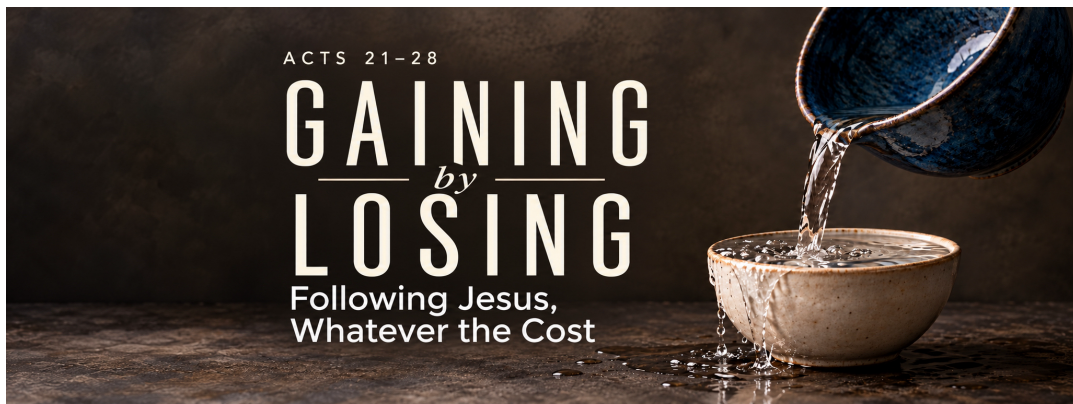




“WHEN OBEDIENCE COMES AT A COST”

Acts 21:1-36

BIG IDEA: *Following Jesus will cost us something, but faithful obedience is worth the cost as God uses our surrender for His glory and the advance of His kingdom.*

KNOW

What is true?

- **Read Acts 21:1–14.** What did Paul know awaited him in Jerusalem? What does his response in verses 13–14 reveal about his commitment to Jesus?
- **Read Acts 21:15–26.** Paul had strong convictions about freedom from the law, yet he was willing to participate in the purification practices requested by the Jerusalem elders. What does his response teach us about the difference between compromising biblical truth and surrendering a personal preference for the sake of others?
- **Read Acts 21:27–36.** Paul had gone out of his way to preserve unity, yet he was falsely accused and attacked. What does his experience teach us about faithfulness to God and how others may respond to us?

FOLLOW

How is Jesus calling me to respond?

- Pastor Jon asked, **“Have you made avoiding pain a condition for following Jesus?”** Where have comfort, safety, approval, or convenience become more important to you than obeying Jesus?
- Pastor Jon said, **“Following Jesus means staying faithful when obedience costs us something we'd rather hold on to.”** What are you holding onto that could make it difficult to obey Jesus if He asked you to surrender it?
- Paul was willing to surrender his preferences for the sake of other believers. Where are you holding tightly to a personal preference that you could lay down in order to love someone else well?
- Paul remained faithful even when his service was misunderstood and unappreciated. How does knowing that Jesus sees your faithfulness encourage you to keep serving when others do not notice, understand, or appreciate it?

REFLECT

How should Jesus become visible through me?

- Think of someone God has placed in your life to love, serve, disciple, or share Christ with. What are you willing to sacrifice or be inconvenienced by in order to love that person faithfully?
- Paul chose unity over insisting on his own preferences. How can laying down a personal preference help you reflect Jesus' humility and love in one of your relationships?
- When you are misunderstood, or your service goes unrecognized, how can your response reflect Jesus' character?

ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

- What is obedience to Jesus costing you in this season, and how can this group pray for you as you remain faithful?
- Is there a preference you are holding onto that is making it difficult for you to love someone well?
- Have you attached your willingness to serve to being noticed, appreciated, or understood? What do you need to surrender to Jesus?

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Jesus, give me courage to obey You when...
- Lord, help me surrender...
- Father, when my faithfulness is misunderstood or unnoticed, remind me...
- Jesus, show me how I can follow You faithfully even when...

PASTOR APPRECIATION PRAYER

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Before closing your time together, take a few minutes to pray for the pastors and elders God has called to shepherd our church.

- **Faithfulness:** Pray that our pastors and elders remain rooted in Christ and faithful to God's Word.
- **Strength:** Pray for spiritual, emotional, and physical strength as they shepherd and serve.
- **Protection:** Pray for God's protection over them, their marriages, their children, and their ministries.
- **Courage:** Pray that they will continue to follow Jesus faithfully when obedience is costly, difficult, misunderstood, or unseen.

Also pray for pastors around the world who are faithfully shepherding God's people in places where following Jesus can cost them their safety, freedom, or lives.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Then Paul replied, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.'" Acts 21:13 (CSB)