

## June 27th Discussion Questions

### “Opposition as Opportunity”

### Acts 21-22

#### Preview

“I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” Acts 21:13

**Big Idea:** We need to prepare to respond to opposition like Jesus.

#### Summary

*“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”* Matt. 5:10-12

#### Three Principles of Persecution:

1. Expect **Opposition** as a follower of Jesus (21:11; 9:16; 20:23; 2 Cor. 11:24-27; Matt. 5:10-12)
  - Connect with Jesus by remembering His **Suffering** (Php. 3:10)
2. Accept **Suffering** to help you grow (21:30-32,35)
  - Reflect the character of Jesus in patient **Endurance** (Rom. 5:3-4; James 1:2-4)
3. Seek Opportunities to **Testify** (20:24; 22:3,6,14-16)
  - Share your story to introduce His story

*“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”* James 1:2-4

#### Opening Questions

1. What is something you quit or chose to endure when you were younger because it was too hard? What were you saying to yourself to convince you of your decision at that time?

2. If you were a coach, how would you encourage and challenge your team to endure suffering for the sake of winning? Do you have any good quotes to use?

**Pray:** Pray for your discussion in God's Word to be meaningful, convicting, and filled with grace.

**Read:** Acts 21:26-36,40; 22:1,12-16

### **Discussion**

3. What happened to Paul after arriving in Jerusalem?
4. What opportunity did Paul take in the midst of his suffering?
5. Why do you think God allows suffering in our lives? In what way is suffering an opportunity? Can you give an example from your life?
6. How do you make sense of suffering in light of God's sovereignty?
7. If you could share a lesson about suffering with your younger self, what would it be?
8. What story does Paul recount in Acts 22? What do you think he told this story?
9. Why is sharing your testimony or a story from your life a strategic way to start a spiritual conversation with someone, especially someone who opposes Christianity?

### **Application**

1. What suffering are you facing right now because of the fallenness of our world? What Gospel truth do you need to further embrace to help you endure?
2. What cross of suffering is God calling you to bear right now because of the Gospel? How are you responding to it? Do you need to increase your submission to God's will or change your attitude about God's will?
3. Do you know of anyone suffering for the Gospel right now? How can we pray for them?

### **Prayer Requests**

1. Spend time praying for the suffering in your lives and the lives of others.

### **Church-Wide Requests from the Prayer Team**

- **Personal:** Pray we would not be discouraged by opposition but instead would see it as an opportunity to share the love of Christ.
- **Ministry:** Pray for our teens and adult volunteers as they travel to Washington D.C. for a week of ministry.