

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Unstoppable Church Wk 21 - Fix Your Eyes on Jesus
Acts 21:1–16
11.01.26 | Kyle Morris

About This Week's Message:

As Paul continues his journey toward Jerusalem in Acts 21, he knows that suffering and imprisonment await him. Along the way, believers who love and care for him repeatedly urge him not to go. Even his closest companions plead with him to reconsider. Yet Paul remains determined to follow the Holy Spirit's leading, even when obedience means walking into hardship and uncertainty.

This passage challenges a common assumption we make about following Jesus: that God's will should lead us toward comfort, safety, and ease. But Scripture reminds us that the Holy Spirit sometimes leads us into places of difficulty, testing, and suffering. Paul understood that hardship was not necessarily a sign that he had stepped outside God's will. Instead, he trusted that God was preparing him for what lay ahead. His confidence was not rooted in knowing the outcome but in knowing the One who was leading him.

Pastor Kyle reminds us that the most important part of discipleship is learning to trust God and surrender control of our lives to Him. Like Paul, we must learn to discern God's will through His Word, the leading of the Holy Spirit, and the peace of Christ. Ultimately, Paul's courage came from fixing his eyes on Jesus, who had already walked the road of suffering and faithfully surrendered to the Father's will. When we keep our eyes on Jesus and remember the eternal hope we have in Him, we can face uncertainty and hardship with confidence, knowing that nothing can separate us from His love.

Goals of This Week's Discussion:

- Recognize that following the Holy Spirit does not guarantee a life free from hardship, uncertainty, or suffering.
- Understand that God can use difficult circumstances to prepare us, strengthen our trust, and accomplish His purposes.
- Learn to discern God's will through Scripture, the leading of the Holy Spirit, and the peace of Christ.
- Learn from Paul's example of courage, surrender, and faithfulness in the face of suffering.

Connections with the 7-Marks of a Jesus Follower:

- **Stand in Awe** - Trust in God's sovereignty, faithfulness, and goodness, recognizing that His purposes are greater than our immediate circumstances.
- **Walk in the Word** - Allow Scripture to guide our decisions, shape our understanding of God's will, and help us discern His direction.
- **Keep in Step** - Learn to recognize and follow the Holy Spirit's leading, even when obedience takes us into uncomfortable or uncertain circumstances.
- **Live Free** - Surrender our need for control, release fear and anxiety, and walk in the peace and confidence that come from trusting Jesus.

Starter Questions:

- When you face an important decision, what do you typically rely on most to help you determine what to do?
- Have you ever experienced a season when following God seemed to lead you into greater difficulty rather than greater comfort?
- What makes it difficult to surrender control and trust God when you cannot see what lies ahead?

Read Acts 21:1–6

And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara.[a] 2 And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 3 When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo. 4 And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5 When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed 6 and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.

Discussion:

- What stands out to you about Paul's journey and his interactions with the believers along the way?
- Why do you think the believers urged Paul not to continue toward Jerusalem?

- How might their concern for Paul's safety have influenced the way they understood what the Holy Spirit was revealing?
- How can we distinguish between a difficult circumstance that requires perseverance and one that may be warning us to change direction?

Read Acts 20:22–23 and Luke 4:1–2

22 And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by[a] the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.

Discussion:

- What similarities do you notice between the Holy Spirit's leading in Paul's life and Jesus' experience in the wilderness?
- What do these passages teach us about the relationship between God's will and suffering?
- Where are you currently facing hardship, uncertainty, opposition, or a difficult decision?
- Are you interpreting that difficulty as a reason to turn back, or could God be using it to prepare you for what lies ahead?

Read Acts 9:15–16

But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”

Discussion:

- What does God's instruction to Ananias reveal about Paul's calling and the suffering he would experience?
- How might knowing that suffering was part of his calling have prepared Paul for the difficulties he encountered?

