


LOVE THAT LAYS DOWN RIGHTS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS


ACTS 21:15-22:29

OPENING UP: In Acts 21-22, Paul displays how gospel clarity and church unity are worth suffering for. Why do you think unity in the church is so important?

 Read John 17:20-23 and Ephesians 4:1-6. How do these passages resonate with or expand on what you discussed about the importance of Christian unity? Consider how it displays the power of the gospel to reconcile diverse people and how it impacts our witness to the world. What are some of the ways that disunity can distract from or hinder our mission as a church?

1 When Paul arrives in Jerusalem, he learns of rumors that were spreading among Jewish believers that he was teaching that God forbid Jews from following the law of Moses and that he had desecrated the temple by bringing a Gentile into it (See Acts 21:20-21, 28-29). This wasn't true, and that's not what Paul was actually preaching—he taught that *Gentiles* weren't required to follow the Mosaic law, but he didn't forbid Jewish believers from doing so if they wanted to. Discuss together the danger of these rumors.

 How do rumors and reductionism threaten the health of the church today? Consider James 3:5-10 and Prov. 16:28.

 What are some ways that we can avoid reducing and limiting the gospel? What is one step you can take to better equip yourself to represent the gospel faithfully?

2 What do we learn from Paul's willingness to give up his rights for the sake of others? See also 1 Cor. 9:19-23.

♥ *Paul's example is not a model for being silent when truth should be spoken. It is a call to be shaped more by the cross than by the culture. To ask, "What will serve the gospel here?" more than "What do I deserve right now?" When are you most tempted to assert your rights rather than lay them down for the sake of others?*

3 How should we deal with differences in convictions that deal with areas of Christian liberty—areas of freedom in Christ that are not sinful? Discuss how we could apply the following principles:

✎ *We are to avoid acting in ways that might cause others to stumble (Romans 14:13, 21; 1 Corinthians 8:13).*

We are to seek to edify our brothers and sisters (Romans 14:19; 15:2; 1 Corinthians 8:1; 10:23).

We are to promote the spread of the gospel (Romans 15:8; 1 Corinthians 9:12, 23).

We are to seek to bring glory to God (Romans 15:7; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

4 In Acts, Paul displays incredible patience as he persistently tries to reason, speak, and win over those who oppose him, even when they've tried to take his life multiple times. (Acts 9:23–25, Acts 13:45–50, Acts 14:1–6, Acts 14:19, Acts 17:5–9, Acts 17:13, Acts 18:12–17) Why do you think Paul was so patient with those who oppose him? Consider how his past may have shaped his response. (1 Timothy 1:13, Romans 10:21, 1 Peter 2:23)

♥ *How can remembering our own stories of grace impact the way we treat others who reject or misunderstand us?*

🗨️ *How does Paul's example call us to a life of sacrificial witness—even in suffering?*