

**Sunday Sermon Review: Week of February 5, 2023**

**Sermon Series: The Book of Acts**

**Sermon: God's Plan Will Prevail - Acts 23:12-35**

**Speaker: Pastor Beau Jensen**

## **Icebreaker**

- If you could give Pastor Beau a topic to “freestyle rap” about, what would it be?

## **Discussion Questions**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- Are you a planner? What should you be planning, and is there flexibility for God's will in your planning?

### **I. THE HEART IS DECEITFUL v. 12-15**

- What is the significance of “more than 40” making this oath?
- Do you ever feel like it is acceptable to sin? Why or why not?
- Have you ever felt like everyone was out to get you, yet you were in the “right” about something? How did that make you feel?
- Share a time when you went against God's will because you thought it was better to do things your way? What was the end result?
- Have you ever been passionate about something and believed it was God's will, and then found that it was not? Describe how that made you feel.
- Are you like Paul, or the priests and elders who came against him? Why?
- If you are speaking to someone with differing opinions, do you act like these 40 who came against Paul, or do you ask clarifying questions to provide a clearer picture? How do you do that?

**Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” NKJV**

- This is why we need Jesus – because our hearts are wicked and will deceive us. How do you filter life, so that God is in control and not your heart?
- Have you ever said “Jesus knows my heart” and still did the wrong thing? What if you asked Jesus to reveal your heart to YOU as well as Him?
- Have you ever been sucked into “religious thinking” that was not in line with God’s plan? How did you work that out?

## **II. GOD WILL USE ANYONE & ANYTHING v. 16-30**

- God sometimes uses circumstances and seemingly the most unexpected person or situation to carry out his purposes and plans. How has God used an unexpected person or circumstance to make His plan clear in your life?
- What is the significance of the tribune taking Paul’s nephew by the hand to privately ask what the nephew had to say? How old do you think the nephew was? If he was very young, why would God use a child to help bring His plan to fruition?
- Why did the tribune feel it necessary or important to listen to Paul’s nephew?
- The soldiers were transporting someone they thought was a prisoner, but they were unaware God was using them to transport His preacher of the gospel safely. When has God used you to exercise His will, while you were totally unaware?
- Why would the tribune order 470 soldiers to guard Paul – one man -- during the transport? Does that convince you that God would do anything to make sure His plan prevails?
- Why did the tribune write to the governor, Felix? What do you think his intention was? What might have happened if the tribune didn’t clarify his purpose in sending Paul to Felix?
- If God wants you somewhere, he will make sure you get there! Even now, you are sitting here reading this study because God wants you to be. How does that make you feel?

- Have you ever had to be faithful in your waiting season? Was it easy or hard? How did you get through it?

### III. **God's Plan looks Different v. 31-35**

- Why was Paul taken to Antipatris at night?
- What's blocking YOU from following God's plan? Pride?... Ignorance?... Anger?... How can we get beyond these things that limit us and get closer to His plan?
- God's Plan for Paul was different than expected. The only directive he received was from Jesus, "Take Courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem so you must testify also in Rome." Have you ever had a plan for your life, and then found God's plan to be different? How did it work out?
- God's Plan might look looks different for everyone. Sometimes God's Plan may not make sense to us (and may never make sense), but God's Plan will Prevail. Look at your own life, and describe a way God's plan has surprised you. Does it make sense yet?
- God has an infinite number of options for working out His will in our lives. Why would we think we could understand His plan?

## **Now What?**

**Encouragement:** We may never fully understand God's plan, but God will use any unique circumstance as an opportunity to reach those who have not heard about the Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is because God's Plan will Prevail.

God used Paul's life as an opportunity, he just needed to have the courage to be able to preach the gospel. In our own lives we should take advantage of the opportunities that are in front of us, take courage and share what God has done in our lives. It may seem trivial, however God will use what seemingly feels insignificant to us to do something significant in others.

God has an infinite number of options for working out his will in our lives. While our daily lives may not look spectacular, we can be assured and encouraged knowing that God is involved in our lives.

**Ask:**

- How can you be more aware of God's plan for your life this week?
- How have your own desires encouraged you to follow your own plan and not God's?

**Challenge:**

Spend some time over the next seven days looking into what the Bible says about God's will. Pay particular attention to these verses each day:

Day 1: Psalm 25:4-5

Day 2: Psalm 25:8-9

Day 3: Psalm 119:105

Day 4: Proverbs 19:21

Day 5: Jeremiah 29:10-14

Day 6: Mark 3:33-35

Day 7: Matthew 6:9-10

Pray each day for God to reveal your heart to you and to make His will for you crystal clear.

## **Closing Prayer**

Lord, we love you. God, thank you for this day and this time to come and worship you. We lift up your name, because it is a gift to love you. I pray that we would not fight back against your plan, God. Thank you, Lord, that your plan is the only plan. I pray that we would go the direction you would have us go, and we thank you for that decision. Jesus, I'm all in on your plan for my life. Because I know your plan will prevail. Thank you for giving me new life. Give me your Holy Spirit to lead me and to guide me. In Jesus' name, AMEN!

