

Day 129, Acts 21

by David Servant

Paul's journey to Jerusalem serves as a reminder of the importance of trusting God's guidance and being prepared for hardship, even when faced with difficult circumstances.

Scripture: Acts 20:22, Acts 21:11, Acts 21:13-14, Acts 21:30

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Holy Spirit Guidance"

Description

David Servant preaches about Paul's unwavering commitment to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, despite knowing the trials and tribulations that awaited him in Jerusalem. Despite warnings and pleas from others to avoid Jerusalem, Paul remained steadfast in his mission, demonstrating the importance of obedience to God's calling even in the face of adversity. The sermon also highlights the role of prophecy in providing extra assurance during difficult times and the need to trust in God's guidance, even when it leads to challenges and hardships.

Transcript

As he journeyed towards Jerusalem, Paul and his companions landed in the Mediterranean port city of Tyre. There the disciples "kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem" (21:4). So why did he continue his journey to Jerusalem?

You may recall that, many months before, Paul had "purposed in the spirit" (19:21) to journey to Jerusalem, and he also knew then that he would ultimately see Rome. Moreover, as he made his way toward Jerusalem, Paul testified before the Ephesian elders that he was "bound in spirit" (20:22), even knowing that "bonds and afflictions" awaited him (20:23).

In light of these and other verses, we can only conclude that the Spirit was leading Paul to Jerusalem. The Spirit had also revealed to the disciples in Tyre that trouble awaited Paul there, and because of that, they urged him not to go. But that was their own desire, not God's.

Along these lines, notice also that the Holy Spirit, through the prophet Agabus, only told Paul what would happen to him in Jerusalem, but did not tell him not to go there. He was indeed following the plan of God, even though it would result in his imprisonment. Still, everyone who heard Agabus' prophecy begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. They, just like the disciples in Tyre, were motivated by their concern for Paul's welfare.

James and the Jerusalem elders were overjoyed to hear Paul's testimony of how God had used him to establish the kingdom among the Gentiles, but they had a problem. Many Jews who had believed in Jesus were zealous to keep the Mosaic Law, and Paul's reputation had preceded him to Jerusalem. Everyone knew his stand on the Law of Moses. Hoping to quell any trouble, they encouraged Paul to "become all things to all men" and make himself appear to be a good Law-keeping Jew. He submitted to their plan, and although it may have helped to calm the minds of Jewish believers who were still zealous for the Mosaic Law, it obviously proved ineffective in calming unbelieving Jews. Those Jews would have killed him if not for the providential intervention of some sword-carrying Gentiles.

It was not as though Paul was unprepared for what happened. In every city where he stopped on his way to Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit testified to him that "bonds and afflictions" awaited him. And just weeks earlier, Agabus had told him what would happen (21:11). These many incidents help us to see that God is well able to forewarn us of trouble that is coming. It also helps us to see that spectacular guidance, that is, guidance beyond the "still, small voice" of the indwelling Spirit, such as prophecy, is granted when it is needed for the extra assurance that it provides in difficult times. Don't wish for a prophecy! If you receive one that is really from the Lord, it may well mean that hardship is in your future and that you will need to cling to that prophecy in the face of trouble.

It is interesting that we discover that Philip, one of the original seven men who were chosen to serve widows in Jerusalem, was living now in Caesarea, a large port on the Mediterranean northwest of Jerusalem. You may recall that God had used him about 25 years earlier to bring the gospel to Samaria with the power of signs and wonders. Philip is also the one whom God used to lead an Ethiopian eunuch who had been reading Isaiah 53 (8:5-40) to the Lord. After Philip baptized the eunuch somewhere along the road that connected Jerusalem to Gaza, he was "snatched away" by the Spirit, and he found himself in Azotus, a city about 18 miles north of Gaza, not far from the Mediterranean coast. Luke tells us that he then "kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea" (8:40). Apparently, he settled there, and during the next 25 years he and his wife raised four very spiritual daughters whom the Lord used to prophesy frequently (21:9). Raising children is no insignificant ministry either, and worthy of mention in Scripture!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/day-129-acts-21/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net