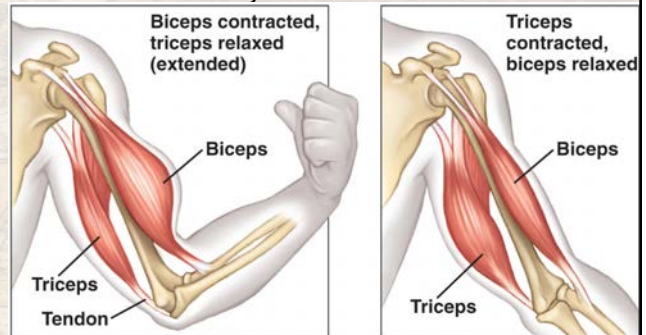


Muscles in the Human Body

- What are “opposing muscle groups”?
- When do we need them?



When else do we need “opposing muscles” in life?

What can go wrong with “opposing muscles” in life?

How might this happen in the church?

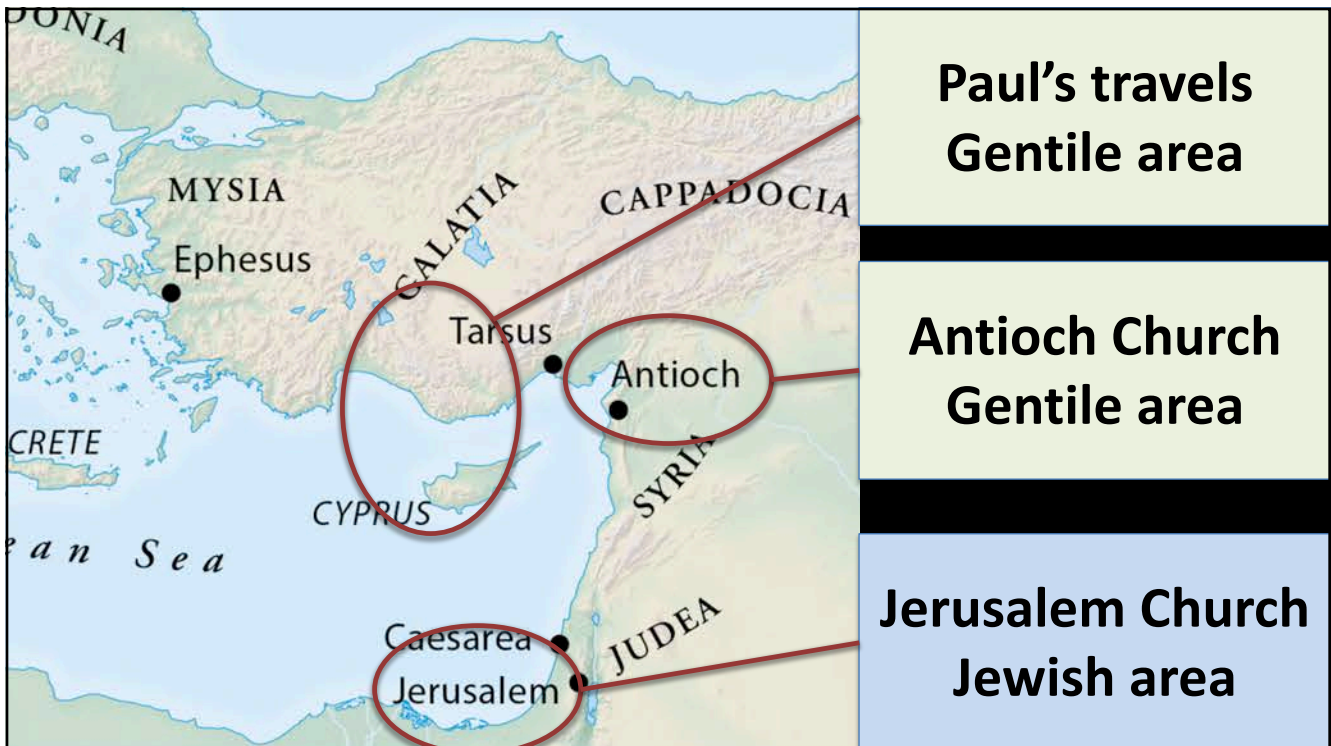
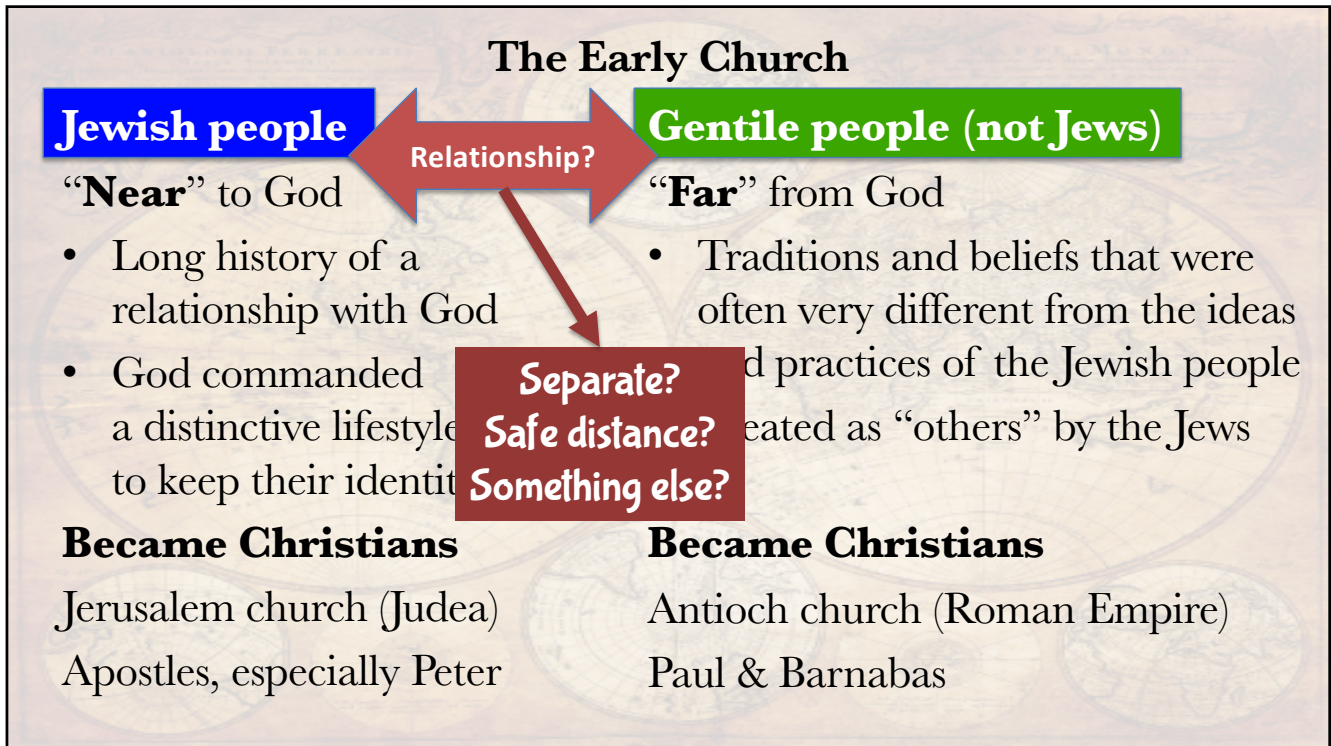
Pray: God’s “wisdom”: head, heart, and hands

Grace Alone Together

Acts 15:1-35

Chinese: page 1792
 Spanish: page 1407
 English-Green: page 755
 English-Brown: page 1108
**** larger print**





