
Witness Unhindered:
“Free Grace Alone From the First to the Last”
Acts 15: 1–21

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“Grace is free, but it ain’t cheap.” – Pierce Pettis

“No one has helped to provide salvation; God has done it all himself. The banquet of mercy is served up by one host.” – Charles Spurgeon

“The Reformation was a time when men went blind, staggering drunk because they had discovered, in the dusty basement of late medievalism, a whole cellar full of fifteen-hundred-year-old, two-hundred proof grace-bottle after bottle of pure distillate of Scripture, one sip of which would convince anyone that God saves us single-handedly. The word of the Gospel—after all those centuries of trying to lift yourself into heaven by worrying about the perfection of your bootstraps—suddenly turned out to be a flat announcement that the saved were home free before they started... Grace has to be drunk straight: no water, no ice, and certainly no ginger ale.”—Robert Farrar Capon, *Between Noon and Three*

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- Pierce Pettis makes a distinction in his quotation above between the free-ness of grace and its cost.
 - What is he driving at?
 - How do we balance the fact that God’s grace is absolutely free and absolutely costly?
 - What cheapens grace for you personally, for the church, and for the larger world?
 - How does that interact with Capon’s assertion that “Grace has to be drunk straight: no water, no ice, and certainly no ginger ale.”?
 - What is at stake if it is diluted?
- The language of “good news” and “gospel” can become cliched and a little shopworn at times.
 - How is the “good news of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom” unique?
 - How is it distinct from just being positive and trying to see the good things in the world?
- How does the goodness of the Good News get lost for Christians in general and for you personally?
 - What did the Judaizers add on to the good news of the Gospel?
 - What do you think was driving them to do so?
 - What do we explicitly or unwittingly add on to the good news?
 - Why do you think we do so?
- How does the letter James and the other Christians penned for the new Gentile believer function?
 - Is it another “add-on” to the Gospel? If not, what role does it play in sanctification?