



Week 20 | March 3 Sermon

Community:

This is the final week of Acts 2.0 discussion and teaching, as Lent teaching begins next Sunday, March 10. As a reminder, discussion guides will not be provided during the weeks of Lent. Take some time in your “Community Time” to talk through options for your meetings during Lent. Of course, sermons will still be preached so you could continue your discussion of them. Other options include, but are not limited to:

- Utilize the Seek God for the City books/app to stay in communal prayer during Lent. Kid versions of these guides are available as well. If your GROUP has kids involved, consider having them join you in this experience. It is so good for them to see healthy and prayerful community modeled for them. (These are available at the church at all entrances this Sunday.)
- Do a different topical study. There are new options of studies in the GROUPS resource library in room 100!
- Choose a daily online reading plan as a group to discuss when you are together. Examples of these can be found on the YouVersion or She Reads Truth/He Reads Truth apps.
- Serve together
- Fast together
- Gather socially and for the purpose of celebration
- Take a break if needed/desired
- Be intentional about inviting new people in while you’re out of routine. Our goal is to multiply!
- Any combination of these!

Talk about Lent and your personal experiences/feelings towards it. Here is a good synopsis for discussion:

Lent is the six week period leading up to Easter. It’s one of the most important times of year for many Christians around the world, held at a similar level of importance to Advent – the build up to Christmas.

While Advent is a celebration and a time of great anticipation, Lent is more frequently seen as a time of solemn observance and preparation for the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter. From its start on Ash Wednesday until its conclusion on Easter Sunday, Lent has been a traditional time for fasting or giving something up. Just as we carefully prepare for events in our personal lives, as a wedding, or birthday; a commencement Lent invites us to make our minds and hearts ready for remembering Jesus’ life, death and body resurrection.

Sermon Title: The Jerusalem Council | Text: Acts 15

Auditorium Discussion Questions::

Tom had us profile Paul, Peter, and James and their Level 1 (personal relationship with Jesus Christ) background and temperaments. With which of the three do you most identify? Why?

The key players in the Jerusalem council had differences in the constituency they were ministering to on Level 2 (interaction with the Body of Christ). Can you think of believers who have very different thoughts or opinions than yourself because of the people to whom they minister? How do you handle these differences? How should we navigate these differences?

The "Judaizers" who were insisting that all believers follow Jewish customs had cultural blinders on and expected all believers to be like them in beliefs, customs, and religious practices that were not essential to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What "cultural blinders" have you observed in the body of Christ today?

With what Level 3 (worldly power) systems were each of the key players in the Jerusalem Council experiencing conflict? What different pressures might each of them feel because of this?

Think about today, how does the Jerusalem Council inform us about handling essential theological issues in our present day world with fellow believers who live and minister in many different diverse backgrounds, systems, and circumstances?

*Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. **Hebrews 10:24-25***

GROUPS

Sanctuary Discussion Questions::

How is the threat to unity a threat to the great mission God gave his disciples?

Why does contextualization of the gospel matter? How can you better seek to understand the people with whom you have a witness to help them understand the truth of the gospel in a way that makes sense to them?

How can you humbly choose to submit to someone with whom you have a disagreement out of reverence for Christ?

Who are 2-3 people God has placed in your life whom you could pray for, built trust with, and have spiritual conversations with in the coming weeks?

Who might you consider inviting to church this Easter as the gospel is shared and an invitation is made to take a step toward following Jesus?