

VOYAGER

Experiences That Shape Our Faith

About the Series: Experiences are powerful and can shape our Christian faith. But experiences should not be what defines our faith. Rather, it should serve to strengthen our faith and affirm what we already know to be the facts of our faith as recorded in the Scriptures. In this sermon series, we explore the journeys of Apostle Paul and how encountering life-changing experiences can teach valuable life lessons to voyagers like us who are on a journey called life.

Part 14

Courage in Convictions

Acts 21-22 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

DISCUSS

"The measure of our obedience isn't found in the greatness of the act, but in how we stick to the Word of God for the sake of Christ. Every person has a different set of circumstances, but every person has the same choice to make: to be faithful to God - regardless of the consequences." -Sara Barrat

We are in a generation, young and old, that seems to have either no biblical convictions or weakened convictions, that is why we are not making more of an impact in the world as we should. Read Acts chapters 21 and 22 and discuss the following four biblical principles for how to strengthen our biblical convictions for God's glory.

Accept the consequences of your biblical convictions (v. 21:1-14)

- Why did the Christians in Tyre try to persuade Paul NOT to go to Jerusalem? Were they trying to undermine the will of God? How did Paul respond (v.13-14)?

- What's your understanding of biblical convictions?
- How do your personal convictions provide boundaries for you to live a godly life?
- Why is it so dangerous to be in a society or in an environment without personal convictions?
- Would you be able to accept the consequences of your convictions like how the friends of Daniel did in Daniel 3:17-18? Why or why not?
- Can others, such as family members, friends, co-workers/classmates see just how important your convictions are to you?

Be flexible on the non-essentials of your personal convictions (v. 21:15-26)

- How did the Christian leaders react to Paul's arrival? What was the rumor that he was told about that may cause hatred toward him in the Jewish community? How did Paul counter this misinformation about what he supposedly taught (v. 22-25)?
- As a Christian in your culture, how could you be sensitive and yet not compromise your biblical convictions as Paul clearly demonstrated?
- Discuss some of the non-essentials of the Christian faith that you could be flexible on.

Be prepared to defend and clarify your biblical convictions (v. 21:27-22:1-21)

- How did some trouble-making Jews from Asia react to Paul? What did they do to him? How did Paul respond to false accusations (v.37-40, 22:1-5)?
- How did he use his personal salvation testimony to defend and clarify his biblical convictions (v. 6-21)?
- How would you defend your convictions when society says that an unborn child is a lifeless clump of tissue with no humanity, or the human gender is whatever one believes or chooses to identify with, or there is no absolute truth and the Bible is just a work of human invention? Are you able to explain clearly your biblical beliefs and defend your convictions?

Make use of your rights under the law to protect yourself (v. 22-29)

- What was the issue that caused the crowd to call for Paul's death? What right under the law did Paul use to protect himself from further torture?
- Do you feel blessed that you live in a country where the teachings of the Scriptures are protected under the law?
- If your biblical convictions are in danger, what should you do to ensure that your religious freedoms continue to be upheld?

REFLECT

If your boss or someone above you asks you to curse God, would you do it? If you get threatened to disown the Savior who saved you from sin and promised you eternal life, would you listen? Would you be silent when Biblical convictions are being bashed by society? Pray that God will raise a generation of men and women among us who will stand strong for biblical convictions.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I must admit that living in this society where my Biblical convictions are being threatened and laughed at is not easy. I need to make a firm resolve to accept the consequences of my biblical convictions, but to be flexible on the non-essentials so that I will not unnecessarily offend others and be a stumbling block. Lord, please help me to be prepared to defend and clarify my biblical convictions and to learn and know my rights under the law to protect myself. Thank You that I live in a country where there is a religious freedom to live out my faith. Help me, Lord, as I deal with people of different convictions. Help me please to stand strong in this generation for Your glory and as a witness for our Savior Jesus Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.