

2010 ACTS #22 CHAPTER 21 MAKING DECISIONS

Acts 21:

Making decisions is a daily event.
 For some people decision making is easy.
 But for most of us, it is more difficult.
 And many decision we make determine our destiny

A farmer and his wife went to their high school reunion.
 The farmer looked around, noticing the other men with their expensive suits and their bulging stomachs. Proud that he weighed just five pounds more than he did in high school, the result of trying to beat a living out of a rocky hillside farm, he said to his wife: "I'm the only guy here who can still wear the suit he wore when he graduated."
 She glanced at the prosperous crowd, then back at her husband, and said, "You're the only one who has to."

Decisions determine our destiny and that's
 why it so important that we make good ones
 And we make it with good advice.

I heard about a young mother who knelt down beside the bed to pray with her little son. She discovered that the little boy was bored with his old prayer, so he improvised, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, if I should die before I wake.....can I have breakfast with you in the morning?"

We all need a friend at breakfast
 As a matter of fact
 Most of us could use a friend at lunch and dinner.
 Those of us who have good friends,
 Have a blessing in disguise.

Real friendship is a cherished gift
 Especially if friends can be trusted to be open and honest.

**The Apostle Paul has faced a decision point in his life.
 And he was getting advice from his Friends and they
 Urged him not to go.**

I. ADVICE OFFERED

We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. ⁴Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. Acts 21:3-4

Have you every had a friend
 Who persuaded you to make a different decision than you considered?
 To take a different road than you planned?
 Maybe not to marry who you did?
 Or choose the career you took.
 The trouble with good advice is that it usually interferes with our plans.

The friends of Paul in Phoenicia,
 Were so concerned about Paul's safety that they
 Spoke to him about it and pled with him not to go to Jerusalem at this time.

We don't know if it was in private prayer, or a group meeting, but
 The Spirit encouraged them to say no.
 The reason was the spirit had said Paul would be arrested,
 bound and even maybe die in Jerusalem.

**"Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound,
 but also to die in Jerusalem. Acts 21:13**

A good friend's responsibility is to share his counsel
 To advise his loved one if he knows of the dangers.
 Kids have some of the best advice.

Alyesha 13 advises: When you get a bad grade in school,
 show it to your mom when she's on the phone.

Joel age 10: Don't pick on your sister when she's holding a baseball bat.

The responsibility of parents is to give advice to their children.
 To share with them the dangers they will face in life.
 The pitfalls of our society.
 Even though we know that often our good advice is what our own kids disregard
 but save to give to their kids.
 So just think of it being a way to help your grandkids.

If we haven't warned our children about AIDS and sexual disease,
 About the dangers of unwanted pregnancy,
 And bullying.
 About the dangers of religions that offer half-truths.
 The danger of strangers or,
 getting into a car with drinking drivers.
 or texting while driving.
 Then we have failed,
 Because it takes only a moment of distraction.
 To run a red light,
 Or turn into the other lane of traffic,
 Or make a mistake that changes a life forever.

Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. Acts 21:4

Now just because someone gives us advice or a warning,
 doesn't mean we always follow it.

Sometimes the risk is worth the results.

Paul knew the risk

**⁵But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and
 their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we
 knelt to pray. Acts 21:5**

There was some kind of spontaneous prayer

For their journey.

We can relate to that.

I remember when my sister left to travel in Europe with a friend on a motorcycle.

I watched my father cry for the first time as he said goodbye.

This was his daughter.

Traveling in a strange land. In a dangerous time.

His tears touched me with the severity of the danger she faced.

The Apostle Luke did not miss the danger they are facing.

And as they boarded the ship,
His heart maybe wasn't all in it.

After saying good-by to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home. Acts 21:6

He said that They returned home with wife and child;
They returned home to the safety and comfort of their beds,
but Luke and Paul went to face the savage mob in Jerusalem,
they went to the chains, and long awaited justice that never came,
There is a sense of loneliness in the words for Dr. Luke,

But they returned HOME.'" Acts 21:6

That is the way it is for obedient Christians.

When we accept the call we go.

This summer the Wyciff translators we support, Don and Brenda Scheller,
were to have come to speak to us, but Brenda's brother suddenly died.

They canceled their time just to spend it with their family.

But less than a month later they were back in the Philippines.

He told me it was getting dangerous now in the Philippines.

Especially for Christians.

But they were going back, in spite of the sudden death, in spite of the danger.

I'm sure as they left, they must have felt that loneliness

That Luke felt, he went to Jerusalem, but they went home.

Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. Acts 21:8

The Spirit foretold Paul's persecutions,
but does not appear to have forbidden his journey;
and Paul was persuaded that, in acting as he was about to do,
whatever personal risk he ran,
he should bring more glory to God in Jerusalem than anywhere else.
But the warnings continue to come no in a different town from a different place.