Acts 15:1-35 **Gentile area** **Jewish area**

1-5:	
6-11:	
12:	
13-21:	
22-29:	
30-35:	

Chinese: page 1792
 Spanish: page 1407
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Acts 15:1-35 **Gentile area** **Jewish area**

1-5:	Some Jewish Christians required Gentiles to become Jews in order to be accepted as Christians
6-11:	• Circumcision and the law of Moses
12:	• Many rules about acceptable food, special days, separation from ‘unclean’ things and people
13-21:	• Explicitly taught in the Old Testament, plus “fences”
22-29:	• They questioned salvation, and created separation
30-35:	• Pharisees who became Christians: super strict
	• So the Antioch church sent Paul and Barnabas and others to the Jerusalem church
	• A scary step! What will they say?

Chinese: page 1792
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<i>Acts 15:1-35</i>		Gentile area	Jewish area
1-5:	Some Jewish Christians required Gentiles to become Jews in order to be accepted as Christians		
6-11:	Apostles & elders met: Peter defended “ grace alone ”		
12:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much discussion: an important & challenging issue 		
13-21:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter represented the apostles (first leaders) 		
22-29:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was sent by God to welcome a Gentile as a Christian 		
30-35:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “God made a choice”: sent by God, gift of Spirit • “among you”: the Jews, in Palestine • Salvation: by grace of Jesus; same for everyone! • God witnessed to Gentiles’ genuine rebirth in Christ 		

<i>Acts 15:1-35</i>		Gentile area	Jewish area
1-5:	Some Jewish Christians required Gentiles to become Jews in order to be accepted as Christians		
6-11:	Apostles & elders met: Peter defended “ grace alone ”		
12:	Barnabas & Paul told of God’s work among Gentiles		
13-21:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Silence” contrasts with “much discussion” 		
22-29:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perhaps a response both to what precedes (Peter) and what follows (Barnabas & Paul) 		
30-35:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis: what “God had done” among Gentiles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not Paul’s reasons and strategies, or his sense of the Spirit’s leading, or response of Gentiles, or joy of the rest of the church 		

<i>Acts 15:1-35</i>		Gentile area	Jewish area
1-5:	Some Jewish Christians required Gentiles to become Jews in order to be accepted as Christians		
6-11:	Apostles & elders met: Peter defended “ grace alone ”		
12:	Barnabas & Paul told of God’s work among Gentiles		
13-21:	James proposed a solution: “ grace alone together ”		
22-29:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James: Jesus’ half brother (not the apostle James) 		
30-35:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represented the elders (emerging authorities) • Emphasized God’s initiative and prophecy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “God intervened to choose a people for His name” • By grace, not by following the Law • Prophecy: Gentiles added to Jews in God’s family • Gentiles should adjust to enable fellowship 		

<i>Acts 15:1-35</i>		Gentile area	Jewish area
1-5:	Some Jewish Christians required Gentiles to become Jews in order to be accepted as Christians		
6-11:	Apostles & elders met: Peter defended “grace alone”		
12:	Barnabas & Paul told of God’s work among Gentiles		
13-21:	James proposed a solution: “grace alone together”		
22-29:	Broad agreement: Send word to the Gentiles		
30-35:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People were sent to witness to the written message • 2 parts of the message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is saved by grace alone: from/to “brothers” • Called to change behavior to promote fellowship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentile culture that conflicted with Jewish culture • They were convinced of the guidance of the Spirit 		

Acts 15:1-35**Gentile area****Jewish area**

1-5: Some Jewish Christians required Gentiles to become Jews in order to be accepted as Christians

6-11: Apostles & elders met: Peter defended “grace alone”

12: Barnabas & Paul told of God’s work among Gentiles

13-21: James proposed a solution: “grace alone together”

22-29: Broad agreement. Sent word to the Gentiles

30-35: Letter brought joy, encouragement, and growth

- Relieved by the affirmation of genuine salvation & relationship
 - No need to change cultures to be full Christians
- They welcomed the call to pursue unity

