

Acts 21 – 4 October 2020

“Using Your Pain For God...For Good”

Introduction

*Since Acts 13, we've been learning from Paul's missionary trips around the world

*This is the final part of the return leg of the final trip

*Paul has been driven by the Spirit to offer salvation to Jew and Gentile whether easy or hard

*Very often Paul's had to endure thru painful circumstances just to continue giving the Gospel

*Jesus prepared us for this reality in (Read) John 16:33

Often thru pain the sincerity of a situation comes clear. When we endure thru pain it shows:

1. We truly value what we're doing, or we'd quit
2. Humility to look for God's plan, not our own

Today, 3 arenas of pain in our life used of God to advance His Kingdom on earth

1st Arena of Pain is Spiritual Pain (Chap 21:1-14)

Read Vs 1-6 – *A week's stop in Tyre of Syria*

1. Great that church expanded to places like Tyre.
 - a. The stories of Paul are just part of the expansion of the kingdom of God
2. Tyre disciples told Paul to not go to Jerusalem
 - a. This seems to be their interpretation of what the Spirit of God's basic message to them was.
 - b. Read Acts 19:21 – “Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem”.
 - c. Read Acts 20:22-23 – Paul went “bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem”, knowing there was “bonds and affliction” waiting for him there.
3. What is the spiritual pain?
 - a. Paul saw God's will for him in going to Jerusalem, but they didn't see it.
 - b. We want that spiritual confirmation from others, but don't always get it.

Vs 7-14 – *Many days in Caesarea*

Read Vs 7-9

1. Notice the change in Philip mission or ministry
 - a. Acts 6 he was 1 of 7 original deacons
 - b. Now he's an evangelist as we saw him begin in Acts 8 w/ Ethiopian Eunuch
2. By tradition his daughters lived long & were well-respected as godly women

Read Vs 10-14

1. Interesting that Philip's prophet daughters weren't given this message to give to Paul.
 - a. God works as He wills
 - b. Here at Calvary, we've been given the msg to preach chap by chap whole Bible in 7-10 yrs
 - i. Not all in church have been given this msg
 - ii. There's variety in how the Spirit works

2. The message from the Spirit is clearly that “bonds & affliction awaits Paul in Jerusalem”
 - a. The interpretation of many people to this is, “therefore don’t go”.
 - b. We need to accept that the painful road isn’t automatically the wrong road.
3. So how does Paul use this pain for God?
 - a. He brings them all together under the banner of “let’s let God’s will be done”.
 - b. This will personally strengthen Paul’s resolve for the difficulty ahead
 - c. Paul let this spiritual pain of people seeing God’s will differently drive him to trust God.
 - d. Paul will directly see God’s hand in this later in Jerusalem after his arrest.
 - i. Read Acts 23:11 – What comfort to Paul!!

Example of Spiritual fight w/ spiritual pain

1. Jesus in Garden of Gethsemane
2. Don’t wrestle against flesh, but spiritual forces

2nd Arena of Pain is Mental Pain (Chap 21:15-26)

Read Vs 15-19

1. So Paul w/ James & Jerusalem church leaders
2. These folks are as close to mental equals as Paul has anywhere in the world.
 - a. Can't share anything with the world you're evangelizing
 - b. Can share many things w/ your students
 - c. Can share everything w/ our peers
 - d. Paul wants to share all & be vulnerable here
3. Oh the joy of sharing the work of God w/ peers
4. But there's a mental pain that will arise now...

Read Vs 20-26

1. There was this supposed teaching divide or mental disagreement that needed addressed.
2. Even though he wasn't, many were saying that Paul taught the Jews needed to forsake the Law
 - a. Reality, he taught that they didn't need the Law for salvation and righteousness.

3. It was mentally painful to Paul that many Christians misunderstood what Paul was teaching.
 - a. Acts 15 Jerusalem Council determined that Gentiles didn't need to keep the Law
 - b. This event clarifies Jews don't need to forsake Law, just their dependance on it for salvation.
4. So how does Paul use this pain for God
 - a. He shows by example the Lord's true teaching in performing vows of the Law
 - b. Read I Cor 9:19-21
 - c. This mental conflict that brought such pain to Paul, has now worked out to the benefit of the whole church!
 - d. Vs 22 – They were able to unite the church!
5. When disagreement comes, do we melt and shrink back, or press forward thru the distress?

Example of Mental fight w/ mental pain

1. Jeremiah (weeping prophet) reasoned w/ Israel
2. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind

3rd Arena of Pain is Physical Pain (Chap 21:27-40)

Read Vs 27-30

1. There are many Jews from whole world there for Pentecost (3 feasts required their attendance)
2. These Jews from Asia flat out lie about Paul to stir up the people
 - a. Your enemy takes small parts of truth and twists it against you
3. There's now a mob physically beating Paul
 - a. This physical pain is brought about by:
 - i. The Jews spiritual lack of revelation
 - ii. The Jews mental lack of understanding

Read Vs 31-34

1. Nothing makes senses when there a lack of spiritual and mental understanding
2. The mob didn't even all agree on what was happening.
3. There were confusing messages given to the Roman captain.

Read Vs 35-38

1. An unnamed Egyptian recently led a revolt of 4,000 Jews to take over Jerusalem from Romans
 - a. Josephus says 400 killed, 200 captured and the Egyptian fled away.
 - b. Seeing tumult Romans assumed it was him
2. Unbelievers, as these Romans, are always ready to put down a threat to their earthly power.
 - a. They never imagined Paul was there to threaten Satan control over their soul.

Read Vs 39-40

1. So how is this physical pain used for God?
 - a. It was only b/c of Paul's mistaken identity and physical pain that he's now given the chance to speak to his countrymen!
 - b. Paul now gets the chance of a lifetime to preach to all Israel b/c of this physical pain.
2. Are we willing to do whatever it takes to share the gospel and see souls saved?

Conclusion

Next week, we'll see Paul's specific message to his countrymen as he gets the chance he's always wanted

Whatever mission you're on in life the express stands true – “No pain, no gain”.

Make your mission a worthy cause, a godly cause!

1. **There is spiritual pain**

- a. Discerning God's will isn't always easy
- b. Not everyone is led of the Spirit the same
- c. Trust God as you listen to the Spirit & read His Word, that He knows how to care for you

2. **There is mental pain**

- a. You'll never agree w/ all Christians all the time
- b. Just be an example of the truth as you reason from God's Word, His truth

3. **There is physical pain**

- a. If you're not spiritually discerning His will & mentally persuading others, you may never have any physical pain. (Read Phil 3:7-10)n