



"Paul's Journey Through God's Story"

Acts 20:36-21:26

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1. Paul's journey included great suffering. (20:36-21:6)

Paul endured suffering in his ministry with "tears and with trials" (20:19) and he knew that in every city "imprisonment and inflections await" him (20:23). When leaving his Ephesian friends in Miletus, (never to see them again), there was much "weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because . . . they would not see his face again" (20:37-38).

When leaving the believers in Tyre, Paul and his friends "knelt down on the beach . . . prayed and said farewell to one another" (21:5-6).



Paul suffered hardships during his journey, but he knew his suffering was for the greater purpose of sharing the gospel.

What Does the Bible Say About Our Suffering?

1. Suffering is _____ (2 Cor 4:8-9)
2. Suffering happens in _____ (Gal 6:2)
3. Suffering equips us for _____ (2 Cor 1:4)
4. Suffering is a _____ (Job 2:9-10)
5. Suffering prepares us for more _____ (2 Cor 4:17-18)

2. Paul's journey was strengthened by "spiritual friendships." (21:7-9)

Acts 2:42 instructs us about "the fellowship." We also call this our "Christian community." Paul's journey was strengthened by "spiritual friendships" (See Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendships*).

Spiritual Friendships

1. Spiritual friendships are _____.
2. Spiritual friendships are _____.
3. Spiritual friendships are _____.
4. Spiritual friendships are _____.

3. Paul's journey was a single desire to pursue God's plan against all opposition. (21:10-16)

Agabus, a prophet, warned Paul of the dangers of going to Jerusalem. Paul's other friends begged him not to go. But Paul had an answer:

"Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' 14And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, 'Let the will of the Lord be done.'" (21:13-14)

What Do Your Passions Say About You?

1. What are your core desires?
2. Do you have competing desires?
3. What are your desires "hunting"?
4. Are you pursuing eternal pleasures?

4. Paul's journey had the single purpose of spreading the gospel. (21:17-26)

Paul and the Jerusalem leaders celebrated God's work throughout the Mediterranean world. Church communities had been established from Jerusalem to Corinth, and beyond.

Paul's journey reminds us of the importance of . . .

1. Cultivating a _____ in the gospel.
2. Maintaining _____ in service.

Your Journey Through God's Story

Paul's life is a demonstration of endurance through suffering by one strengthened with spiritual friendships so he can pursue God's plan and his purpose of sharing the gospel.

Consider how Paul's example can remind you how understanding your place in God's story can give you greater perspective in life.