

“Growing Up”

Use this guide as a tool to help you prepare to experience spiritual transformation in a practical way. It is a flexible guide that will help you discover, own, and apply the truths of God’s Word.

Message Summary

The Apostle Paul arrived in Jerusalem finishing up his 3rd Missionary Journey. He brought an offering to the persecuted church in Jerusalem from the Gentile churches scattered throughout Asia and Macedonia. Paul excitedly shared with the church all that God had done through his ministry to the Gentiles. When the church heard all these things they together with Paul and his missionary friends glorified God.

But Paul was a liability to the church in Jerusalem. Many of the Jewish believers were confused by Paul’s message. They had been told by non-believing Jews that Paul taught Jews to forsake the Law of Moses. Even though this wasn’t true, the church encouraged Paul to participate in a vow made by some of the brothers to prove his love for Moses and the Law. Even though Paul understood that his righteousness was not gained from the Law but through Christ, Paul’s conscience was clear to participate so that he might be able to win the Jews. He was willing to lay aside his freedoms for the sake of loving his brothers. He was even willing to live with the potential consequences. As we know from the story that follows, Paul did end up in chains by the hands of the Jews. But Paul’s conscience wasn’t chained nor was the spread of the Gospel because Paul’s arrest served to spread the Gospel all the way to Rome.

Paul had grown up. In his maturity Paul recognized that his ministry was really God’s work. He was willing to lay aside liberties for the sake of the Gospel and also willing to live with the consequences of doing so. This is an extraordinary example for us as Christians today. How do you relate to Paul’s maturity in Christ? Do you see your ministry as God’s work? Are you able to submit yourself to the local church for the sake of fulfilling the Mission of God so that God will receive the glory? Are you willing to lay aside liberties for the sake of loving others so the Gospel can go forth? Are you willing to live with the consequences?

As you prepare to meet with your Missional Community this week ask these questions of yourself and the ones on the following page. Be prepared to discuss your answers with the MC.

Message Outline

Christian maturity involves...

1. Recognizing the advancement of the Gospel ultimately is God’s work. (17-20a)
 - God uses servants of God...
 - Who submit to the church of God...
 - To fulfill the mission of God...
 - For the glory of God.
2. Willingly giving up liberties for the sake of the Gospel. (20b-26)
 - Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone – not by keeping rules.
 - Christ-righteousness frees us from the bondage of works-righteousness.

But...

 - Our freedoms are to be laid aside in the interest of love.
3. Willingly living with the consequences. (27-36)
 - God uses our circumstances for our good and His glory.
 - His grace strengthens us in our weakness.
 - God’s glory in His promises begins where our ability ends.

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Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help make application of God’s Word to your Head (What God wants me to know), to your Heart (What God wants me to desire/value), and to your Hands (What God wants me to do).

In regard to Acts 21:17-36:

1. What does this passage say about God’s character?
2. What is God doing here? How does this passage fit in the overall narrative of the Bible?
3. What is God saying about me?
4. Where am I not living by faith? How do I return to faith?
5. How should I practice this in everyday life?

Weekly Prayer Focus

- **Church:**
 - Pray that God would give us new believers and covenant members.
 - Pray for new relationships that will lead to Gospel conversations.
 - Pray for the elders as they lead us to accomplish the mission.
 - Pray for the Missional Communities to establish their goals and objects and begin to live them out.
- **Local:**
 - Pray for the SRB MC Group as they prepare to engage their community and build Gospel relationships through the Friday Night Beach Bonfire Outreach.
 - Pray that God would burden us with the lostness in our cities, neighborhoods, and at work.
 - Pray that God will identify 5 people you can begin to invest in and engage with the Gospel.
- **Global:**
 - Pray that God would give you a heart for the nations.
 - Pray for the trip to SEA.