

Da-Great Debate

I. Slide1 **Announce:** *Romulo A/V*

A. Slide2-6 Larry: Kids. R&R. Moms. Kona. Wed Night *His Own*.

B. Slide7 Census: Friends from our *City Manager's Office* asked if I would remind our faith community about **the Census**. [not only how we are *represented in Congress*]

1. It is estimated our region lost **\$1 billion** in public & private investment over the last 10 years, **due to** the 2010 **under-count**. **This meant** less funding for *public health, schools, small businesses, non-profits, transportation, & infrastructure*. The **under-counting** also deprived our region of **critical private investment opportunities** as lenders, realtors, and businesses used less reliable data to make decisions about Inland So Cal

a) **10 minutes of time**, can bring **10 years of benefit** to our community.

C. Slide8 Sun Service: Starting Next Sun 8/30. *Goal is not to get Sat Night to Sunday, I love Sat Night. But for those who can't make it on Sat night. Start w/simple. no children's ministry. 1 or 2 worship leaders. Quite/intimate service.* [same as Sat night]

D. Slide9a Prayer: *Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.*

II. Intro: Da-Great Debate

A. We will read through Acts 15, running commentary. And though *this church problem* may **not** be what **we** are facing today in the church, it has **important key truths** we **need** today in our lives **&** in our church...

1. How do we handle **differences** in the **essentials** **vs.** the **non-essentials**?
2. How do we handle **conflict** as followers of Jesus?
3. What **traditions** or **practices** have some Christians **added** to the gospel? (*knowing Legalism is the default of our heart's*) How can I guard against **expecting more** of new Christians **than** God expects?

III. Slide10 Da-GREAT DEBATE (1-35 *running commentary*)

A. (20) *Why these things? Trippy list isn't it?*

1. **Slide9b** It should be taken in the sense of Rev.2:14 - *But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.*

a) It was a usual practice among Gentiles to use an idol's temple for banquets and celebrations. So, this was important for the Gentiles to **keep themselves from these & to *not be a stumbling block*** to the Jews.

B. (22-29) In the decision, there was **no compromise doctrinally**, but there was **consideration practically**.

1. In this decree, the church asked the Gentiles **not to *deliberately offend the Jews***.

2. **So do you & I have to follow the magic 3 today? yes/no!** (I've never asked the **butcher** at Albertsons if this T-bone was *offered up to some lil idol* in the backroom) Our basic principle of **Love** is expanded **far more than these 3** in Rom14,15 & 1 Cor. ch.8-10.

a) (eg) *Don't **judge** your brother. Don't **eat/drink/or do anything** that would cause them to stumble. **Become** all things to all men, might save some. All things are **lawful**, but not all **expedient**.*

C. (30-35) **Antioch**, the 1st stop on *The Good News Tour*.

1. **Joy, encouragement & strength** for the brethren.

IV. Slide10 **ESSENTIAL vs. NON-ESSENTIALS**

A. *In **Essentials**, **Unity**, in **Non-essentials**, **Liberty**, in **all things**, **Charity**.¹*

B. That's how the **early church** handled it here. **And** how **we** should in 2020.

1. **Essentials** – **Key:** is in vs.1...*you cannot be saved*.

a) They are trying to add **1 thing** to salvation...**it MUST be stopped here**.

¹ Attributed to Augustine, 3rd century.

b) (6-11) **Debate of Peter** reasons & explains to them ***Sola Fide & Sola Gratia***:

c) ***Sola Fide*** - **faith** alone.

