

So Much Like and for His Jesus Acts 21:27-36, Sunday AM, November 27, 2022

Prelude – Scripture: Acts 21:17-36 After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. ¹⁸ And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ After he had greeted them, he *began* to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰ And when they heard it they *began* glorifying God; and they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; ²¹ and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. ²² “What, then, is *to be done*? They will certainly hear that you have come. ²³ “Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; ²⁴ take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law. ²⁵ “But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.” ²⁶ Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them. ²⁷ When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing him in the temple, *began* to stir up all the crowd and laid hands on him, ²⁸ crying out, “Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people and the Law and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” ²⁹ For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. ³⁰ Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. ³¹ While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the *Roman* cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. ³² At once he took along *some* soldiers and centurions and ran down to them; and when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³³ Then the commander came up and took hold of him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; and he *began* asking who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ But among the crowd some were shouting one thing *and* some another, and when he could not find out the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. ³⁵ When he got to the stairs, he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob; ³⁶ for the multitude of the people kept following them, shouting, “Away with him!”

So many stops on the way to Jerusalem, and yet, we found, they were not merely safe places to sleep and eat, but souls of individual disciples/followers of Christ. Living relationships tied by life from Christ enabled Paul and company to be encouraged and cared for even while he exhorted and cared for them. But GOD was the focus, the life, the director, enabling them to move on entrusting each other into the hands of God. And now, we’ve come to Jerusalem, to another group of souls VERY GLAD to receive Paul and the rest of the group. Paul brought the much needed monetary gift from the Gentile believers to help these Jewish believers in their time of need, and, while thankful for both the gift and work of God in the lives of the Gentile believers, we encountered a big problem. WHO is acceptable to God? HOW do we live to please Him? and WHAT should be done about rumors spread of Paul’s work among the Gentiles. Paul, **they are all zealous for the Law; ²¹ and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. ²² “What, then, is *to be done*? They will certainly hear that you have come.** So Paul humbly agrees to an elaborate plan to join others taking Nazarite vows and pay for their expenses so the Jewish believers will recognize Paul is not rebellious. While perhaps necessary, how discouraging it must feel at times as we recognize the battles not merely against the world, but for the unity of believers under God. Our hope lies in a holy God—remembering His character and promises and the eternal nature of His promises to us so the seeming long wait for the Messiah and now His second return when He will make all things new brings hope. Church, welcome the season of advent with both longing and hope as we stand between the two promised comings of Christ.

***Hymn (Powerpoint): O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

Think of the work of worship. Not just jumping through hoops for the Jews, but “meaning it”—7 days of customs showing honor to God—the work of worship. In spite of all this, the crowds are stirred up—rumors full of partial truths lead to out-of-control emotions. It is NOT safe for Paul and company. Now what? What keeps you steady through the middle of these times? It should be the promises of God and the hope of the gospel that you can be reconciled to God. Live focused on the “wellness” of your soul. This doesn’t make it easy, but it makes it worth it, and therefore bearable.

***Hymn #493: It Is Well with My Soul *Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Come Adore Scripture: Luke 14:15–35** When one of those who were reclining *at the table* with Him heard this, he said to Him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” ¹⁶ But He said to him, “A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; ¹⁷ and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ ¹⁸ “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.’ ¹⁹ “Another one said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.’ ²⁰ “Another one said, ‘I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.’ ²¹ “And the slave came *back* and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ ²² “And the slave said, ‘Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ ²³ “And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel *them* to come in, so that my house may be filled.’ ²⁴ “For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.’” ²⁵ Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, ²⁶ “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸ “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ “Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’” ³¹ “Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand *men* to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² “Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³ “So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. ³⁴ “Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? ³⁵ “It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Offering: *Doxology:

Are you ready to eat bread in the kingdom of God? Then be careful that you are not busy with anything that might keep you from being ready for that banquet—But they all alike began to make excuses. How could that happen? Perhaps we can learn from those invited—the poor, crippled, blind, and lame. Perhaps we can learn from the sacrifice required to follow Christ. **“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.** When things seem out of control—either from your choices, circumstances out of your control, or like today, when you think you are doing what God has asked you to do, remember the unfathomable worth of the One you are privileged to follow—the One from whom you derive life and mission. THIS makes it not only worth it, but enables you to see His provision for whatever lies in your path. Who is He? Learn this song with me.

***Hymn (Powerpoint): Who Is This**

What has this Magnificent Christ enabled those who trust in Him to do? Faithfully show the world the treasure of reconciliation with God through Christ all the way till death or His return. And THAT is what we see today. Should Paul have come to Jerusalem? He was bound by the Spirit, but were the Spirit-led warnings of others to tell him to stop or merely to tell him what would take place? Don’t struggle too much here because both options included suffering that went with the charge given Paul by the Holy Spirit. To live to avoid suffering is a far different mission than to live to be faithful to serve Christ. Pray for the heart to be faithful. To the work!

***Hymn #428 (Red): To the Work**

Message: So Much Like and for His Jesus Acts 21:27-36 *Hymn #358: I Am Thine, O Lord Prayer