

ii. Paul has not only shared in the sufferings of Jesus, he has shared in the mission of Jesus to the world.

a) Isaiah 42:6

➤ Acts 22:7

b) (See also: Isaiah 49:6)

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- In Acts 20:22-24, what does Paul say is his one aim for his life? What does Paul's time in Jerusalem tell us about what kind of race he is going to have to finish?
- Explain why Paul will need to "consider his life worth nothing to himself" not in order that he might die for Christ, but that he might live for Christ. How does this text speak to you about what it means for you to live for Christ?
- In what ways do you think Paul may have been disappointed or discouraged once having arrived in Jerusalem? What concerns did he come to Jerusalem with?
- How are believers uniquely made to endure suffering and continue the race, to maintain joy?
- If you were in Paul's shoes, might you have been tempted to second guess your decisions once you were beaten outside the temple? Do you think Paul did? Why or Why not?
- What is the task the Lord Jesus has given you? How are you called to run that race in your own life?
- Paul longed to see his own people saved (Romans 9:2-5). Do you think these desires were satisfied for Paul? If so, how? If not, how do you think this effected Paul? What spiritual desires have you had that have not been fulfilled? How has that effected you?

Redefining the Race

Jerry Cisar — January 18, 2015

Text: Acts 21:18–23:11

Finishing the Race (Acts 20:22-24)

Finishing the race for Paul, counting his life as nothing, was not about going to Jerusalem to die. Jerusalem is not the finish line, but a mere check point in what is a race of endurance.

Witherington: *"There would be no more miraculous releases from prison...for Paul; rather, there would be real experiences of weakness and suffering, with no final resolution of the matter by the end of the book."*

I. Paul's Desire to Reach His Own People (Acts 21:18-26)

A. Paul arrival in Jerusalem in time for Pentecost

i. A collection for the saints.

ii. Romans 15:31.

iii. Acts 24:17

B. Forces collide in Jerusalem:

i. Paul's desire to see his people saved (Romans 9:2-5)

ii. Jerusalem's political climate

Johnson: To any reader of Josephus' Jewish War for this period, this riot scene in the Temple rings absolutely true. There is nothing, in other words, intrinsically unlikely about a figure like Paul creating just such a scene as Luke describes.

a) Luke 21:5-7 The Destruction of the Temple (70 AD)

b) Luke 21:8-19

c) Luke 21:12-15

C. Paul gladly does what James and the leaders suggest.

II. Paul's Arrest and Rejection (Acts 21:27-36)

A. Trouble has followed Paul from Ephesus. (Acts 19:34)

i. 21:30 Paul seized and drug out of the temple.

ii. 21:31 Seeking to Kill Paul

iii. 21:32 They stop beating Paul.

B. Paul arrested and bound with chains.

i. *"Away with him!"*

ii. Luke 23:18

iii. Paul is not the one they are rejecting... it is Christ.

C. Second Guessing God's Providence

III. Paul's Testimony Before The People (21:37 – 22:22)

A. Paul was once just like they are now. (22:1-5)

B. Paul's encounter with the God of Abraham. (22:6-16)

i. I saw a bright light and heard a voice

ii. Who is this Righteous One? (Acts 7:52)

C. Jesus keeps sending Paul away to the Gentiles.

i. Paul recounts 3 visions from the Lord:

a) The Damascus Road

➤ *"you will be a witness for him to **everyone** of what you have seen and heard."*

➤ Act 9:15

b) Vision in Jerusalem (22:17-21)

c) Vision at night of the Lord standing near. (23:10-11)