

Acts: The Gospel Gone Viral
Lesson 43 “Unnecessary Roughness”

I. We have been studying through *Acts* and how the gospel went viral through various revivals in the first century. This is what caused the gospel to spread so rapidly in the first century.

A. We recently finished studying the Apostle Paul’s third missionary journey, which was highlighted by the greatest New Testament Revival; the revival in Ephesus. Over 100,000 people were saved in 2-3 years in Ephesus and Ephesus became a launching pad for ministries and ministers in the first century.

B. After studying Paul’s greatest success, last week we studied Paul’s greatest mistake when He disobeyed the leading of the Holy Spirit and 2 prophetic words and went to Jerusalem to minister to the Jews. **Acts 22:18-21**. God sent Paul from Jerusalem and never told him to return. He sent him to the Gentiles.

1. This mistake led to Paul being arrested in Jerusalem and imprisoned in Rome (not part of God’s plan for Paul’s life). The good news is, God worked wonders through this mistake (Paul was able to minister to Caesar’s household and he wrote the prison epistles). What God did was so miraculous He almost made Paul’s mistake look like it was part of the original plan. He can do the same for us if we will trust him with our mistakes.

2. Today, we are going to look at some of the consequences of Paul’s disobedience. Paul’s disobedience led to him experiencing unnecessary roughness in his life. Just because God can fix our mistakes, it’s better to not have to undergo unnecessary roughness.

C. What is Unnecessary Roughness? It’s a penalty in football that is assessed when a player goes outside the parameters of the rules. For example, when a team hits a quarterback 5 seconds after the whistle they are penalized 15 yards and they make their life much more difficult. **This is what Paul did to himself in Jerusalem.**

II. Unnecessary Roughness

A. **Acts 21:15-25 Paul Arrives in Jerusalem**

1. When Paul arrives in Jerusalem, he is initially greeted warmly by the brethren. The next day, he went to meet James (Jesus’s brother) and began to tell of the things God had done through his ministry to the Gentiles.

2. **Verse 20** James and the elders have an interesting response. They glorify the Lord at Paul’s testimony, but they then shift the subject to talk about the Jews in Jerusalem who have believed. (Who was Paul called to? Gentiles). This should have been a sign to Paul that he is in a different environment.

3. **Verse 20** Interestingly, the Jews who believed were zealous for the law and they wanted to ask Paul about his teaching, not because they wanted to learn, but because they wanted to make sure he wasn't teaching against the law. Why would God send Paul into that?
4. **Verse 21** They were informed about things that weren't completely true. Paul never told the Jews to forsake the law for right standing with God, but he didn't forbid them to do things for ceremonial or customary purposes. He did teach the Gentiles to not go under the law. **The bottom line is this group is going to hear what Paul is teaching to determine if they have to pull him in line. Why would God put Paul in a situation like that?**
5. **Verses 23-25** James then makes Paul take a Nazarite vow and pay the expenses of four other men to go through a Jewish purification ritual (this would have cost in the thousands of dollars in today's money). **Sin takes you further than you want to go and costs you more than you want to pay.**
6. James did not have the revelation of grace Paul had. When Paul came to Jerusalem, he came under James's authority and had to submit to things he taught against in *Galatians*. Paul was no longer the spiritual authority so in order to keep you unity he submitted. Paul brought this on himself.

B. Acts 21:26-36 Paul Arrested in the Temple

1. After the days of purification, Paul had about had to offer an He then was to offer an animal sacrifice as part of the Nazarite vow he made before the crowd interrupted everything. Even if his motive was to become like the Jews in order to win some, this is a really difficult situation he put himself in and a bad witness to the grace of God he preached to the gentiles. **Bad compromise.**
2. Had Paul been in Asia or anywhere else, the Jews from Asia wouldn't have been able to stir up the crowd and beat Paul up.
3. In first century Judaism, it was illegal for a Jew to go past the court of the Gentiles on the temple grounds. The mob jumped to a conclusion and assumed Paul was responsible for helping Trophimus do this. **Ephesians 2:14-17**
4. The mob was so angry with Paul, Roman centurions had to rescue Paul and carry him to safety.

III. Conclusion - We need to stick with the plan of God for our lives. Much of the unnecessary roughness we experience in our lives happens when we go beyond God's plans for our lives. This type of consequence is a penalty we incur because we disobey God's plan.

A. Where do we go from here?

1. Obey
2. If you've disobeyed, look at **2 Samuel 12:24-25**. In the perfect will of God, David would have never slept with Bathsheba, killed her husband, and Solomon

wouldn't have been born. In spite of that, when David repented, God brought something so amazing out of his disobedience, we can't even imagine Solomon wasn't in the perfect plan of GOD. He was the wisest and wealthiest king Israel ever had, wrote 3 books of the Bible, and is in the lineage of Jesus. **When we sin, we need to humble and trust God's goodness. He can make beauty from ashes.**

3. God did this for Paul. He ends up being arrested and imprisoned in Rome (wrote the prison epistles) and began to minister to those in Caesar's household.

B. Pray Closing Prayer of Repentance and for a Revelation of God's Goodness

C. Call Up Prayer Team