

## Sermon Text Discussion 2/25/2018

Paul's Journey to Jerusalem and the Gift of True Friendship Acts 21:1-21 by Drew Hunter

### Overview

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Although this passage does not explicitly explain or reference the Gospel, it demonstrates that the message of Jesus' rescue and restoration of humanity creates a certain kind of person and Christian community. This is manifested in deep community, single-minded devotion to Jesus, and an incredible flexibility. A risen Savior is only thing that sufficiently explains the following qualities we see in the disciples in Acts 21.

1. The Strength of Christian Friendship (v1-9). These early disciples became less individualistic, developing rich networks of relationships, based in the eternal community of the Triune God. With Jesus as their "bonding agent" they experienced hospitality, expressions of affection, prayer, counsel, and constancy.
2. The Cost of True Discipleship (v10-14). Paul knew that the Gospel doesn't just create a new community, it leads to self-denial. Thus with single-minded devotion, Paul willingly suffered for the cause of Christ.
3. The Flexibility of Gospel Centrality (v15-21). While Paul was zealous and protective of the centrality of the Gospel, he was flexible with secondary issues.

### Quotations

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*"Someday you will read or hear that Billy Graham is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. I shall be more alive than I am now. I will just have changed my address. I will have gone into the presence of God."*

Billy Graham

### Understanding & Application

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- 1) In what ways have you experienced the Lord making you less individualistic and more committed to developing a network of meaningful relationships?
- 2) What are your joys and challenges in offering hospitality? What specific step do you believe the Lord wants you to take in regards to hospitality?
- 3) Why should prayer be experienced as a natural and foundational part of our Christian friendships? When do you feel comfortable in initiating prayer? In what situations or relationships do you need to be more open or bold to pray?
- 4) Our words are a central part of expressing affection and giving counsel. What have you learned from others who do these things well?
- 5) What was it about Paul that made him able to embrace suffering for Christ? If you were more willing to suffer for Jesus, what would be different in your life?
- 6) Drew said, *"The believers befriended one another because they have been befriended by Jesus. John said that we love one another because he first loved us. We welcome one another because God welcomes us by grace. We open our homes to one another because God has opened up his heart to us and made us family. How are you doing these days in receiving and being open to God's grace?"*