



Everyday FAITH Family Page

New Testament 5

Law/Gospel

I sin when I believe that Jesus is not enough for my salvation or when I think that I must do something, however small, to contribute to my salvation. **Jesus has done it all perfectly for me. In Him, my salvation is complete.**

Bible Words

[Peter said,] "But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

Acts 15:11

The Big Picture

This meeting of the apostles and elders became known as the Jerusalem Council. Later, Church councils met when false teaching arose. Using Scripture as their source, the Church preserved the purity of the Gospel.

Martin Luther wrote that the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of believers. So, if council members represent the people of God, the council is true and ruled by the Spirit. A true council gathers God's faithful people to preserve and teach the pure Word of God.

Paul and Timothy

Acts 15:1–16:5

As the Holy Spirit brought Gentiles to faith in Christ, questions arose about whether they should submit to the requirements of the old covenant, especially circumcision. Although Jesus fulfilled these ceremonial laws, many Jewish Christians continued to practice them. Some believers, including Christian Pharisees, insisted that the Gentiles had to keep the Old Testament laws to be saved.

The Church in Antioch sent Paul, Barnabas, and some others to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem to ask whether God saved us by the grace of Christ alone or by grace plus rites, ceremonies, and practices.

The apostles and elders gathered and debate ensued. Peter, Paul, and Barnabas spoke about seeing the Spirit save Gentiles and cleanse their hearts through faith in Jesus. Led by the Holy Spirit and Scripture, not human reasoning, the group concluded that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone.

But to avoid offending Jewish believers, the leaders advised Gentiles to "abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality" (v. 29).

The first and last things avoided confusing Christian teaching with practices of idol worshipers. Refraining from sexual immorality also honors the body, a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:18–20).

Not eating blood or strangled animals avoided offending Jews who did not eat these things and felt appalled at those who did (Romans 14:20–23). This showed love and respect for the Jews, so that nothing would hinder them from receiving faith in Christ.

Later, Paul circumcised Timothy, son of a Jewish mother in Lystra, to avoid offending the Jews on their next missionary journey. Circumcision did not save Timothy, but made him acceptable to Jews with whom they hoped to share the Good News about Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Holy Spirit, keep us in true faith in our risen Savior, Christ Jesus, our Lord. In His name we pray. Amen.

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