The Big Idea

We are saved

by God’s grace alone

to show grace to each other

as one body

God’s grace = generous gift of forgiveness and relationship in Christ


Application: Grace Alone Together

Grace alone

- Require nothing more than faith in Christ for salvation
 - “For by grace you have been saved through faith...not by works”
Ephesians 2:8-9
 - Apply ‘grace alone’ to ourselves and to others
 - Do not **explicitly** add requirements
 - Such as: baptism or other religious action; specific beliefs; membership of a particular church or denomination; an experience
 - Do not **implicitly** add requirements
 - Such as: being a “good enough person” in order to be explore Christianity or to be saved; having a certain experience or emotion
 - “Regeneration precedes transformation”

Like a heart, a healthy church has...

opposing muscle groups
that work together
for the common good

 The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia®
THE CARDIAC CENTER | heart.chop.edu

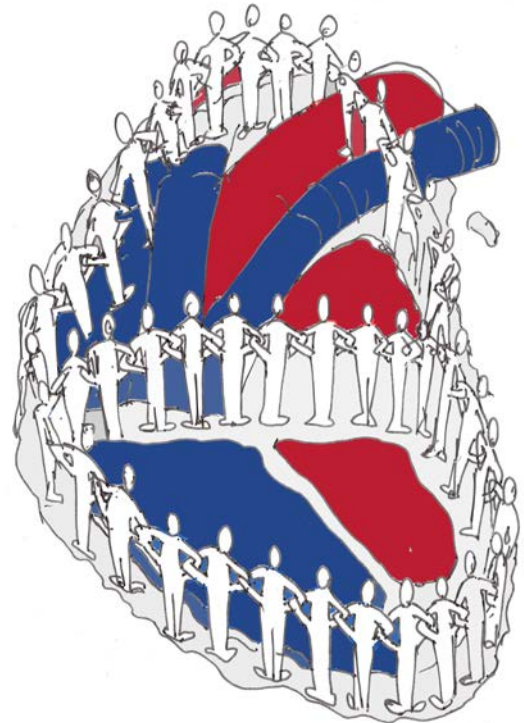
To work, the heart has
to seek different goals
at different times
in sync with each other



Like a heart, a healthy church has...
 opposing muscle groups
 that work together
 for the common good

And that is just in the heart!

- The human body is filled with 'antagonistic' muscle groups that try to do opposite things together for the overall health of the body



Application: Grace Alone Together

- Require nothing more than faith in Christ for salvation
- In grace, do the good work of unity
 - Focus on the pure Gospel **and** practice kind consideration
 - We don't have to give up our distinctives
 - Jews could still follow Law
 - Some places where divisions can easily begin...
 - "Politics" whether government, work, church, family, ...
 - Different emphases in the Gospel and life
 - Sin and reflexive rejection
 - Cultural sensitivities
 - Example: sexual purity (universal) versus modesty (contextual)

Grace alone
 Together

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility **value others above yourselves**, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Philippians 2:3-4

“‘I have the right to do anything,’ you say—but not everything is beneficial. ‘I have the right to do anything’—but not everything is constructive. **No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.**”

1 Corinthians 10:23-24

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit** through the bond of peace.”

Ephesians 4:2-3

Jesus said, “**Love** your enemies, **do good** to those who hate you, **bless** those who curse you, **pray** for those who mistreat you.”

Luke 6:27-28

- A healthy church has...
 - Opposing muscle groups
 - People with different gifts, passions, sensitivities, and values
 - People at different places in their journey with Christ
 - Broken people
- Unity comes from...
 - Deep conviction of salvation by grace alone
 - For me and for others
 - Showing grace to each other in the power of the Spirit
 - Make adjustments for the sake of others
 - Allow and celebrate differences in each other
 - Be quick to apologize and quick to forgive

**We are saved
by God's grace alone
to show grace to each other
as one body**

