

ACTS

Having a Steady Faith in the Midst of Shaky Circumstances - Acts 21:1-35

February 8th, 2015

OBSERVE & REFLECT

(This section is designed to encourage us to reflect on and observe the scripture and weekend sermon.)

READ Acts 21:1-35

- ☀ Read the text at least twice. Try reading the text from two different translations.
- ☀ What do you observe in the text? What jumps out at you and grabs your attention? What questions do you have from the text? Pay attention to any action words or phrases and observe what the implications are.

INVESTIGATE & APPLY

(This section focuses on what the scripture has to say as we dig deeper into the Word. It is oriented to create discussion on the Scripture.)

1. Read v.1-9. What do we learn about the strength of Christian fellowship and the ways that it is expressed and carried out? Does this seem to be your experience with Christianity and church? How do you show hospitality, as the Bible commands us to as believers?
2. Luke seems to be helping draw out the parallels between Jesus and Paul. What similarities do you see in this passage?
3. Is Paul disobeying the Spirit (v.4; 10-11) by continuing on toward Jerusalem? See also Acts 20:22-23 and Acts 9:15-16.
4. This incident seems to demonstrate that people can have real, divine insight from God about a person's situation and still misunderstand how to apply it. What does this tell us about how careful we need to be about speaking on behalf of God?
5. Read v.17-26. What signs were there that James "Jewish" Christianity and Paul's "Gentile" Christianity were compatible? If so, what is the problem here? What is James' solution (v. 22-26)?

"The parallels of Paul with Christ are not to show us how exceptional Paul is as a Christian, but how unexceptional he is. Jesus said, "All men will hate you because of me...a student is not above his master." (Matt. 10:22-24)...That means that if we simply obey Christ, at various points we will suffer because we are obeying."

-Tim Keller

NEXT STEPS

- Acts 21 marks a major transition in the book of Acts. Up until this point, we have watched Paul, the church planter and evangelist, travel all over to share the Gospel. Now, from Acts 21-28, Paul becomes a prisoner, going through a series of trials. Amazingly, although Paul's circumstances change, his identity and mission does not. Whether a church planter or prisoner, Paul simply longs to make disciples and share the Gospel. What does this teach us about how we are to live as the circumstances and seasons of our lives change?