

"The Third Missionary Journey"**Part 14****Acts 18:23-21:26**

Introduction: Tonight, in our study we have now come to Acts 21. At the end of Acts 20 Paul was meeting with the elders from Ephesus as he was on his way to Jerusalem. Let us keep in mind that he was being led by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem.

Notice Acts 20:22-24

He was bound by the Spirit to go and at the same time Paul knew there would be bonds and afflictions waiting for him there. He was okay with whatever he faced for it was his desire to glorify God in any manner that he was called upon to do so. This now brings us to chapter 21.

➤ Paul in Tyre**Notice Acts 21:1-3**

On the map we can see the path which they took to get to Syria. Here are the distances which they traveled.

- Miletus to Coos - ~50 miles
- Coos to Rhodes - ~60 miles
- Rhodes to Patara - ~65 miles
- Patara to Tyre - ~385-400 miles

Along the way it is believed that they stayed overnight in these places and with that thought there would have been many amazing sights to behold. Here is an example.

*"In **Rhodes** they would have seen the remains of the Colossus of Rhodes, another of the seven wonders of the ancient world (Paul had already seen the Temple of Diana/Artemis another wonder of the seven) The **Colossus** had crumbled at the knees about 226 BC but the impressive remains were still visible until about 654 AD. Pliny the Elder remarked that few people could wrap their arms around the fallen thumb of the Colossus and that each of its fingers was larger than most statues."*

There was much more which they would have seen but the interesting thing is that Luke mentions nothing about any of this. Why? They would not allow themselves to be distracted by these worldly wonders.

Colossians 3:1-2

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

² *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

James speaks to this same danger of getting caught up in the world.

James 4:4

⁴ *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

Paul and his companions had their focus upon spiritual matters and they refused to be distracted.

Application:

It is no sin for us to enjoy God's creation and it is no sin to admire the architecture we see in this world. But we must keep in mind that whatever we see in this world will all one day pass away.

2 Peter 3:9-10

¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

¹¹ *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*

Notice Acts 21:4

Paul and his companions were in Tyre for seven days. When they arrived there, they searched for other believers and spent the seven days with them. We can only imagine what this seven-day Bible conference was like as Paul would have taught them for the days he was there. What we need to see in this verse is that these believers warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem and they warned him through the Spirit. Now we looked at how Paul was bound in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. So, who was correct here? Some people say that Paul was outside of the will of God, and he was disobedient to the Holy Spirit when he went to Jerusalem. But I believe there are verses that prove he was NOT outside the will of God and he was not living in disobedience.

First of all, let us keep in mind that Paul was going to Jerusalem for a good reason. He had the financial gifts which the churches had given for the saints in Jerusalem. Keep in mind also that some of the poverty they were facing was because of Paul's persecution of the church. Paul did not want to send some representative to Jerusalem; he wanted to go to Jerusalem himself. He desired to face the saints and to do all he could to meet their needs. In Philippians we see verses that would support that Paul was in the will of God.

Philippians 1:12-13

¹² *But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;*

¹³ *So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;*

When Paul made the choice to go to Jerusalem his choice did not hinder the spread of the Gospel. Instead, his choice put him in the presence of royalty. This was a fulfillment of prophecy.

Acts 9:12-16

¹³ *Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:*

¹⁴ *And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.*

¹⁵ *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

¹⁶ For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

Until this point in Acts 21, Paul had not appeared before kings and rulers. In the next chapter he will stand before King Agrippa and it is believed he stood before Nero in Rome. There is another verse in Acts 23 that confirms that Paul was in the will of God.

Acts 23:1

And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

How could a man that was living in disobedience to the Holy Spirit make this statement? Paul knew when the Spirit did not want him to go where he desired to go. He knew the importance of listening and abiding to the leading of the Spirit.

Acts 16:6-8

⁶ Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

⁷ After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

⁸ And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

So, what do we do with the people advising Paul in the Spirit and Paul being bound by the Spirit? I believe that the only explanation is that the Spirit of God made known to them that Paul would suffer bonds and afflictions in Jerusalem. They then took it upon themselves to warn him not to go. We can understand why they would not want him to go. He was an Apostle who delivered so much Truth to them and they desired to keep him in their midst. They cared about him and they did not want to see anything happen to him. Why would the Spirit reveal this to them? Possibly so that they knew how to pray for Paul before the affliction would come. This they will do.

Application:

What can we glean from this for our own lives? There is a very important lesson here. We must understand that there are going to be times when God impresses upon your heart to do something or go somewhere and there are going to be people who do not understand. These people will often do their best to talk us into walking a different path. These times are tests for us to see if we will follow the Lord or follow man. There may be a path that is much safer but keep in mind that circumstances do not determine the will of God.

Hebrews 10:37-39, 11:6

³⁷ *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

³⁸ *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

³⁹ *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

⁶ *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

There have been many people who have been called by the Spirit to step out for the Lord but instead they listened to the warnings of a family member or friend or fellow saint and they made the choice not to take the step of faith. Considering Paul's life, it makes us wonder what they missed.

Let me make another application here. When we know someone who believes they are being led by the Spirit let us be sure to encourage them. Now I say this and at the same time we must keep in mind that what they say they are led to do **MUST** be in total agreement with the Word of God. For example, if someone claimed to be led by the Spirit to date or marry an unsaved person then we can be sure that they are not in the will of God. The Spirit will never lead someone down a path that is contrary to the Word of God.

Notice Acts 21:5

As Paul and the others were leaving, they were joined in their journey to the boat by the disciples and their families and before departing they prayed together. Since these

believers from Tyre were aware of what was waiting for Paul, they were able to pray in detail for Paul's future.

Notice Acts 21:5 again.

Let us not miss the word "ALL." There was not one believer who did not join in this gathering and prayer meeting. To get ALL of the church together for anything in our busy society today would be a miracle. But here in Tyre ALL the believers came. These believers did not want to miss out on anything that God was doing. In our churches today it is not the same. People do not realize that when they skip out, they are missing what God is doing and they are missing a blessing from the Holy Spirit. These people did not want to miss the send off of the greatest Apostle of all so they sat everything else aside to be there. God wants us to be dedicated. He has ordained the church as a place where believers are taught and equipped.

Hebrews 10:23-25

²³ Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Conclusion:

Notice Acts 21:5 again.

What a scene this is. What a testimony these believers were to those who were watching. There is no hesitation here. There is no concern for what someone may think or say. This is faith in action. This is what should be seen in each one of us.