

# Grace, A Beautiful Mess

## ACTS 15

### A. Legalism - Acts 15:1-20 (Don't forget to REMEMBER)

**le-gal-ism noun** - 1. strict adherence to law, but to the letter rather than the spirit. 2. The doctrine that salvation is gained through good works. 3. Judging conduct in terms of adherence to precise laws.

- 1) Religious leaders of Jesus' day struggled with \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) The early church \_\_\_\_\_ with legalism.
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ and I struggle with legalism.

### WHY? (TIME FOR CONFESSION)

- Because we are \_\_\_\_\_ messed up!
- Just like \_\_\_\_\_ else!

### B. Leadership – Acts 15: 22-29 (Grace-based leaders are LIFE GIVING)

**lead-er-ship noun** – 1. a person or persons who guides or directs a group 2. Influence exerted toward uniting a group to function together toward a common goal. 3. a position of authority matched with the power to lead.

- 1) God's response to legalism (our mess) is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) God's response to legalism (our mess) is \_\_\_\_\_ filled leadership.
- 3) God's response through leadership is a \_\_\_\_\_ filled letter.

### WHAT? (TIME FOR CONCESSION)

- Is there a grace-filled letter you need to \_\_\_\_\_?
- Is there a grace-filled letter you need to \_\_\_\_\_?

### C. Liberty – Acts. 15:30-35 (Liberation attracts others to CHRIST IN YOU)

**lib-er-ty noun** - 1. freedom from arbitrary or despotic government or control. 2. power or right of doing, thinking, speaking, etc., according to choice. 3. freedom from captivity, confinement, or physical restraint.

- 1) In the midst of the mess, grace \_\_\_\_\_ the church.
- 2) In the midst of the mess, grace \_\_\_\_\_ believers.
- 3) In the midst of the mess, grace \_\_\_\_\_ the advance of the Gospel.

### HOW? (TIME FOR CONNECTION)

- **Grace creates a BEAUTIFUL MESS.**  
(We are the mess. Jesus is the beauty)
- **Christ in you is the hope of glory!**  
(You are the attraction God uses to draw others to the Kingdom!)

## **GRACE FELLOWSHIP STATEMENT OF FAITH**

**THE BIBLE** - We believe that the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the only complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the Divine and final authority for Christian faith and life. (Matthew 5:18; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21)

**GOD** - We believe that God eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; John 1:1-2, 14, 10:30, 14:15-17; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 13:14). We believe that God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe; that creation was a direct act of God who spoke the cosmos into being from nothing. (John 1:3, 10; Acts 17:24-25; Genesis 1:1)

**JESUS, GOD THE SON** - We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been born of a virgin. He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High Priest and Advocate. (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; Hebrews 1:1-2, 7:25; Luke 1:30-35; Ephesians 4:8; John 1:1-5, 10-14, 14:3; Colossians 2:9; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 1:3,11; Revelation 20:4)

**GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**- We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the sinner, in-dwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service. (John 3:5, 16:7-11; Acts 5:3-4; Ephesians 1:13, 4:30, 5:18; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 12:13)

**MAN** - We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin, and is therefore lost; and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained. (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 1:18, 3:23, 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12)

**SALVATION** - We believe that salvation is a gift of God and that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God. (Acts 13:38-39; Romans 4:5, 6:23, 8:1, 38-39; John 10:27-29; Ephesians 2:8-9)

**THE CHURCH** - We believe that the true Church is composed of all such persons, who through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ, of which He is Head. That only those who are thus members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church, and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs. (Acts 2:42, 47; Romans 12:5; Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:23-24; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2)

**THE ORDINANCES** - We believe that water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during this present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38, 41, 8:12, 35-38; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29)

**THE CHRISTIAN LIFE** - We believe that a Christian should walk in holiness and not after the flesh, with the goal of being conformed to the image of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As a new creation, walking in the Spirit, the Christian learns to grow in faith, in obedience to Scripture, in prayer, in fellowship with the saints and in a life of service. We believe that the Christian will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to have his life evaluated according to his deeds. (Galatians 5:16-26; Hebrews 10:25; Ephesians 4:20-24; Hebrews 11:6, 12:1-2; John 17:17; Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15)