After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Acts 21:10

The Prophet Agabus represents the establishment.

He represents those in authority.

He is a prophet of the prophets.

Like the Bishop, District Superintendent, or other in authority.

He was speaking from a position of power

Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.' " Acts 21:11

The prophet **Agabus** spoke in the same manner of the ancient prophets

You remember the prophet Jeremiah buried his girdle by the river Euphrates to mark out the days of captivity for the Jews. Jeremiah 13:4

The prophet **Isaiah** was told to take off his sackcloth and his sandals,
And go around stripped and barefoot.

Then the LORD said, "Just as my servant Isaiah has gone stripped and barefoot for three years, as a sign and portent against Egypt and Cush, so the king of Assyria will lead away stripped and barefoot the Egyptian captives and Cushite exiles, young and old, with buttocks bared - to Egypt's shame. Isaiah 20:4-5

I'm just thankful today that we pastors I don't have to preach and demonstrate in the ways of Isaiah.

Agabus binds Paul's hands and feet.

Implicitly saying that

If you go you will be bound,"

Not that "you might be bound."

When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Acts 21:12

II. ADVICE REJECTED---PAUL CHOOSE TO GO

The hardest thing to learn in life is which bridge to cross and which to burn. [David Russell](#).

We all must come to that point of making the decision.

Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts 21:13

CS Lewis said:

"Crying is all right in its own way while it lasts. But you have to stop sooner or later, and then you still have to decide what to do." — C.S. Lewis

There comes a time for all of us to make a decision.

If you don't someone else will.

Former president Ronald Reagan's aunt took him to a cobbler for a pair of new shoes. The cobbler asked young Reagan, "Do you want square toes or round toes?" Unable to decide, Reagan didn't answer, so the cobbler gave him a few days. Several days later the cobbler saw Reagan and asked him again what kind of toes he wanted on his shoes. Reagan still couldn't decide, so the shoemaker replied, "Well, come by in a couple of days. Your shoes will be ready." When the future president did so, he found one square-toed and one round-toed shoe! "The cobbler said: "This will teach you to never let people make decisions for you," Reagan said: "I learned right then and there, if you don't make your own decisions, someone else will." *Today in the Word*, MBI, August, 1991, p. 16.

Paul made his own decision.

He had prayed about it.

He had gotten advice from those in authority.

He had gotten advice from his friends.

Only one he didn't get advice from was his wife.

That was because he didn't have one.

But friends if you have a spouse you should consult them.

If at first you don't succeed, shouldn't you try doing it like your wife told you to do it?

So when it comes to making a decision- make sure you check it out.

1. Relationship Check – ck with good counselors, good advisors.

A good wife speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue. Proverbs 31:27

Another man said: "I go home, sleep on it, and then discuss it over breakfast with my omniscient beagle. I've named him Nostrodoggus.

2. Motive Check

Why am I doing this, or choosing this?

Is it for selfish gains or pleasure, or in service to others?

Jas 4:3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Check your attitude:

Romans 12:3 Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

3. Life Style Check

What positive action will this give to my life or the good of others?

Romans 12:18,21 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. If your enemy is hungry feed him, if he is thirsty, give him something to drink, in doing this you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Does your decision enhance your life or distract from it.

4. Faith Check

Will this decision add or subtract from my Christian life,

Will it bring confidence or doubt to my faith?

Jas 1:6-7 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;

5. God's Will Check

Is this in any way violating God's word, or his will for my life?

1Jn 5:14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

John 9:31 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will.

Maybe it wasn't the best decision Paul had ever made,

But it was the decision that God used.

And whatever decision we make as we trust God,

He will use.

¹⁴When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done." Acts 21:14

God has the ability to use all that we give him to honor him.

All that we do,

All that we decide

As we trust him daily.

That doesn't mean we will be protected from pain or danger.

Global reports indicate that over 150,000 Christians

were martyred last year, chiefly outside of the United States.

Paul was not protected from the danger,

But in that pain and danger God was glorified.

The prophecy came true for Apostle Paul.

³⁰The whole city was aroused.. they seized Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. ³¹While they were trying to kill him, news

reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. Acts 21:30-31

They shut the gates so they could kill him.

They shut the gates so he wouldn't get help from his friends.

They shut the gates so the Roman's official wouldn't interfere.

But Commander Claudius Lysias,

³²He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Acts 21:32

This prediction of Agabus was literally fulfilled:

All that was said about him came to pass.

Friends, don't become a Christian if you want an easy life.

This is a life of tribulation in this world.

And you will be harassed and pushed to make decisions

That are against what God has asked.

But as we trust God,

Get good advice, from friends and spiritual advisors we must

Make sure our decision is not contrary to the Biblical principles of God's word,

And if we Pray

We can make our decision with boldness and confidence,

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

The most important decision you can make is your relationship with the living God.

That is a decision that affect our eternal destiny.