

# Crossway Life Group, Week of November 24

See sermon notes on [CMC's webpage](#) for background information

## Community

---

Take time to share and pray for each other's concerns and joys.

## Scripture: Acts 21:1-16 Sermon: "The Submissive Servant"

---

### Reading & Discussing Scripture

- **Background.** If the book of Acts were made into a television series, Acts 21 would be episode 1 of the final season. In Acts 21 Paul is led and empowered by the Holy Spirit to visit Jerusalem, fully aware of the trouble it will bring. He is arrested in Jerusalem and spends the rest of his life as a prisoner, bouncing from court to court and jail to jail. Acts 21:1-16 shows how Paul and his friends entrust themselves to God's good, though difficult, purposes.
- **Read Acts 21:1-16.** Have you ever had to make a difficult decision that would bring hardship but you knew it was the right thing to do? If so, how did it ultimately turn out? How did you know it was the right thing to do?
- **Read Acts 21:17-26.** What does it mean to you to submit yourself (your desires, plans, etc) to God and for the good of the Gospel? What is a good example of how we might need to submit to others in Christianity rather than doing what we think would be best?

### The Big Idea

**Submissive servants of God trust Him especially when faithfully following is difficult because God will accomplish His perfect purposes**

### Application & Reflection Questions

- Allan told a story about a missionary couple, David and Svea Flood, who encountered great hardship in serving God in what once Belgian Congo, now Democratic Republic of Congo. These Swedish missionaries were faithful to God's leading yet did not see the fruit of their sacrifice until years later. The need for an eternal perspective is important as we faithfully follow God's lead. In what ways do you feel you are sowing seeds that may only bear fruit beyond your time?
- Allan told a story about a friend named Dwayne who willingly cut off his dreadlocks, after growing them for 8 years, in order to honor and serve graciously with his host church. Have you seen examples of gracious, submissive serving in your life? How have such people inspired you?
- Are you facing any difficult decisions? How can your life group members help you discern, prepare, and pursue following God faithfully?
- Understanding the relationship between law and grace is an important foundation in our Christian faith. For example, Christ willingly submitted to God's law, dying on our behalf, and thereby graciously offers us forgiveness and new relationship with God and others. Trusting this gospel will increase our freedom, amplify devotion, and deepen worship. How have you experienced God's grace? In what ways has God's grace expanded your freedom, devotion, and worship?

### Growing in Cultural Understanding

---

Being a submissive servant is not always viewed as a positive title in today's society. Leaders often charge ahead and at best give lip service to what it means to really submit and serve. What does humility, servanthood and submission look like in your culture and your family?

### Serving beyond ourselves

---

What are ways that your group can be for the benefit of people beyond yourselves?

Would your group consider **praying for our church's nominating committee**? This team is responsible to review people who are suggested as possible nominations for Board Member, Board Member/Elder, Nominating Committee member, and search committee member. Please pray for this committee:

- To develop a good process for our church
- For wisdom about people and the Spirit's leading
- That they would not delay, and that they would not rush
- For God's provision of the right leadership for our church

### **Acts 21:1-16 – New International Version (NIV)**

After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. <sup>2</sup>We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. <sup>3</sup>After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. <sup>4</sup>We sought out the disciples there and stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup>When it was time to leave, we left and continued on our way. All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. <sup>6</sup>After saying goodbye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

<sup>7</sup>We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day. <sup>8</sup>Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. <sup>9</sup>He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. <sup>10</sup>After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>11</sup>Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" <sup>12</sup>When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." <sup>14</sup>When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

<sup>15</sup>After this, we started on our way up to Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup>Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

### **Paul's Arrival at Jerusalem**

<sup>17</sup>When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. <sup>18</sup>The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. <sup>19</sup>Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

<sup>20</sup>When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. <sup>21</sup>They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. <sup>22</sup>What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, <sup>23</sup>so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. <sup>24</sup>Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. <sup>25</sup>As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality."

<sup>26</sup>The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.