

The Will of the Lord Acts 21:1-14, 23:11

I. Intro

- A. Do you ever wonder what God's will is for your life?
- B. It's a natural part of the process of growing in faith.
- C. We have such a strong desire to serve the Lord, but we need to know God's heart and will.

II. Text

- A. Verse 20:22: Paul says he is bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem
- B. Verse 21:4: The church tells Paul not to go to Jerusalem, claiming the Spirit as well.
- C. Verses 21:10-11: The prophet Agabus presents to Paul what is going to happen when he goes to Jerusalem.
- D. Verse 21:12 The church again urges him not to go
- E. Verse 21:13 Paul settles it with assurance that he is willing to die for the cause.
- F. Verse 21:14: Let the Will of the Lord be done
- G. Verse 21:15 through 23:10 the story of all that happens
 1. False accusations
 2. Riotous mob
 3. Bad leaders
 4. Beatings and imprisonment
 5. Yet, Paul continually stops to reason with them.
 6. Paul explains the full story of conversion and salvation!
- H. Verse 23:11: The Lord appears to Paul and says, now you get to do all this again in Rome.

III. Points

A. Mixed Messages

1. What do you do when the church is hearing a mixed message?
 - a) Spend time searching for the Lord's will.
 - b) Check your motivation.
 - c) Check your willingness.
 - d) Count the Costs
 - e) Wait on Unity
2. The mixed message gave Paul an opportunity to be certain.
3. Did the church miss something?
 - a) Did they hear from the Lord, or from their fears?
 - b) Were they instruments in the hand of God to challenge Paul to REALLY be prepared.
 - c) Did they go with instinct, logic, and reason?
4. We really don't know the answers, but we do know that God had a plan in this as well.
5. Through this trial, in preparation for a larger trial, God grew their faith!
6. Everyone came into unity, and Paul went.
 - a) They could have actually heard from God so it would be a greater demonstration of unity.
 - b) They could have been afraid to lose Paul, and were acting out of fear.
7. Paul explained his calling, and his desire to go and do whatever the Lord had for him to do.

B. Certainty of the Call

1. Paul was certain
2. He had been certain, and he was now more certain.
3. He knew what was coming, when it was coming, and he had to check his motivation.
4. The enemy would like nothing more than for us to sit idle and not do anything.

5. The clear direction from God would be to do what He had sent Paul to do.
 - a) Easy for us to say, we weren't facing it.
 - b) But, when you are certain, you go.
 6. Sometimes, the certainty of the calling is all you have left:
 - a) Reason and logic will run out
 - b) Uncertainty may rise up
 - c) But the calling remains.
 7. Application as a Pastor:
 - a) I'm called to serve the Lord faithfully
 - b) I'm called to do so as the Pastor of this church
 - c) When things are going good, its not hard to find motivation
 - d) When things are tough, I have to go back to the calling.
 - (1) This is what I'm called to do
 - (2) This is to what I've devoted my life
 - (3) This is the place, and my calling.
 8. Application as a Parent
 - a) You are called to serve selflessly
 - b) You are not doing this by yourself, even if you are a single parent.
 - c) It's not hard to find motivation when things are going well.
 - d) But when things are tough, you will need the leadership of the Lord!
- C. The Will of the Lord
1. There is no safer place to be than in the center of the will of the Lord.
 2. Paul was going to accomplish God's will, because he was obedient to God's direction.
 3. Do not mistake the scene... it was HARD.
 4. But, because it was so hard, Paul was more certain.
 5. My opinion: Paul would have not handled the prosperity gospel preachers with gentleness.
 - a) He would have showed them his scars
 - b) He would have showed them his chains
 - c) He would have "counted it all joy" because that is precisely what he wrote:
 6. Paul:
 - a) Romans 5:3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,
 - b) 2 Corinthians 12:10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
 - c) Colossians 1:11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;
 - d) Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church,
 7. James:
 - a) James, Pastor in Jerusalem who met with Paul before these trials:
 - b) James 1:2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,
 8. Peter:
 - a) Peter, who was a special kind of devoted:
 - b) 1 Peter 4:13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

IV. Close

- A. Search out the will of the Lord.
- B. Commit your ways to God
- C. Find your joy in doing God's will.