

**"I WILL BUILD
MY CHURCH"**

DATE
Sunday June 8, 2025

PLAN TITLE

***Overcoming Obstacles
and Continuing the Build***

PROJECT SITE

FRANCONIA MENNONITE CHURCH









Pentecost and the Mission of the Church

Acts 13:47

⁴⁷ '...I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'

Acts 1:8

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."



Dispute over Circumcision for Gentiles

Acts 15:1-2 | Dissension in Antioch

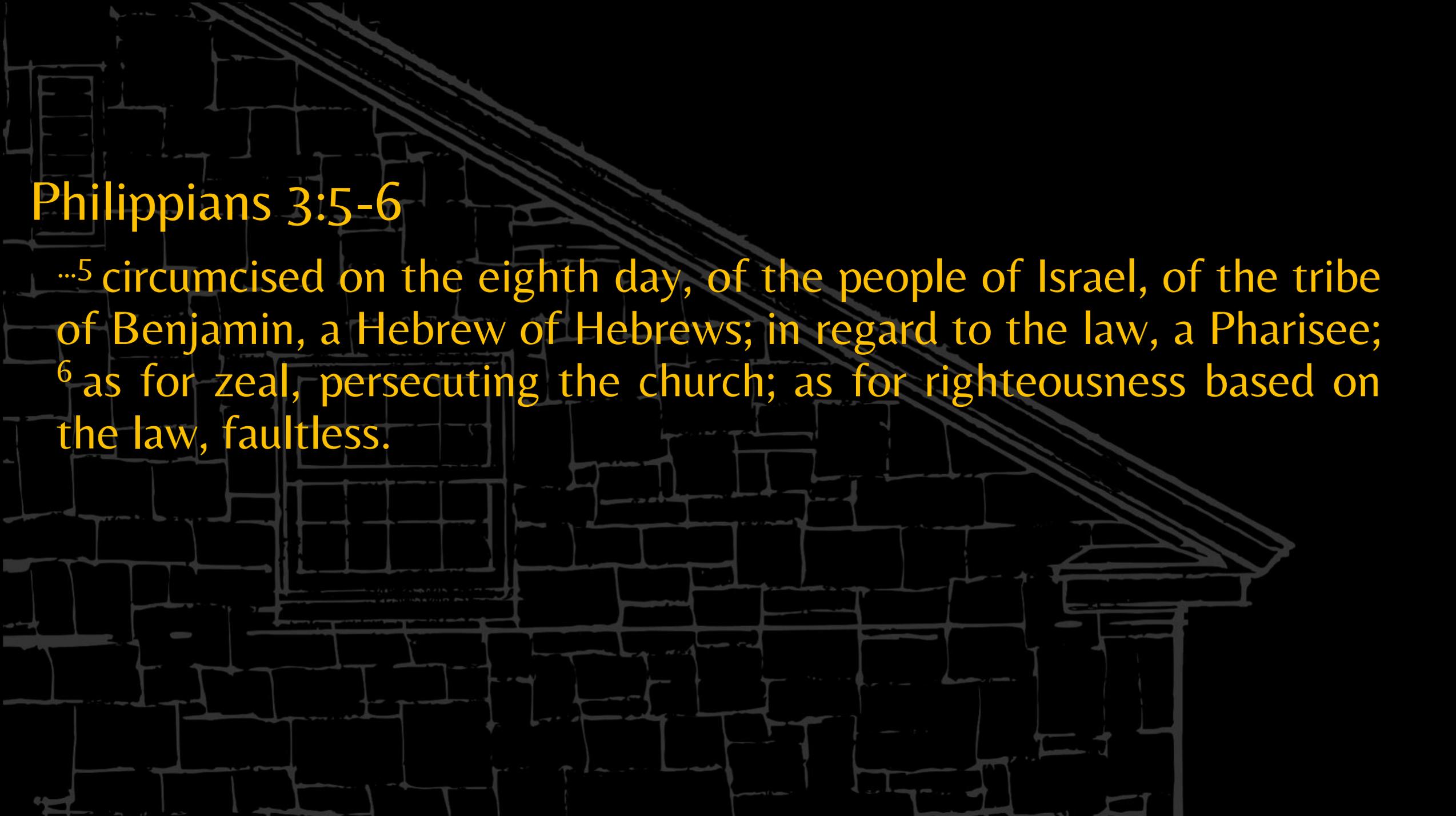
¹ Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” ² This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.

Dispute over Circumcision for Gentiles

Acts 15:3-5 | Witness on the Way and Dialogue in Jerusalem

³ The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. ⁴ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

⁵ Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”



Philippians 3:5-6

...⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee;
⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

Galatians 2:15-16

¹⁵ “We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles ¹⁶ know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

Galatians 2:21

²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!

Galatians 2:18

¹⁸ If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker.

Jerusalem Meeting of Church Leaders

Acts 15:6-11 | Peter's Testimony to the Apostles & Elders

⁶ The apostles and elders met to consider this question. ⁷ After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸ God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹ He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.

Jerusalem Meeting of Church Leaders

Acts 15:6-11 | Peter's Testimony to the Apostles & Elders

¹⁰ Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? ¹¹ No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”)

Matthew 23:4

⁴ They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

Matthew 11:29-30

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Jerusalem Meeting of Church Leaders

Acts 15:12 | Barnabas and Paul Report

¹² The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

Jerusalem Meeting of Church Leaders

Acts 15:13-21 | James' Key Speech

¹³ When they finished, James spoke up.

“Brothers,” he said, “listen to me.

Jerusalem Meeting of Church Leaders

Acts 15:13-21 | James' Key Speech

¹⁴ Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. ¹⁵ The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

¹⁶ “ ‘After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent.

Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,

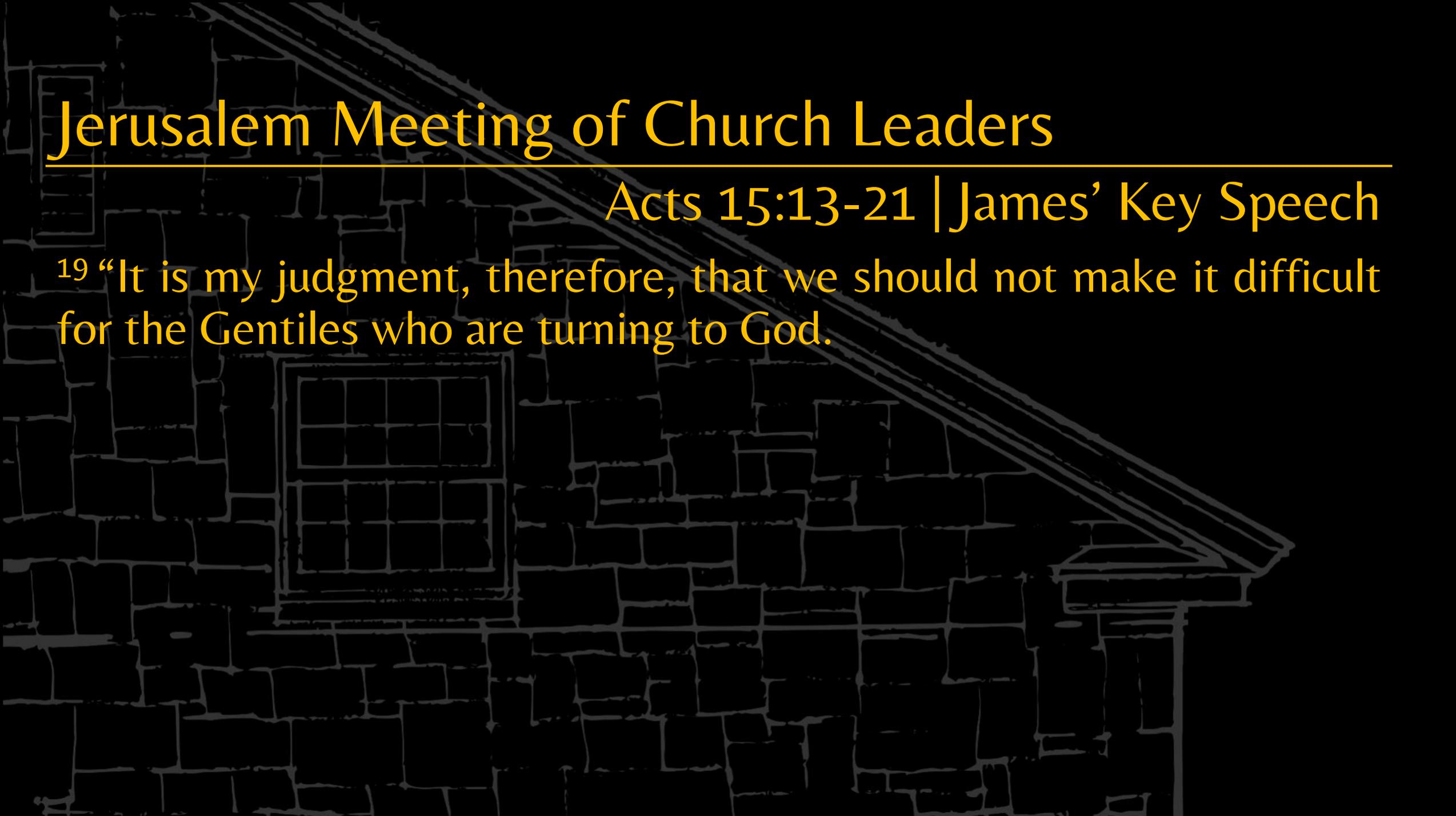
¹⁷ that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things’—

¹⁸ things known from long ago.

Jerusalem Meeting of Church Leaders

Acts 15:13-21 | James' Key Speech

¹⁹ “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.



Three Solas from the Reformation

Sola Gratia (Grace alone)

Sola Fide (Faith alone)

Solus Christus (Christ alone)

Jerusalem Meeting of Church Leaders

Acts 15:13-21 | James' Key Speech

²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.

3 Requirements from Council for All Believers

1. Abstain from **things polluted by idols**. —avoiding a stumbling block for the Jewish brothers as well as a potential stumbling block for some gentile brothers, too. (1 Cor. 8:1-13)
2. Abstain from **sexual immorality** —which was common in pagan society with temple prostitution, and even illicit relationships among family members (1 Cor. 6:13-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-5)
3. Abstain from **meat of strangled animals** and from **eating blood**. (Gen. 9:4)

Council Outcomes

Acts 15:23-29 | Good to the Spirit and the Church

To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings.

²⁴ We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said...

²⁸ It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹ You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.

Council Outcomes

Acts 15:31-33 | Good to the Spirit and the Church

³¹ The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message.

³² Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to **encourage and strengthen** the believers. ³³ After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the **blessing of peace** to return to those who had sent them.

Lessons from Acts 15 for Us Today...

1. Are we fostering Spirit-led leadership?
2. How do we avoid the prejudices and inequalities so prevalent in the pagan culture of our day and age?
3. Or what about prejudices that might be specific to our specific Mennonite Heritage?
4. Are we handling the issues of our day with the same love, gentleness, and clarity shown by the Jerusalem Council?
5. Do we make ourselves personally and relationally available to be God's hands and feet in delivering decisions and reconciling divisions?

