Date: March 31, 2019
Text: Acts 15:36-41
Title: Can we agree to disagree?
Big Idea: Disagreement in the church does not always mean disunity.

Mark: A Point of Contention

Who was John Mark? Read Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; and Colossians 4:10 and discuss.

What issue does Paul raise in Acts 13:38 for why Mark *should not* join he and Barnabas? Talk about reasons why mark may have "withdrawn from them" back in Acts 13:13. What would be reasons that *you* might withdraw from the difficult work of spreading the Gospel?

Paul vs. Barnabas: Who was Right?

Verse 39: "And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other."

Consider Barnabas:

Barnabas is an encourager and an advocate (see Acts 4:36-37; 9:27; 11:19-30). What values were potentially driving his decision (see verses 37 & 39)?

Talk about the "Barnabases" in your own life: people who have encouraged and gone to bat for you. How could you be a "Barnabas" for others?

Consider Saul:

Paul is a missionary to the core, and is passionate for the "work" (see Acts 15:38; compare Acts 13:2 and 14:26). How do you think this would effect his decision to take a pass on bringing Mark along? What character traits might he perceive as lacking in Mark? Why would this be a big deal on the mission field?

Who do you think was right?

The End of the Story?

Look at Colossians 4:20 and 2 Timothy 4:11. How did Paul view Mark a decade after Acts 15 took place?

Also, God used Mark to write the Gospel of Mark! His failure was not the end of the story!

Take-Aways

There could potentially be a dozen take-aways from this story, and we'll each walk away with something different. But the *main* point is this: that disagreement does not always mean disunity.

1. Paul & Barnabas were both sinners, and so are we. Nobody gets it right all the time, and yet God still uses us!

2. As the church, we must find unity around the truth and give grace around the things that are debatable: opinions, preferences, etc.

3. How do we make decisions when we have competing values that we hold tightly to?