



Acts 21:1-16

UNDISTRACTED DETERMINATION
TO DO THE WILL OF GOD

Evaluating a misguided warning (21:1-6)

¹ And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara.

- ▶ Paul had to tear himself away from the elders from Ephesus in Miletus
- ▶ Knowing they won't serve together or serve one another again stirs them all emotionally

² And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. ³ When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo.

- ▶ At the port in Patara, they found a larger ship headed across the Mediterranean Sea to the coastal region of Phoenicia
- ▶ The ship sailed past the island of Cyprus, heading to the port city of Tyre in Syria to unload cargo

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⁴ And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days.

- ▶ How important is fellowship to Paul?
- ▶ Their hearts long for fellowship so deeply that they sought out Christians in Tyre
 - ▶ Fellowship with the people of God is something the Holy Spirit inspired from the beginning
 - ▶ Acts 2:42
 - ▶ Hebrews 10:24–25
 - ▶ We are to prayerfully recognize that we need both to be encouraged and to encourage other Christians
 - ▶ Philippians 2:3–4

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And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

- ▶ As they spent time together, the Holy Spirit gave them prophecies that Paul's experience in Jerusalem would result in affliction
- ▶ They conclude that Paul should not go
- ▶ Congregational prophecy in the New Covenant does not come with the authority of Scripture – *"Thus saith the Lord"*
- ▶ Congregational prophecy in the New Covenant is Holy Spirit-inspired, revelation-rooted, fallible speech
- ▶ We don't believe Paul defies the word of the Lord, but that he is undistracted in his determination to do the will of God (Cf. Acts 20:22-24)
- ▶ Paul evaluates their warning as misguided because of the Lord's clear instruction to him

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⁵ When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed ⁶ and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.

- ▶ The believers in Tyre don't rebuke Paul and his associates for their defiance
- ▶ The united households of the church in Tyre follow Paul and his associates back to port
- ▶ This is a picture of Christ-honoring fellowship and support

Evaluating multiple misguided warnings (21:7-14)

⁷ When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day.

- ▶ One day of fellowship is sought and is beneficial for all

⁸ On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. ⁹ He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

- ▶ Paul, Luke, and their associates are welcomed in the house of Philip
- ▶ “the evangelist” – one who declares salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus to those who repent and trust in the authority of Jesus as Lord and Savior
 - ▶ Driven from Jerusalem by the persecution of Saul, Philip went to Samaria to share
 - ▶ Philip was directed to meet the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza, who was converted and baptized
 - ▶ Philip went up from Gaza, sharing the gospel in many towns on his way to Caesarea, where he apparently settled down
- ▶ “one of the seven” – one of the seven Hellenistic Jews (Acts 6) appointed to help distribute food in the church in Jerusalem

Evaluating multiple misguided warnings (21:7-14)

- ▶ *“He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.” – Philip has four daughters, not yet married, who were part of the church in Caesarea and had the gift of prophecy*
 - ▶ Women prayed and prophesied in the church, but they did so with an open acknowledgment that they were under the authority of their husbands
 - ▶ Philip’s unmarried daughters were under their father’s authority
 - ▶ This also indicates that congregational prophecy did not carry *“thus saith the Lord”* authority
 - ▶ Women are not permitted to take authority over men by teaching and preaching to them
 - ▶ 1 Timothy 2:11–15
 - ▶ The Spirit impresses individuals in the church to offer words to other individuals that will help and prepare them
 - ▶ 1 Corinthians 14:3

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¹⁰ While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

- ▶ Prompted by the Holy Spirit, Agabus took Paul's belt and wrapped it around his own feet and hands, signifying oppression and imprisonment
- ▶ Agabus predicts that Paul's time in Jerusalem will result in his affliction and arrest
- ▶ Agabus does not say Paul shouldn't go; he just states what will happen to Paul

Evaluating multiple misguided warnings (21:7-14)

¹² When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴ And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."

- ▶ The reaction of those in the church who heard it, Luke included, was to encourage Paul not to go to Jerusalem
- ▶ The prophecy isn't wrong, it is their interpretation of the prophecy that is in error
- ▶ The hardships or even death that may happen do not dampen Paul's resolve stated in Acts 20:22-23
- ▶ Paul is willing to experience prison and death to fulfill the Lord's purpose for his life
- ▶ "*he would not be persuaded*" – Paul's focus on his God-given goal will not be altered
- ▶ "*Let the will of the Lord be done.*" – They did not accuse Paul of disobeying God but accepted that Paul was determined to go because the Lord told him to go
- ▶ It would be wonderful if we all had an unflappable determination to obey God no matter how challenging or painful it would be
 - ▶ James 4:17

God provides the necessary support to do His will (21:15-16)

¹⁵ After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶ And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us,

- ▶ The time came to make the trip to Jerusalem
- ▶ Paul didn't go alone

bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

- ▶ Their commitment to one another was very beneficial in the face of opposition and oppression
- ▶ We need to be and know safe harbors
- ▶ We are called to be hospitable and to support one another

Questions to Consider

- ▶ What do you need to do to make Christian fellowship a priority in your life?
- ▶ How can your time with fellow believers be more open to stirring them up to love and good deeds?
- ▶ In what ways can your time with your spouse and children be developed, so that time with others is a Christ-centered and others-oriented overflow of fellowship from your household?
- ▶ What needs to be altered in your thinking so that you don't view God's will as the path of ease and comfort?
- ▶ How does Paul's commitment to the gospel serve to encourage you?



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