

* ACTS

The Continuing Work of Jesus

So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words. And after they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

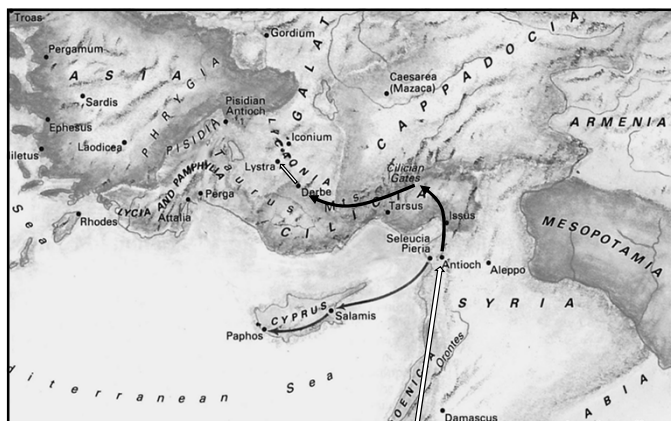
And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are." Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other.

Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

(Acts 15:30-16:5)

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Growth, Unity,
and a Little Disagreement



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Growth and unity in the church come from...

1. A refusal to compromise on gospel issues (15:31)

Q: What are "gospel issues"?

A: Gospel issues are those things that are at the core of the message about Jesus Christ: the only way to be saved is through God's grace alone, by faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone.

Growth and unity in the church come from...

1. A refusal to compromise on gospel issues (15:31)

2. A commitment to compromise on non-essential issues (16:3)

Q: How is this not a compromise on gospel issues?

A: This is no longer about the issue: "How can you be saved?" but "Who are we living among and how can we adopt cultural customs in order to not unnecessarily offend them?"

A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.
A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.

- Martin Luther

Growth and unity in the church come from...

1. A refusal to compromise on gospel issues (15:31)

2. A commitment to compromise on non-essential issues (16:3)

3. An ability to forgive and keep working when compromise seems impossible (15:18-41)