



## Willing to Suffer for Jesus

*By Shannon Ford on May 6, 2021*

### **TODAY'S READING:** 2 Corinthians 11

Many people in our church enjoy traveling. The convenience of cars and planes make travel easy and safe. However, travel in the ancient world was difficult and dangerous. Many people back in Paul's time never traveled. This makes Paul's extensive and dangerous travels even more remarkable. During his travels, he often had to go without food, drink and sleep, and sometimes he lacked sufficient clothing to keep himself warm.

Paul's lengthy list of sufferings from his travels (vv. 23-33) is his most detailed list. Several of the incidents mentioned are from his three missionary trips and travels. Throughout the book of Acts, we read of Paul's sufferings from travel and persecutions from the enemy. In verse 24 we learn that Paul received the Jewish punishment of "forty lashes less one" which could kill a person. The fact that Paul survived this punishment five times reveals both his love for others and God's sustaining power for his body. Despite his many hardships, nothing compared with the pressing concern that he felt for all the churches. Even when Paul did list his sufferings, he was careful that Christ was glorified, and not himself.

Clearly, Paul could have avoided many of these difficult and painful events. He could have backed down when opposed or simply not traveled so much to carry the gospel to others. Yet he was not only eager to carry the message of Christ's love and forgiveness to as many as possible, but Paul was also willing to suffer along the way. May we never take for granted the sacrifices others have made so that we might enjoy the blessings of the gospel today.

**PRAYER:** Lord, thank You for not calling me to suffer for You, but to suffer with You. I am comforted to know that You will never lead me into hard places where You are not present. You will never ask me to do anything for which You will not give me sufficient grace and the power of the Holy Spirit. Thank You that regardless of the hardships, trials and sufferings, You will never leave me or forsake me. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **TOMORROW'S READING:** 2 Corinthians 12

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