

084 -On the Way to Jerusalem - Acts 21:1-14

Call to Worship: Psalm 147:11-12

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 15:1-6

Sermon: "On the Way to Jerusalem" Acts 21:1-14

Benediction: 2 Peter 1:2

Acts 20:22-24 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, (23) except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. (24) But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 21:1-13 Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. (2) And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. (3) When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo.

(4) And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. (5) When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed. (6) When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home. (7) And when we had finished our voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day.

(8) On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. (9) Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.

(10) And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. (11) When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" (12) Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem.

(13) Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

I. See how kind the Lord is in His Providence

A. the Lord provided that His servants could afford to travel by ship instead of walking (21:1 “set sail”)

1. since the last time Paul was in Jerusalem, he has walked to get to Ephesus, and then over to Macedonia, and then back to Ephesus again, including various side trips, and this has been roughly 1,500 miles of walking
2. it would be about a 1,000 mile walk to get from Ephesus to Jerusalem
3. in God’s kind providence, He has provided that Paul’s party can take ship

B. the Lord provided that Paul’s ship would go straight to where he was headed

1. Paul’s trip from where he was at Patara in Asia over to where he could land near Jerusalem, at Tyre or Caesarea, was like going from Houston over to Miami
2. If the ship went along the coast, it would be about 1,000 miles; the ship would pick up and drop off cargo and passengers at several stops along the way, and the voyage would take weeks
3. But by God’s kind providence, the ship went straight across without stopping, from Patara to Tyre (Houston to Miami), making the trip only about 500 miles, and taking only a few days

C. APPLICATION: We who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are servants of the living God, who made heaven and earth. When we are about His business, we find that His providence is always perfect.

1. Sometimes the Lord would shipwreck Paul, or make him walk the mountain paths of Macedonia. Other times, the Lord would provide Paul a ship sailing straight to his destination.
2. Of course He deals with us the same way. Sometimes things are smooth and easy as we go through this life. Sometimes they are rough and difficult. Other times your life may become a downright shipwreck. But trust in the Lord; take heart; His hand is not too short, nor is His arm too weak to provide for you exactly what He knows is best. Let the instances like this one, where His kindness is on display, assure you of it when times are hard.

II. See how sweet the Lord Jesus makes the fellowship to be among His disciples in this life

A. They accompany one another (21:1-3)

B. They seek one another out (4a)

C. They stay with one another (4b, 8)

1. those traveling are willing to stay with their brothers

2. those at home are willing to receive their brothers

D. They speak the word of God to one another (4c)

E. They accompany one another some more :) (5a)

F. They pray together (5b)

III. See how much greater the Name of the Lord Jesus is than any concerns about this life

A. Paul is bound in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ to testify the gospel of God’s grace in Jerusalem

B. Everywhere he goes, the Holy Spirit causes people to prophesy that chains and tribulation await him in Jerusalem

C. In Tyre, there was more such prophecy, and the church urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem (21:4)

D. In Caesarea, there was another such prophecy (21:10-11); and the believers pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem

1. not only the church, but Paul's own companions
2. people like Philip and Luke!

E. They were pleading with Paul on the grounds that he would be in danger of harm and imprisonment and death if he went to Jerusalem; but he had told already (Acts 20:24) that such concerns do not move him; he does not consider his life dear to himself; what is dear to him is the name of the Lord Jesus; he wants to finish the race he is running, testifying to the Gospel of God's grace all the way to the finish line, rather than shrinking back in fear for his own comfort or safety

F. APPLICATION: Let us take care first NOT to apply this to ourselves wrongly.

1. Paul was an apostle, and had received definitive revelation from the Holy Spirit that he was supposed to go up to Jerusalem. He could defy the counsel of the churches, and even of such men as Philip and Luke, because of his unique relationship with the Lord Jesus

2. He also was uniquely gifted to be content single, without wife or children. He did not have to concern himself with them.

3. This kind of activity by Paul the apostle should not be used by any of us to claim special revelation, and reject all counsel from God's churches.

4. What Paul did here, in defying the counsel of the churches, and knowingly walking into harm's way, is not what Christians normally should do.

*Matthew 10:16-23 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. (17) "Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. (18) On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. (19) But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, (20) for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. (21) "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. (22) All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. (23) **When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another.** I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

G. APPLICATION: Let us apply this to ourselves rightly.

1. Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is to live the life to which the Lord has called us.

2. Let us be well informed, each person in his own conscience, about what it is to which we are bound in the Spirit

- a. children - to obedience to parents

- b. fathers - to earning your living; to training your children
 - c. women with husband and children - to loving your husbands and children
 - d. older women - to prayer, to training the younger women, to keeping the tongue from gossip
 - e. young men - to self control; to using your strength in the cause of Christ
3. Then let every person be unmoved by every appeal that your own comfort or convenience should move you from being faithful in these things to the name of Jesus Christ
4. For those few who are sent into harm's way as God's missionaries, let the Name of Jesus Christ, the testimony of God's grace, be more important to you than life itself

Luke 21:10-19 Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. (11) And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. (12) But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. (13) But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. (14) Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; (15) for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. (16) You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. (17) And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. (18) But not a hair of your head shall be lost. (19) By your patience possess your souls.

Savastio:

"I'm not calling you to suffer. I'm calling you to such a knowledge of Jesus Christ that suffering for Him makes sense."

Verses 1-3

JRY:

- this is real history
 - not Mount Olympus
- this is real life in this world

-there is a church in Tyre!!!

Verse 4

MacArthur:

-see "I have received of the Lord Jesus"

-the prophecy from the Spirit was "not prohibition, but preparation"