



St James Woodley - Resources for Journey through Acts (Part 2)

Chapters 13-21 May – July 2020



Week 10: Home (but not dry) and into hot water!



SETTLING

Spend a few minutes thinking back on your own “church history”. It’s possible that St James is the only church of which you’ve ever been part. If that’s you, then consider the different phases of St James life and ministry over the years. If you’re new to church then this bit won’t take you long! However, if you’ve been part of several churches over the years, reflect upon the people and experiences that you had while there. As you look back, take time to thank God for walking with you through the various stages of your journey and for the people that you encountered and how they influenced the development of your faith in Jesus.

FOCUSING

Use these simple steps to help you to become open to God’s word and the voice of the Holy Spirit.

- Invite the Holy Spirit in prayer to open your ears, heart and mind.
- Read the passages of scripture out loud and notice where your attention is drawn – a verse, phrase or single word.

Romans 8 vs 38-39: *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Psalms 139 vs 7-12: *I can never be lost to your Spirit! I can never get away from my God! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the place of the dead, you are there. If I ride the morning winds to the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, your strength will support me. If I try to hide in the darkness, the night becomes light around me. For, even darkness cannot hide from God; to you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are both alike to you.*

- Then remain in silence for a minute or two, staying with the place in the passage that stood out for you.
- Listen to what you feel you heard in the passage, in a particular verse, phrase or even single word. It might be something you’d never heard before, something odd or something comforting, or something which you’d like to better understand.
- Conclude by simply offering back to God what might have come out of the exercise and ask for His help in making sense of it over the coming days.

Acts Chapter 21 vs 1 - 26 – The Third Missionary Journey Pt. 3



As Paul completes his third missionary journey, so we conclude this second part of our “Journey through Acts”.

Read Acts 21 vs 1-6: Back in Paul’s day, there were no scheduled shipping services. Travellers negotiated with trading ship captains for a passage, if the ship was going to a port where they wanted to go. Apparently, passengers had no accommodation and had to provide their own food as they camped on the ship’s open deck. So, Paul and his companions made their journey towards Jerusalem in stages as such available shipping allowed. In Tyre, their ship had to unload its cargo and pick up another, so was in port for about a week. During this time the group sought out the local church and spent time with them. Some of the local believers, through the Holy Spirit prophesied over Paul and urged him not to continue his journey to Jerusalem – to which, it seems, Paul paid not a blind bit of notice! Did Paul have such a low regard for the gift of prophecy that he felt it O.K. to just ignore what was said? Almost certainly not, but try and suggest why he acted as he did and what bearing, if any, this might have on our attitude to prophecy today.

Read Acts 21 vs 7-15: At each stage of the trip back to Jerusalem, Paul and his friends link up with other Christian believers, either just for the day or for a longer stay. Suggest why they did this.

In Caesarea, at the home of Philip (he who met and baptised the official from Ethiopia, back in chapter 8) more, clear, prophecy declares that in Jerusalem things are not going to go well for Paul. Everyone, except Paul, feels it would be a good idea not to go there. Once again, Paul takes a different view. Try and give an explanation for his lack of anxiety about what might befall him in Jerusalem.

Read Acts 21 vs 16-26: Paul and friends eventually make it to Jerusalem where they are shown hospitality by Mnason, and are given a polite, if slightly cool, reception by the church leaders. However, their arrival clearly creates a rather nervous atmosphere among the Jerusalem believers. Perhaps surprisingly, Paul agrees to go along with the proposal to try and show the Jerusalem Jews, and the authorities, that he is still a good Jew and not, as the rumour mongers suggest, “against the Laws of Moses”.

Do Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 9 vs 20 help to explain his behaviour?

Paul knew that coming back to Jerusalem would be tough and he was ready to face whatever might come his way. Perhaps, too, he realised that “what goes around comes around” – might this be explained by looking back to Acts 9 vs 1-2?

The plan to appease the Jews at the temple in Jerusalem doesn’t succeed – but that’s another story. . .

To be continued . . .



For this final week of our series on Acts (part 2) try using the **A.C.T.S.** mnemonic for structuring your prayers.

A = Adoration. – spend some time focusing on God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Lift up your heart in worship of the awesome nature of God and the character of each member of the trinity.

C = Confession. – be open before God about those areas of your life where you know you have failed or been weak, confident of God’s mercy, grace and forgiveness.

T = Thanksgiving. – allow yourself time and space to give thanks to God for whatever is on your mind.

S = Supplication. – bring before God any people or situations that concern you, seeking His help, care, blessing etc.