

Sermon Date: February 16, 2014
Paul Following God's Call to Jerusalem – Acts 21:1-26
Doug McBride

Read Acts 21:1-26

1. What urgent warnings does Paul get as he travels to Jerusalem in Acts 21:4-14?
 - a. What do you make of the term "Through the Spirit" (v. 4, 11)?
 - b. Would these prophetic warnings have been a surprise to Paul (see Acts 20:23)?

2. *Read Acts 21:10-14.* How do Paul's friends respond to the prophecy of danger (v. 12)?
 - a. How does Paul respond (v. 13)? As far as we can tell, what was Paul's mood?

3. Doug commented that Paul's friends, while well-meaning in pleading with Paul not to go to Jerusalem where his life would be in jeopardy, nonetheless responded with their own agenda. What was their agenda? By what were they motivated?
 - a. Is it understandable that they would be so shaken by this information and want to prevent Paul from going to Jerusalem?
 - b. Is their response emotionally motivated or spiritually motivated?
 - c. Can spiritual motivation and emotional motivation co-exist? Explain.

4. Why do you think God gave Paul and his friends' insight into Paul's future sufferings?

5. Have you experienced a time in your life when God gave you a glimpse of future suffering in your life? Did it change your direction? If you had to guess, why would God forewarn us even if the outcome *could not* be changed?

6. Paul's friends in Caesarea eventually accepted Paul's decision to go to Jerusalem and said "May the Lord's will be done" (v. 14), echoing the way Jesus taught us to pray (Matthew 6:9-13) and Jesus' words at Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39, 42, 44). What are some situations that you are wrestling with to come to those terms "May Your will be done?"

7. *Read Acts 21:17-26.*
 - a. Who is Paul now meeting with?
 - b. What does he report to them?
 - c. How do they respond?

8. How does Paul respond to the concerns raised by the elders, and what motivates him? Do you find it surprising that Paul agrees to observe the law? See 1 Corinthians 9:20. Why do you think Paul agrees in this instance?

Closing Thoughts:

Doug commented along the theme of Paul's commitment to push forward despite knowing that he would suffer for his calling. Doug observed, "If it's hard, it doesn't need to be bad. Previous cultures saw great value in suffering while our culture worships comfort, yet Paul's example teaches us that sometimes the hard thing to do is the right thing to do. We're walking down road of the suffering of Christ and it is often painful. Without pain you can't experience healing." See Romans 8:16-18 and 1 Peter 5:13-14, 16, and 19. What is often the silver lining in suffering from 2 Corinthians 1:3-7?