

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 23RD, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

PAUL'S JOURNEY (ACTS 21:1-9) PAUL KEEPS MOVING

Luke says they "tore [them]selves away" from the Ephesian elders and continued toward Jerusalem, traveling through Cos, Rhodes, and Patara before sailing toward Phoenicia.

- Paul already knows Jerusalem will bring hardship. Every city they pass is another step closer to Jerusalem—and another step of obedience.

BELIEVERS IN TYRE ARE CONCERNED FOR PAUL

In Tyre, Paul stays with Believers for seven days. Through the Spirit, these Believers understand that suffering awaits Paul, and they urge him not to go.

- We often assume God's will should lead to comfort and easy circumstances. **If we only follow Jesus for comfort and ease, then we will not follow Jesus for long.**

WE WERE NEVER MEANT TO WALK ALONE

When it is time for Paul to leave, the Believers don't simply say goodbye. **The entire church**—men, women, and children—**walks with Paul** outside the city to the shore. There, **they kneel together and pray** before Paul leaves.

- We may not be able to change what someone is walking through, but **we can make sure they don't walk through it alone.**

PHILIP'S FAITHFULNESS

Paul arrives in Caesarea and stays in the home of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. This is the same Philip we first met in Acts 6. **The faith that shaped Philip's public ministry was also present in his home** (four daughters who prophesied).

- **Don't just start well. Build a life of faithfulness that outlives you.**

AGABUS (ACTS 21:10-16)

AGABUS

The prophet Agabus takes Paul's belt and binds his own hands and feet. Through the Spirit, he warns Paul that he will be bound in Jerusalem and handed over to the Gentiles.

- **God may not always remove what is ahead of us, but He will give us what we need (His presence) to faithfully walk through it.**

PAUL'S FRIENDS BEG HIM NOT TO GO

When Paul's friends hear the prophecy, they beg him not to go. **Their motivation is understandable: they love Paul.** They don't want to see him arrested, beaten, or killed.

- **We should listen to wise counsel—but ultimately our obedience belongs to Jesus.** Comfort cannot become the determining factor in our obedience.

"I AM READY"

Their tears affect him. Their words hurt. His heart is breaking. Paul tells them, "I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

- **Paul's confidence doesn't come from believing nothing bad will happen. His confidence comes from knowing Jesus is worth whatever happens** (Philippians 3:8).

"THE LORD'S WILL BE DONE"

Paul cannot be persuaded, so his friends finally say, "The Lord's will be done." They finally reach the point where they trust God's will more than their own desires.

- **Tell God what you want—but trust Him with what He chooses. Sometimes the most faithful prayer we can pray is also the hardest: "The Lord's will be done."**

ARRIVAL AT JERUSALEM (ACTS 21:17-25)

LOOK WHAT GOD HAS DONE

Paul arrives in Jerusalem and tells James and the elders everything God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. These weren't Paul's accomplishments; they were God's work through Paul.

- **We should tell stories of God's faithfulness in a way that makes people impressed with Jesus, not us.**

CELEBRATE WHAT GOD IS DOING

When James and the elders hear Paul's report, "they glorified God." Thousands of Gentiles had come to Jesus through Paul's ministry. Meanwhile, thousands of Jews in Jerusalem had also believed.

- **Kingdom-minded people can celebrate what God is doing even when He does it through someone else.**

RUMORS

Thousands of Jews have believed in Jesus, but rumors have spread that Paul is teaching Jewish Believers to abandon Moses and their customs. The accusations misrepresent Paul's ministry.

- **Paul loved his fellow Jews. He was connected to religious practices, but not saved by them—an important distinction.**

THE GOSPEL IS GREATER THAN OUR PREFERENCES

Paul agrees to participate in a purification ritual to help four Jewish Christian men fulfill their Nazirite vow. In this way he could remain all things to all men (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

- **When the gospel becomes more important than getting our way (preferences), there is very little we won't be willing to lay down to help someone find Jesus.**

NEVER WALK ALONE (COMMUNITY)

- We were created for authentic community.
- Sometimes people don't need us to fix their situation—they need us to faithfully walk beside them. **Who are we walking with?**
- We need people who know us well enough to encourage, challenge, and pray for us.
- Isolation will lead us to go astray. **Community helps keep us faithful.**

COMFORT CAN'T BE OUR COMPASS (OBEDIENCE)

- Following Jesus isn't about finding the easiest road—it's about faithfully following wherever He leads.
- Jesus didn't say, "Follow Me, and I'll make your life comfortable." He said, **"Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me."**
- Comfort makes a terrible compass. Let Jesus determine the direction of your life.

DO WE TRUST GOD? (SURRENDER)

- Paul surrendered himself: "I am ready." His friends surrendered the outcome: "The Lord's will be done."
- **We like surrender, as long as we know how the story ends.**
- What are we trying to control that we need to release? **Can we still call God good if His answer is different from ours?**