



Acts15:1-35



Overview

Over the next three weeks we are celebrating Missions Month. This marks a time where we put money aside for those who need it. On Sunday Pastor Steve reminded us we can either set the bar as low as possible or show that our relationship with God is alive and vitally important to how we do mission. Today we will look at how the Spirit of God is presented in Acts 15:1-35 and the difference He makes to Christianity and to mission.



Getting to Know You

What are some challenges and benefits of living in a different culture? Or What is something about mission at MABC that encourages you?



Digging Deeper

“You need to get circumcised in order to be a proper Christian. . .” (vv. 1 & 5)

1. Read Acts 15:1-2 and talk about the statement by some people from Judea. Does this sound ridiculous to you? Why or why not? Consider things:
 - a) **Culturally** (i.e., would it be strange like hearing someone today say “you need to carry your school bag on one shoulder not two” or “you have to blow your nose on tissue & put it back in your pocket...”
 - b) **Theologically** in terms of the gospel (i.e., does circumcision have anything to do with God’s salvation now that Jesus has come?)
2. Read verses 6 to 11 and notice the way the Spirit of God is presented in Peter’s sermon to the congregation in Jerusalem.

As a little bit of background . . . in Old Testament times if you were unclean you had to wash and go through various ceremonies to go before God and have fellowship with Him. Salvation in the New Testament has a similar picture. When someone believes in Jesus they are forgiven and “purified” (or “cleansed”). Now clean, the Spirit of God indwells every believer and enables them to walk with God in new life. This is good news!

⁸ God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹ He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. (Act 15:8-9 NIV)

3. According to these verses, who makes the Phoenicians, Samaritans and other non-Jews who believe in Jesus accepted?
4. Given the gospel is truly for all people and cultures how should we as Christians do mission to Muslims or Buddhists? Should we just say 'our backgrounds are too different'?



Taking it Home

1. What can we do to our cultural practices in order to reach new immigrants to New Zealand or overseas people groups for the gospel?
2. What would an attitude of acceptance to a Muslim or Hindu look like? What sort of things would you consider when communicating the gospel to a Muslim or Hindu?
3. Start praying and planning about what you can set aside so that you can give to others during missions month



Prayer

As a believer in Jesus you are forgiven and enabled by the Spirit of God to serve him where he has you. Spend a few moments thanking God for this. As you consider what to give up for others start by reviewing your walk with God and think about what it looks like to trust Him.