

Acts 21

Paul has endured a lot of hardship with more to come. In this section of Scripture, we find Paul facing difficult challenges to his call to stay on course. He is on his way to Jerusalem. We happen to know from the Book of Acts that Jerusalem represents the beginning of the end for Paul. If he is to finish the course, his needs must be met.

Main Point: Earthly challenges are no match for the power of the gospel.

The first of several challenges that Paul faced in this piece of the story is this:

1) Paul must meet his need for fellowship with God's people.

Paul's need for Christian fellowship is very real.

As great as he was, even Paul needed support from brothers and sisters in Christ.

Notice in this passage how Paul seeks out Christians in Tyre, Acts 21:4-5.

The only thing that Paul had in common with these people was they were brothers and sisters in Christ.

The fellowship was deep enough that entire families gathered together to say good-bye to Paul.

I will suggest that it's just not the same if Paul went to the same beach and knelt in the same place and prayed the same prayer but did that alone. Paul, even Paul has a very real and deep need to share life with other Christians.

The Christians in Tyre became Christians not because of the preaching ministry of Paul but because of the persecution against Christians led by Saul the Pharisee. The gospel answered Paul's need for Christian fellowship by providing Christians for fellowship.

2) Paul must continue to be led by the Holy Spirit.

Paul is in a situation where he has heard from God. He encounters Christians who have also heard from God about him. They don't agree in their assessment of what to do. How does Paul stay on course?

Paul needs to be led by the Spirit on this final journey. He looks at the overall flow of Scripture, which points to losing your life for the sake of the gospel. Paul's sense of what to do is led by and confirmed by the Holy Spirit. The gospel answered Paul's need for God's lead by providing the indwelling HS.

3) Paul must surrender his will to God's will.

This story in Acts 21 demonstrates the writing brilliance of Luke. One of the things Luke is doing in these chapters is helping us to see that Paul ran a very similar course as Jesus.

Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Paul has resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

There were distractions for Jesus. There were distractions for Paul.

In Jerusalem, Jesus was misunderstood and mistreated. Same will be true for Paul.

This is deeper than circumstantial coincidences. Luke is showing us how to live the Christian life.

Full surrender to Jesus. Fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

The gospel answered Paul's need to submit to God's will by giving him the example of Jesus and the power of the HS.

Home Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read Acts 21 and spend some time reflecting on the reading and/or the Sunday teaching.

2. The first of Paul's needs that we encountered in this passage was this:

Paul must meet his need for fellowship with God's people.

Do you also have a need for fellowship with God's people?

What do you presently do to pursue Christian fellowship?

Is there anything you can do to add more/grow deeper in Christian fellowship?

How about for your Home Group?

3. ***Paul must continue to be led by God's Spirit.***

Do you also have a need to be led by the Holy Spirit?

What do you presently do to position yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit?

Is there anything you can do to grow deeper in this area?

How about for your Home Group?

4. ***Paul must surrender his will to God's will.***

Do you also have a need to surrender your will to God's will?

What do you presently do that helps you pursue the will of God?

Is there anything you can do to grow deeper in your pursuit of God's will?

How about your Home Group? Are you pursuing God's will?