

Road Trip (Part 5)

GPS Recalculated – Navigating Disagreements

Acts 20:24 (NKJV) — *“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy...”*

(Acts 15:36–41; 16:1–5)

Introduction: Have you ever been on a road trip when the GPS suddenly says, “Recalculating...”? It can be frustrating – but eventually you get back on track toward your destination.

In our series “Road Trip,” we’ve been using travel themes to illustrate our journey of faith. Today’s message, “GPS Recalculated”, is about what happens when there’s a disagreement – a relational wrong turn – and how God can still get us to the destination.

I. A sharp disagreement between friends: Acts 15:36–41

Context: Paul and Barnabas, a strong missionary team, have a sharp disagreement over John Mark’s involvement.

A. Reason for the conflict: John Mark had withdrawn from the work during the first trip (Acts 13:13), which made Paul hesitant.

1. Paul wants a dependable team;
2. Barnabas believes in second chances (v. 36–39).

B. Result of the conflict:

1. The disagreement becomes so sharp they part ways—
2. Barnabas takes Mark to Cyprus, Paul chooses Silas and goes to Syria and Cilicia (v. 39–41).

Even mature believers can have passionate differences; unity is not the same as uniformity. “Unity does not mean we all always agree in every detail.”

Sometimes disagreement is not right vs. wrong, but different perspectives/priorities.

II. Two teams, one mission: Acts 15:39–41; 16:1–5

1. **The mission *did not* collapse. (God uses the split to further His mission)**
 - Two missionary teams now cover twice as much ground.
 - Paul and Silas travel, strengthening churches; Timothy joins their team in Lystra (Acts 16:1–3).
2. **The mission is what mattered most –**
 - Paul demonstrates flexibility—has Timothy circumcised to avoid unnecessary offense (16:3), showing the mission comes before personal preference. 1 Corinthians 9:20,22
 - Churches are strengthened and grow (16:4–5).
3. **God redeems broken relationships and failures:**
 - Mark, once rejected, later serves with Paul again and writes the Gospel of Mark (Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11).

- Barnabas is honored as a faithful encourager (1 Corinthians 9:6).

III. Lessons for us: unity over uniformity:

1. Distinguish between essentials and preferences

- Not all disagreements are about core gospel truth (Romans 14:19).
- “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”

2. Handle conflict with grace and truth

- Ephesians 4:2–3 and James 1:19 remind us to use humility, patience, and love in disagreements.
- Seek understanding and resolution where possible (Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:18).

3. Keep the mission first

- Personal preference must not hinder the advance of the gospel.
- Like Paul and Barnabas, keep serving—even if it looks different than before.

4. Seek reconciliation where possible

- Do your best to make peace, forgive, or give second chances (Romans 12:18; Genesis 50:20).
- God can redeem broken relationships for future fruitfulness.

Jesus reconciled us to God through grace—He calls us to extend the same grace He shows us to others in our disagreements.

Conclusion: Disagreements may cause detours, but God’s “GPS” can recalculate your route.

- Stay focused on Christ and His mission.
- Unity is not identical methods—it’s a shared commitment to serve Jesus together.
- Ask God to help you value people above preferences, pursue peace, and stay on mission.

“Let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”

—Romans 14:19