencing a moment like this, but they remained faithful to God and their call to minister to others. We too need to remain faithful amidst disagreement. Three principles can help us.
 - First, we need to stay on mission. We need to have an eternal perspective that souls are at stake and that disagreement, even when painful, cannot remove us from participating in the mission of God.
 - Second, we need to know ourselves - how we are formed by God. Understanding our inclinations can help us better understand opposing views as well as recognize how God may be directing us toward other ministry paths.
 - Third, we need to remain humble. When we disagree with other believers if we allow pride to creep in we can become entrenched in our opinions leading to breaking relationships and possibly damaged ministry. Humility allows us to work toward understanding others' opinions and how they reached them giving us a common ground to be able to communicate more effectively.

***Important Note to Remember - This is not a doctrinal disagreement. That was covered earlier in Acts 15. This is a disagreement in opinion between believers.