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| **Faithful Heralds of the Gospel**  *Promise: we are saved by grace received by faith in Christ* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Acts 15:21; Psalm 46; Galatians 2:1-10; Matthew 16:13-19 (St Peter & Paul, Apostles), 6/29/25)  *So we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.* – Gal. 2:16  **Lead In –** It’s too good to be true. There must be something we must do. It can’t just be a gift that we must humbly receive with thanksgiving. How can it be a gift that we have in no wise earned or deserved? Friends, it is with this thinking and the difficulty in receiving a gift that causes people to alter the gospel, the message of our salvation. We reason there must be something more than grace by itself, and faith by itself, to receive Christ alone to saves us. We want Jesus, plus something. And yet the authentic message is Christ alone saves us.   1. **We Commemorate Two Great Leaders in the Church**    1. Both looked to as leaders among leaders…    2. Peter was the first to make the good confession…    3. Both lived and then died for the Gospel in Rome… 2. **Dispute Breaks Out at Antioch, Church Council Called**    1. Jewish Christians had come down from Jerusalem…    2. Antiochian Church sends delegation up to Jerusalem…    3. Testimony of the two pivotal Apostles… 3. **Sinful Pride to Try to Make It Jesus Plus Something…**    1. Christ fulfills the Law on our behalf, where we fail …    2. Ceremonial and ritual Law has served its purpose …    3. The Law shows us our sin. The Gospel shows us…   **Final Word –** Friends, you can bet the devil spares no effort to make a shipwreck of our faith. If he fails to plug and stop our ears to the hearing of the Gospel, then he toys with the Gospel Message itself. Instead of Jesus alone, he changes the message to Jesus plus. He insists that there is something we must do. He tries to create doubt in us that God would give us a rich gift without an effort on our part to be worthy of it. He even suggests that trying to keep God’s commandments is the way to do so. But with this addition, the good news has been taken away. This ends up as no Gospel at all! Thank God for His instruments, the Apostles Peter and Paul, that they took such pains to make clear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Salvation is by grace, received through faith, by trusting in Christ alone! Peter and Paul bore witness to this in their lives, and in their deaths. Not Jesus plus. But Jesus alone! Thanks be to God. Amen.  **Mt 20:25-26** “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you.”  **Mt 16:16-17** Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.”  **1Co 12:3** …no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.  **Ep 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.  **Earlier in Acts 6** The Apostles and disciples gathered together in Council to address a problem in the distribution of food to widows… | **Acts 15:1-21 ESV**  *The Jerusalem Council*  1But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” 2And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. 3So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. 4When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. 5But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.”  6The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. 7And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, 9and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. 10Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 11But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”  12And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. 13After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. 14Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. 15And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,  16“‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, 17that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things 18known from of old.’  19Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, 20but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. 21For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.”  **Ac 10:44-45** While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.  **1Co 15:7** Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.  **Mt 5:17** “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.”  **Ro 10:4** For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.  **In Mark 7** Jesus taught that what is taken into the mouth does not defile, but what comes out of the heart. He thereby declared all foods clean.  **In Rom 7** Paul taught that the Law was holy, righteous and good. But we cannot keep it. It shows us our sin. So we can be thankful for it helps to predispose us to receive the Gospel that shows us our Savior… |