

Basic Tips: 1.) Use a translation you can understand. The NIV or The Message are good starters. 2.) Use a kids Bible with kids. 3.) Keep a pencil and notebook around to write down questions, observations, and conclusions. 4.) Have fun. Use your imagination and your brain.

June 28-July 5, 2020

What is the Church?

Day 1	Acts 21:1-16
Day 2	Acts 21:17-36
Day 3	Acts 21:37-22:22
Day 4	Acts 22:23-23:11
Day 5	Acts 23:12-35

Questions to Guide You:

While we are not gathering in our building every week, it is the perfect time to reconsider what is the Church? We'll start by reading in the book of Acts.

- 1.) Before reading, what has God been teaching you this week about the church? About yourself? About justice?
- 2.) Paul and Luke have to "tear themselves away from [the church from Ephesus]". When have you had to tear yourself away from church? Who have you had to tear yourself away from? Pray for that kind of connection with your congregation.
- 3.) What patterns do you see with Paul in each city on the way to Jerusalem? Why does he "seek out believers"? Have you ever done such while traveling? What ministries or churches would you like to seek out in the future? Who do you want to learn from?
- 4.) Why does Paul want to go to Jerusalem against so much advice? When have you had to go against the advice of wise believers? How do we know the will of God when others can't see it?
- 5.) Why is it so instructive that Phillip has 4 unmarried daughters who are prophets? How should this change the way we think about women in ministry?
- 6.) How do the church leaders respond to Paul? What do they celebrate with him? What are they afraid of? Why?
- 7.) Why would Jewish Christians assume bad things about Paul? When Christians assumed bad things about another pastor or Christian teacher? How can we give the benefit of the doubt to folks' faith?
- 8.) What are the mobs so mad about? When have you seen people respond

violently out of fear and misunderstanding? Why does the commander save Paul's life?

- 9.) Why does Paul address the crowd? Why does he tell them his testimony? Do you know your testimony? Who have you shared it with lately? What things does Paul emphasize in this re-telling?
- 10.) Why do people get so angry at this point in his story? Was it the reminder of Stephen's murder or that Paul went to the Gentiles that angered them so much?
- 11.) What is it that you "have been assigned to do" (vs 10)?
- 12.) What things do Americans hate to be reminded of? Christians? Why?
- 13.) Both the Roman commander and the High Priest command people to hurt Paul? Why do they use violence? In what ways does our justice system still follow this distorted thinking? Should Christians ever use or allow torture?
- 14.) Why does it matter that Paul is a "Roman citizen" and a "Pharisee"? What privileges do these afford him that would not be given to other people? Which prisoners in our justice system are treated worst? Non-citizens? Uneducated? Poor? What can Christians do to better the justice system?
- 15.) To help think through the trials here in Acts, perhaps watch *Just Mercy*, to see how justice is miscarried and still so.
- 16.) This is a lynch mob working coordinated with complicit government. What do you know of America's history of lynchings? Painful as it is, it will help you understand what happened to Paul? This is how people often try to get justice.
- 17.) Who saves Paul's life? Who much are you investing in your nieces and nephews? Do they know your faith? Do they know your testimony?
- 18.) Why doesn't Claudius Lysias let the Sanhedrin assassinate Paul? How can we work to undermine miscarriages of justice?