

The Way- What is God doing?

Sermon Notes

June 25, 2017

Illustration: Falsely accused in Hershey.

- Fear grips you—will you lose your job? Lose your career? Go to jail?
- Anger comes next—this is not right! That is not the truth!
- Defense begins.
- Questions come: *“What are you doing God?”*

Paul’s mission misunderstood by his peers. Acts 21:1-16

- Spirit-filled people urged Paul to not go to Jerusalem. (4)
 - Not likely a command of the Spirit to go to Jerusalem thus making Paul disobedient to God.
 - Likely the Spirit revealed to them what Paul was going to face in Jerusalem thus urging him to not go. EBC
 - Similar to Jesus being discouraged from going to Jerusalem by many godly people.
- A former partner in the ministry Agabus prophetically prepares Paul for being arrested by the Romans. (10-11)
- Again godly people are begging him to not go to Jerusalem. (12)
- Paul is prepared to die for Jesus in Jerusalem—he is prepared! (13b)

Paul takes all precautionary steps. Acts 21:17-26

- Plesantries...They exchange stories of God’s work through the disciples among the Jews in Jerusalem and God’s work through Paul among the Gentiles. (19-20)
- Concerns...Paul’s reputation has been ruined among the Jews under false pretenses. (21)
- Precautionary response in fear...Take a Nazarite vow and pay for others to do the same. That should work. (23-24)
 - This would be seen as a zealous practice of the law.
 - Great idea but it does not work.

The power of a false accusation. **Acts 21:27-32**

- He was falsely accused of teaching against the law, the Jews, and against the temple. (28)
 - Truth is, Paul worshiped in the temple.
 - Paul affirmed the law. **Romans 7:7-25**
 - Paul loved the Jews. **Romans 9:2-4a** *"I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race the people of Israel..."*
 - He was willing to go to the greatest ends to win both Jew and Gentile. **1 Corinthians 9:20**
- He was falsely accused of taking a gentile into the holy place that is for Jews only. (29)
- Paul is indeed bound by the Romans and led out of the mob. (33)

Paul's defense. **Acts 22:3-21**

- I am a Jew's Jew. (3)
 - Grew up in Jerusalem.
 - Taught by Gamaliel.
 - Zealous in his adherence to the Law and forcing others to do the same.
- I met Jesus.
 - While on his way to persecute The Way.
 - Jesus transformed his heart and mind immediately.
- Commissioned by Jesus to go to the Gentiles. (21)
- His testimony is rejected! (22)

Where is God?

- He was there in preparing Paul for what lie ahead...not safe but best place to be.
- This moment of chaos and false accusation led to the platform of sharing the gospel with key leaders both Roman and Jew—brilliant move by God.
- His mission for Paul remained to the gentiles, and Jerusalem was merely the launching pad to that end. God was consistent with his calling upon Paul's life.

Take Aways

1. God is right there with you and is bringing about his great purposes.
2. His ways are not always discernable and may never be.
3. Staying the course of God's mission is as Ed pointed out last week, not the safest place to be but the best place to be.