



---

LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

---

**TEXT:** Acts 21:1–22:11

**MAIN IDEA:** A heart centered on the gospel gives us the right perspective for living life well.

**LEADERS:**

- Praise God for all the families who dedicated children on Sunday!
- We have a night of worship coming up on November 20th at 7:00 pm at the Totowa campus. All are welcome.
- Registration is open for the Winterblast winter student retreat. This year, they'll be at Camp Orchard Hill, January 20–22. Registration is open via the digital bulletin until November 18.
- This year's Winter Sessions is all about the archaeology and historical background to the Old Testament. Whether you're thirsty for confidence in your Bible, or a skeptic wondering if you can trust it, this is for you!! Winter Sessions will be held in suite 500 of our Totowa Campus, 7 pm on Monday nights, from December 5 to January 16. No sign up necessary. If you can't make it, check out each class on the Emergence Sessions podcast.

**GETTING STARTED:**

- Watch this week's Community Extras Video.
- **Icebreaker:** Who is your favorite musical artist right now, and what do you like about them?
- **Opener:** What stood out to you from this week's sermon?

---

This week we follow Paul as he finally makes it to Jerusalem. In the sermon, Ryan identified three things on display in Paul's life that are essential to a great life. And since this was family dedication week, he also showed how these are applicable to parenting.

**PURPOSE**

We pick up in verse 8, which follows Paul's short stay in the coastal city of Tyre. As we saw last week, Paul is aware of the almost certain danger that awaits him in Jerusalem, and the disciples in Tyre urge him not to go out. Nevertheless, Paul remains steadfast in the conviction that he expressed to the Ephesian elders: "I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

**Read Acts 21:8–12.**

☺ Have you ever faced a dangerous situation in doing what you believe God wanted you to do? How did it turn out?



### Read Acts 21:13–14.

Paul has a strong belief about what the Lord wants him to do, and those urging him not to go have strong opinions as well.



What can we learn from Paul's answer to them about how we should respond to other believers who disagree with our convictions about what God wants us to do?



What does this say about unity within the body of Christ?



Based on what he says here, what would you say is the purpose of Paul's life?



Based on your actions, what would an observer say is the purpose of your life?



In the sermon, Ryan said that Paul's life is all about pursuing the glory of God, rather than his own glory. What does it mean to pursue the glory of God, and why is this a worthy aim, even if it means suffering and going without?

## MAJOR ON THE MAJORS

### Read Acts 21:17–26.

*Leaders: The mention of head shaving in verse 24 makes it likely that the men in question were under a Nazirite vow, the details of which are given in Numbers 6:1–21. These were vows that were taken in order to express an increased level of consecration to the Lord. Although the reasons why people undertook Nazirite vows are not entirely clear, in the Bible vows were typically made in times of need or distress, which would fit the situation of the church in Jerusalem quite well. During his or her time under the vow, Nazirites were expected to abstain from fermented drinks and foods (this included alcohol, but fermented food was more generally excluded from temple sacrifices). They were also forbidden from touching dead bodies and from cutting their hair. At the conclusion of their vow, the Nazirite's head would be shaved and the necessary sacrifices would be offered. It is possible, though not certain, that Paul himself was under a Nazirite vow for a time during his ministry (Acts 18:18).*

In verse 25, James reminds Paul (and us) of the ruling of the Jerusalem Council back in chapter 15, which was an answer to certain Jewish believers who insisted that, to be saved, Gentile converts must be required to submit to circumcision and the law of Moses. The apostles and elders concluded that this was incorrect, and sent letters to the churches, affirming that salvation was through faith apart from works of the law, and that Gentiles should only be asked to observe regulations that were expected of non-Jews visiting Jewish communities. Essentially, *be good guests*.



If observing the Old Testament law is not required for Christians, why does James decide to send Paul to participate in these vows, and why does Paul agree?

*Leaders: Paul describes his personal "policy" on such matters in 1 Corinthians 9:19–23.*



- ①  In the sermon, Ryan said that Paul’s approach was to “major on the majors.” What does this mean, and how is it reflected in this passage?
- ①  Why should all Christians adopt this as their approach to life and ministry?
- ①  Does this mean that Christians can’t or shouldn’t be committed to anything other than the central mission of sharing the gospel? Why or why not?
- ① Are there other “majors” besides the central mission of sharing the gospel? If so, what are they?
- ① What are some of the “minors” that you are tempted to make a big deal about?

### **EMBRACE THE GOSPEL PERSONALLY**

*Leaders: It’s your call if you’d like to have your group read the account of Paul’s arrest in verses 27–40. If not, here is a summary of what happens:*

Near the end of the seven days of purification in the temple, Paul is recognized by Jewish leaders from Asia (think Ephesus) who had come to Jerusalem for Pentecost. They falsely accuse him of defiling the temple by bringing a Gentile with him (vv. 27–29).

Because defiling the temple was a capital offense, a mob is about to kill Paul, but he is saved at the last minute by some of the Roman soldiers charged with keeping the peace in Jerusalem (vv. 30–32).

The soldiers take Paul into custody, unsure of the charges against him and the facts of the case. The angry mob follows them (vv. 33–36).

Before being taken into the barracks, Paul asks the commander to be allowed to address the crowd. His request is granted, and he begins speaking to them in the Hebrew language (probably Aramaic) (vv. 37–40).

#### **Read Acts 22:1–5.**

- ①  Why does Paul begin by recounting who he was before he became a Christian?
- ① What purpose does one’s testimony of life before Christ serve in the Christian life?

#### **Read Acts 22:6–11.**

- ① In the sermon, Ryan pointed out that the most significant point in Paul’s life was when he realized he was wrong. What was it like for you when you realized you were wrong about Jesus?



**Read Acts 22:12–16.**



How does Paul's description of Ananias help him establish his case against the accusations made against him?



Describe the time when you first understood and embraced the truth of the gospel?

---

**PRAYER TIME**

Praise God for giving us a clarity of purpose.

Pray that God would give you a heart for his glory above all things, and that this would bring courage to your walk with Jesus.

Pray for help in seeing which things God wants you to major on and which ones he wants you to minor on.