- How can God use seasons of hardship to deepen our trust and dependence on Him?
- What would it look like to approach a difficult season with confidence that God is still present and working?

Read Acts 21:7–14

When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers[a] and stayed with them for one day. 8 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied. 10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews[b] at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" 12 When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."

Discussion:

- What stands out to you about the prophecy Agabus delivers to Paul?
- How does Paul's response reveal his confidence in God's calling and direction?
- Why do you think Paul's companions continued urging him not to go, even after hearing the prophecy?
- What can we learn from the fact that spiritually mature believers, including Luke, could misunderstand how to respond to what God was revealing?

Read Psalm 119:105

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Discussion:

- Why is God's Word the best place to begin when we are seeking His will?
- How can a lack of familiarity with Scripture make it more difficult to recognize God's direction?
- What are some examples of decisions where Scripture gives us clear guidance?
- How can we become more intentional about allowing God's Word to shape our everyday choices?

Read Galatians 5:25

[25] If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Discussion:

- What does it mean to keep in step with the Holy Spirit?
- How did Paul's relationship with the Holy Spirit influence his willingness to continue toward Jerusalem?
- Why is it important to recognize that the Holy Spirit will never lead us in a direction that contradicts God's Word?
- Have you experienced a time when you sensed the Holy Spirit directing you toward a particular decision or step of obedience?

Read Colossians 3:15 and Isaiah 26:3

[15] And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Discussion:

- What do these passages teach us about the relationship between trusting God and experiencing His peace?
- Pastor Kyle described the peace of Christ as an umpire in our hearts. How does that picture help you understand the role of peace in making decisions?

- Why is it important to distinguish between the peace of Christ and simply feeling comfortable with a decision?
- Have you ever experienced God's peace in a situation where the circumstances themselves were difficult or uncertain?

Read Hebrews 12:1–3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Discussion:

- What does it mean to fix our eyes on Jesus?
- According to this passage, how was Jesus able to endure the suffering and shame of the cross?
- Why is it important to maintain an eternal perspective rather than focusing only on our present circumstances?
- What are some practical ways we can redirect our attention toward Jesus when fear, anxiety, or uncertainty begin to overwhelm us?
- What does it mean to be more than conquerors through Him who loved us?

Reflection:

- Where in your life are you currently being challenged to trust God more deeply?
- When facing an important decision, do you consistently seek God's direction through His Word, His Spirit, and His peace?
- Are there areas where you have relied more heavily on the opinions of others than on personally seeking God's will?
- Are you allowing your present circumstances to determine your perspective, or are you fixing your eyes on Jesus and the eternal hope you have in Him?

Application:

- **Trust God** in the difficulty. Identify a situation where you are experiencing hardship or uncertainty. Ask God to help you recognize how He may be using this season to strengthen your trust and prepare you for what lies ahead.
- **Keep in Step** with the Spirit. Set aside time to pray and listen to the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to make you more attentive to His leading and give you the courage to follow.
- **Let Peace Be the Umpire**. As you consider important decisions, invite the peace of Christ to guide your heart. Remember that God's peace can remain even when obedience involves difficulty.
- **Practice surrender**. Identify one area where you are holding tightly to control. Bring it before God in prayer and intentionally surrender the outcome to Him.
- **Fix Your Eyes on Jesus**. When fear, discouragement, or uncertainty arise, return to Hebrews 12:1–3. Remember Jesus' faithfulness and the eternal hope secured through His death and resurrection.

Pray:

- Thank God that He is faithful and trustworthy, even when we cannot see or understand what lies ahead.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help us recognize His leading and give us courage to follow, even when obedience involves hardship or uncertainty.
- Pray that we would grow in our understanding of God's Word and allow it to guide our decisions and shape our lives.
- Ask God to teach us to recognize the peace of Christ and trust His direction rather than relying solely on our own understanding.
- Ask God to make Revive Church a people who continually fix our eyes on Jesus, trust His leading, and faithfully follow Him wherever He calls us.