

# 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**

# 1<sup>st</sup> 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

## 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

### **3<sup>rd</sup> 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 sense 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