(1) ***Hearts are only cleansed by faith*** (***not works*** – vs.9)

(2) ***We are justified by faith, live by faith, stand by faith, walk by faith, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, & by faith we are victorious over the world.*** (Paul & John's writings)

(3) Paul Leveled the Law, from those who would hold to the ***Faith + Law*** theory. Rom.4 deals w/Works, Ritual, & Law...***3 nails closing for good the coffin of self-confidence.***

d) ***Sola Gratia*** - **Grace** alone. ***Saved by Grace*** (vs.11) - Peter would not compromise on this & called the church to establish ***this essential. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, & not a result of works, so that no one may boast.***

(1) Barnhouse, ***Love that goes upward is worship. Love that goes outward is affection. Love that stoops is grace.*** Max Lucado

(2) To show grace is to extend favor or kindness to one who doesn't deserve it and could never earn it. It always stands in sharp contrast to earning it on the basis of works. ***It is absolutely and totally free.*** You will never be asked to pay it back, because you could never pay it back, **and** it would be ***insulting.*** We have trouble with this because ***we work for everything we get.*** As the old saying goes, ***there ain't no free lunch.*** **But Grace comes to us free and clear, no strings attached.** We simply receive his grace by accepting the free gift of eternal life. **Period. It's Grace. Amazing Grace.**

2. **Non-Essentials** – in vs.20,29 [***sexual immorality*** is essential to our sanctification, **not** our salvation]

a) Change **message**, ***NO!***...change **methods**, ***for sure!*** [if we aren't allowed to ***change methods***...we'd still be doing church in **latin**, there would be **no** congregational singing, **and** we wouldn't be allowed to have **our own Bibles**]

3. **Charity** – in vs.31 [***Joy, encouragement & strength***]

a) Paul showing charity - *18 Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice.* Phil.1:18

4. Slide11 We must seek to be **Biblically Faithful & Culturally Fruitful.**
5. We must be about both **the Word & our World.**
6. We must hold to **Timeless Truths & Timely Methods.**
7. We must **contend** for the faith & **contextualize** our faith.

C. *In Essentials, Unity, in Non-essentials, Liberty, in all things, Charity.*

1. *Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end.* msg 1 For.13:4-7

V. Slide12a **HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT**

A. Today we have *conflicts everywhere*. Conflicts between nations. Between genders, generations, & cultures. Between races & religions. Political parties & employees. Between churches, marriages, or friends. **And now** we have **Covid Conflicts**.

B. **Conflict is inevitable.** *No relationship is immune.*

1. When managed biblically, **conflict** can serve as a catalyst for **change** and an opportunity for spiritual and relational **growth**.
2. **Why then** are we afraid to tell our friend his/her words hurt us, **to** ask our boss for a raise, **or** to confront our family member about his drinking problem **and** its effect on his family?

a) Slide12b **Peacemakers** are people who *breathe grace*. Do you naturally *breathe grace*? *I don't...* Yet, it is what God calls us to do.

(1) Not all of us are called to teach a Bible study, sing on the worship team, **or** work with youth, **but all of us** are called to **go and be reconciled** (Mt.5:24). *To our brothers and sisters, our friends and family, and to our people in our churches and community.*

3. **Slide12c** Everything in Scripture is about **how to remain connected**. To God *and* man.

C. **Slide13** We deal with conflict, by **dealing with conflict** and by keeping it **gospel centered** and **grace-based**. [3 ways to deal with conflict]

1. **Escape Response** (think turtle) pull into your shell & hide. You pretend it didn't happen. **It's avoidance**, not wanting to rock the boat. Don't run from the problem. **Or it's appeasing**, peace at any price. *I just always give in.* That's codependency. That's being a **peace-faker** and not a **peacemaker**.
2. **Attacking Response** (think skunk) react, not act. *Let's fight, but not fair.* Bully or manipulator.
3. **Peacemaking Response** (the right way) Let's fix it. Jesus and Paul never ran from a conflict. God bless his peace makers. A peacemaker is a bridge builder.

D. When there are **interpersonal problems between Christians**, *We can work it out!*

1. Life is very short, and there's no time / For fussing and fighting, my friend.
I have always thought that it's a crime / So I will ask you once again.
Try to see it my way, Only time will tell if I am right or I am wrong.
While you see it your way. There's a chance that we may fall apart before too long...*We can work it out, We can work it out.* (as believers) [Beatles 1965]

E. **Prayer:** *Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.*