

Walking Through the New Testament with Paul the Apostle by His Life and Pen

LESSON NO. 24 - Please read Acts 21. 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." So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

Theme: - Romans 8:28 And we **know** that **all things work together for good to those who love God**, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Many are puzzled by today's passage in Acts, wondering, "Why did Paul deliberately walk into the very center of great trouble and persecution when forewarned in advance?"

To help answer this question, let's compare this event in Paul's life with a similar event experienced by Jesus. Both were determined to go to Jerusalem and both knew great persecution awaited them.

- Luke 9:51-52 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him [Jesus] to **be received up**, that He **steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem**, and sent messengers before His face...

Jesus' disciples, including His close friend, Peter, overtly attempted to dissuade Him from going to Jerusalem.

Let's compare this Acts 21 event in Paul's life to the one Jesus encountered as He went to Jerusalem to obey His Father's will to be the sin-bearing Lamb of God as our substitute in death.

Paul's Event:

- Acts 21:4-6 And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. **They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem**. 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. When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home.
- Acts 21:11-14 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.'" Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place **pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem**. 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.**" So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "**The will of the Lord be done.**"

Jesus' Similar Event:

- Matthew 16:21-23 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that **He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things** from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and **be killed**, and be **raised the third day**. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, **Lord; this shall not happen to You!**" But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for **you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.**"

Both Jesus and Paul were urged by their friends NOT to step into the hostility and certain suffering which was ahead. The friends did not initially understand this was the will of God, founded upon the overriding truth of God's omnipotence, omniscience and perfect control of His

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universe. Those friends had a frail, fallen human understanding of God's sovereignty. If they followed their emotions, their advice would actually do harm to the working out of God's highest and best will for all concerned. God's best will can and often does include suffering.

God works to bring all things into His perfect plan to redeem, restore and reconcile sinful humanity back to Himself in holiness and righteousness. This necessitated the greatest suffering of any man, the separation in death of His beloved Son.

The following verses show us what Jesus faced on our behalf. If He had allowed Himself to turn aside for a single moment, from accepting and accomplishing ALL the Father's will, all of us today would be lost and forever separated from Holy God.

- Matthew 26:39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, **let this cup pass from Me**; nevertheless, not as I will, but **as You will.**"

Note: Jesus, God the Son, Paul's Master said: **Your will be done**. The Christians in Acts 21, along with Paul, finally agreed together that the greatest of all commandments, the most important of all choices in all of life circumstances will be: **The will of God be done**.

TRUTH: Paul could have decided he had not heard God's will clearly and turned back to go another way. Had Paul turned back, we know that retreat would have brought unimaginable loss, not only to Paul, BUT also for all Christianity. This trip to Jerusalem set in motion God's plan for Paul to be imprisoned and eventually sent to Rome. It was in Paul's imprisonment that he was inspired to write most of the New Testament letters which make up the foundational doctrines which we trust in today.

What have we learned from Jesus' and Paul's experiences?

Romans 8:28 And we **know** that **all things work together for good to those who love God**, to those who are the called according to His purpose. God was pleased to use His servant Paul to bless all of Christianity through his temporary sufferings on earth.

It is but a very small step, of course, to realize the same was perfectly true of Jesus. If He had NOT fully embraced His Father's will of suffering and death, all of us would be forever condemned.

Paul did NOT have power to relieve himself of his terribly painful circumstances, however, an incredible, beautiful truth about Jesus is this: Jesus DID HAVE THE POWER to relieve Himself of the suffering which was His cup to drink from His Father.

- Matthew 26:53-56 **Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes,** "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

What do the above verses tell us?

It is the perfect love of God the Son for the Father and His perfect love for us, His brothers and sisters, that gave Him the power, through the perfect Holy Spirit to suffer . He VOLUNTARILY chose to go into such unimaginable persecution, temporary separation from His Father as a perfect MAN in payment for the our sins. Oh, what depth of love is displayed at the Cross!

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That is the clearest illustration of perfect love ever accomplished in the universe. The Innocent [Jesus] voluntarily died for the Guilty [you and me] so the Guilty could be freed and live with Jesus forever.

Jesus went to Jerusalem, Gethsemane and Golgotha because He loved His Father's will and loved people. Humanity, made up of individuals, were brought into the world like NO OTHER part of Creation. Human beings, the most favored of all creatures, are made in the very image of God in their spirits. - Genesis 1:27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

When the image of man was corrupted by sin, God perfectly understood BEFORE creation that to restore sin-filled men and women back to Himself, He would have to shed blood and die. Jesus willingly, gladly set His face toward Jerusalem to accomplish redemption's necessary sacrifice as the perfect Lamb without blemish.

Paul also knew he needed to go to Jerusalem and suffer.

The following may be one of the most important truths we can possibly grasp in our study of Paul, because it plainly declares what our understanding should be in painful circumstances.

Truth: **Nothing touches God's children** without first passing through Almighty, Sovereign God's will of PURPOSE or PERMISSION and **turned for His glory and for the good** of His child.

TRUTH CONFIRMED: - John 16:33 [Jesus said] "These things I have spoken to you, that **in Me you may have peace**. In the world **you will have tribulation**; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

EQUALLY AND ETERNALLY TRUE: - Romans 8:28 And we **know** that **all things work together for good to those who love God**, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

In loving care for his flock of little ones in Christ, Paul sent Timothy to encourage the Thessalonians lest they be discouraged because of his sufferings, that they likewise would also build upon the sure foundation of God's Goodness and perfect plan.

- 1 Thessalonians 3:2-4 to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.

Dearest Reader, we are called to a most wonderful work. Unimaginable eternal treasure will result as we declare to everyone **The Greatest Love Story Ever Told** and ask our listeners if they would like to go to heaven. The MAN on the middle cross said whoever desires could come and be with Him.

Remembering the beauty of Jesus Christ and the simplicity of the Gospel will give us overwhelming gratitude for each step of our heavenward journey.

We love to receive your questions. Your questions can be sent to write2stm@gmail.com or WasItForMeRom832@gmail.com. All our love to you in Christ - Jon + Philis