

## **Vision**

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I. Sometimes we need a vision from God, a premonition or sensitivity of the Holy Spirit.

- A. This is the way - walk in it for either waiting or for going forward. (Isaiah 30:21)
- B. Explaining the Christian life is not simple, but God works in the lives of his children.
- C. God even works through suffering, using it to lead his children. (Romans 8:28-28; Genesis 50:20)
- D. We sometimes think Christian leaders are free of burdens; but this is not so.
  - 1. All Christian leaders suffer.
  - 2. Suffering is God's proving ground.

II. Paul is our example of a Christian leader who suffered much. (2 Corinthians 11:21-28)

A. Some of Paul's trials:

- 1. He was imprisoned often, not only in Philippi.
- 2. Five times Paul was stoned.
- 3. Three times he was shipwrecked.
- 4. In perils often.
- 5. There is more to the book of Acts than Luke writes.
- 6. Paul learned to be content in whatever state he was in. (Philippians 4:11)
- 7. Even the constant care of people was a daily burden to Paul in spite of the excitement of success.

B. In Paul's second missionary journey he began to systematically go through cities to establish and to strengthen the disciples. (2 Corinthians 18:23)

- 1. Establish means to do follow-up, rooting and strengthening Christians.
  - a) Establishing and strengthening is the heart of discipleship.
  - b) Look up establish and see how it is connected to discipleship.
  - c) There is no discipleship without suffering (1 Peter 5:8)

d) When Saul of Tarsus found the Lord, Ananias prayed for him to learn how he must suffer for Christ. (Acts 9:15)

1) There is no escape from the suffering of life.

2) People and circumstances will disappoint us.

3) There is no pearl without pain and "*the tougher the going the faster the growing.*"

2. There is a difference between "seeing" a vision and "having" a vision.

a) They were headed for Bythnia but God changed their direction to Macedonia. (Acts 16:9-12)

b) Lydia became a disciple in Philippi, the leading city of Macedonia, but because of his work Paul was thrown in prison.

c) Being a Roman citizen Paul was offered an escape after his beating but he refused to leave the city secretly. (Acts 16:36-37)

d) They continue their journey toward Thessalonica to Berea where the men were more noble because they searched the Scriptures daily. (Acts 17:11)

e) Finally they arrive in Athens where Paul's spirit was stirred. (Acts 17:15-16)

1) The idolatry of the city troubled him.

2) Imagine growing up in Minneapolis and growing up in the church before suddenly seeing the pagan lifestyles in college.

3) Thus Paul began preaching not only in the synagogues but also in public (Acts 17:22-31)

i. Paul doesn't start with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the Old Testament Scriptures.

ii. In this Mars Hill sermon Paul starts with the known and moves to the unknown.

iii. Paul adapted his message to his audience and some believed.

iv. Paul also related to people one on one as he demonstrates in the end of his Roman epistle where he addresses many people by name.

f) From Athens Paul moves on to Corinth where he meets Aquilla and Priscilla.

1) In Corinth God spoke to Paul to not be afraid of speaking of the gospel for the Lord had many people in that city. (Acts 18:9-10)

2) The truth is God had many people in Corinth only prophetically, as they came to faith through Paul's preaching.

3) Paul continued there 18 months teaching the word of God.

g) Paul moves on again to Ephesus and Caesarea, and Antioch. (Acts 18:21)

1) After spending some time in Antioch Paul begins his third missionary journey again to strengthen the disciples. (Acts 18:23)

2) In Ephesus Paul remained for three years to teach. (Acts 19:10-22).

h) Paul moves on again to Macedonia. (Acts 20:1-4)

1) Luke names several men in this chapter that Paul must have built a personal relationship with.

2) In Troas Paul preached into the night and Eutychus fell from the window, but Paul prayed for him and he revived.

3) One of Paul's greatest sermons is in Acts 20:18-35.

i. Paul preached publicly and in private. (Acts 20:20)

ii. He did not consider his life as precious but worked to fulfill the call of God on him.

### III. Conclusion.

A. Paul made his farewell to his brethren, demonstrating their mutual love. (Acts 20:32-38)

B. Tomorrow we will read the end of Acts.

C. Was Paul in the Spirit when he went to Jerusalem?