

# Don't Judge Too Quickly

## Acts 21

**Icebreaker:** *When do you tend to “jump to conclusions”?*

After leaving the Ephesian elders Paul began his journey to Jerusalem. Meeting with several groups of Christians on his way he ran into a prophet named Agabus who prophesied about what would happen to Paul in Jerusalem.

### Acts 21:10-15

Luke says Agabus, “came down from Judea.” Judea was in the hill country and Caesarea where Paul was staying was on the coast of the Mediterranean. He literally “came down” the hill to Caesarea to see Paul.

*What did Agabus do with Paul’s belt and what did it mean?*

- He tied his own hands and feet up with it and told Paul the same would happen to him in Jerusalem.
- Paul would be handed over to the Gentiles. This fit with Paul’s plan to go to Rome, the Gentile capital of the world (Acts 19:21).

*How did the Christians there respond to this prophesy?*

- They wept and begged Paul not to go.

*What did Paul say he was ready to do for the name of Jesus?*

- Even be killed

Paul, the former persecutor of the church is now himself facing death for the name of Jesus Christ.

### 2 Tim 4:6-8

Paul knew there was more to life than the here and now. All that mattered to him was following the will of God and bringing honor to the name of Christ. Remember Paul’s words from last week in **Acts 20:24**.

*How do we bring honor to Christ today?*

*Do you think that in your lifetime being a Christian will have more risks than it does today? How so?*

*What did Paul say was his only aim? (20:24)*

- To finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus had given him—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.

### Acts 21:17-26

One of Luke’s big points in Acts is that the Christians were not in violation of the law but that Christ had ful-

filled the law. Paul taught that there was a righteousness that came apart from the law and circumcision—that came instead through faith in Jesus Christ. That was confusing to the Jews who believed circumcision was to be done forever to anyone before they could be a part of the people of God.

Paul goes to great lengths to assure the Jews that he is doing what James described, “living obedient to the law.” (21:24). In other words, Paul was not opposed to the law, he just understood the law in a new way because of what Christ had done. Because of his love for his fellow Jews he took part in the custom of purification even though he knew that real purification came through Christ.

*Why is it important that we do our best not to offend our brothers and sisters in Christ when we have differing views on something?*

- We will not agree on everything but we need to have an attitude of love and respect when we do disagree.

### **Acts 21:27-36**

*What three charges did they shout against Paul when they grabbed him?*

- That Paul was teaching against God
- That he was teaching against the temple
- That he had brought Greeks/Gentiles into the temple

They were mistaken on all three. *Why is it important that you make sure you understand a situation before you confront someone or talk to them about something?*

- We need to give people the benefit of the doubt.
- We need to be careful that we don't say or think things that are not true
- We don't need to hold something against someone without making sure we understood the situation correctly.

*What did this misunderstanding result in for Paul?*

- A beating, an arrest, and ultimately his life.

*How dangerous can it be when we make judgments too quickly, before weighing out the facts?*

### **Application**

*Is there anyone you have misunderstood that needs to be resolved? How can you go about that?*

*What areas of your life would hold you back from a trip to Jerusalem? In other words—are there things in your life that you need to give over to Christ's lordship?*

It is so important that we take our Christianity seriously. Paul was willing to live his life for Christ even if it cost him his life. *How does that challenge you to live more for Christ today?*