Acts 21 “I am the Captain of my soul” or “God’s Will be Done.”

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[0:00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Okay, so there's a famous poem, and many of you might not know the whole poem, but you're all very familiar with the phrase, I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul. And it's the poem is called Invictus, and actually it was written 150 years ago this year. It was written in 1875. And it's been in many movies, many books, you've probably all heard it. And I'll read the whole poem. The whole poem is just four short verses. It's very stirring. And interestingly enough, about this poem, it is a poem that I could read to the Conservative caucus, the Liberal caucus, the NDP caucus, the Petit Quebecois caucus, and they would all say the secular equivalent of Amen at the end of it. I could read it at the Art House, one of the most trendy, hip coffee places in Centre Town, or any one of the Tim Hortons. And I would get an Amen to this poem. And, well, let's listen. It's called Invictus, which means, I believe, unconquered. Yes, unconquered. And it goes like this. Out of the night that covers me, black as the pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever gods may be for my unconquerable soul. In the fell clutch of circumstance, I have not winced nor cried aloud.

Under the bludgeonings of chance, my head is bloody but unbowed. Beyond this place of wrath and tears looms but the horror of the shade, and yet the menace of the years finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how straight the gate, how charged with punishments the scroll. I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul. Pretty stirring stuff. And if we're honest, something within us wants to say Amen. If we're honest. Something within us wants to say Amen. Now, I mention all of this because we live in an Invictus world, and we have an Invictus heart. And in that context, how on earth do you hear the words in the Book of Acts that Monique just read, which we're going to look like right now, let your will be done? How does that make any sense? In fact, if you think about it for a second, if you just, we'll look at it closely in a moment, you know, where Paul says, well, I'm willing to go and die for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3:57] And everybody says, let the will of the Lord be done. Like, that's the complete opposite of Invictus, if we're honest with it. Complete and utter opposite. And to be honest, it's very, very unattractive to most people. In fact, most people would probably say, well, George, this is one of the reasons Christianity is dying. You have phrases like, let your will be done, compare it to Invictus. Shouldn't religion and spirituality be making us more Invictus-like, more strong and unconquerable? Well, let's look. At the end of the day, I'm going to suggest that the Bible is vastly wiser, and in fact, gives us what we want most deeply, including at the very heart of it, the best things we want in that Invictus prayer is only going to be given. Well, let's listen. Let's turn in our Bibles to Acts chapter 21.

Acts chapter 21. And I might not be able to read all of Acts 21. I might have to summarize the last half of it, but we're going to begin with a bit which is very boring. And I'm going to read the boring bit

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on purpose. And just so you know, okay, you know, if you want to grow as a Christian, the way to grow as a Christian is to actually be honest with God. Like, what an idea. Like, he already knows. So when you're reading parts of the Bible that you find unbelievably boring, I would suggest you say, God, could you please help me read this? I find it really boring. Like, he already knows you find it boring. So, like, just tell him. Like, honesty. Like, what an odd thing.
Like, being honest with God. Anyway, here's how it goes. I'll tell you why I'm reading the boring part in a moment. And when we had parted from them, so he's just, he's on his way to Jerusalem. He's on his way to Jerusalem. This is Paul. And he's with a group of people. And he knows that he's going to be captured in Jerusalem. And he's going to have a very, very hard time. And so they're on the way there. And they've been in Ephesus. And now it's, the story continues. Ephesus is in what we now call Western Turkey. And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Kos. And the next day to Rhodes. And from there to Patera. And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre. And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. Now just notice here, for those of you who, I gave you a summary of what just happened in
Ephesus, that he's going to Jerusalem, that the Holy Spirit's constraining him to go there, that he's going to have a hard time, he's going to die. And if you look at my sermon, the last sermon I did, so last week we had a guest speaker. But if you look at the last one, I talk about this whole question, this troublesome question about the Holy Spirit hurting Paul to go to Jerusalem to have a very hard time. But notice here, the next bit of verse four, and through the Spirit, they were telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem. What? Is that a contradiction?
I'm going to come to it, I'm going to circle back to it, but it's easier to talk about it if we get down about another ten verses. So let's continue, verse five. Just as boring, by the way. When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed, and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.
[7:26] And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemus, and we greeted the brothers and sisters there, and stayed with them for one day. Now, just sort of pause. Why am I saying this? I'm saying all of this for a very important reason. It's a very important reason that this is actually in the Bible. I've said to you repeatedly that the Book of Acts is an eyewitness-based history of the first 30 years of the Jesus movement, and it was written when many eyewitnesses were still alive.

The part that's being talked, and one of the things which is really neat about the Book of Acts is it has so many historical references that scholars can date it. So this that we're talking about is taking place in May of the year 57. May of 57. The book was probably written about, probably, Acts probably was written by Luke around the year 63, shortly after Paul died, because Paul dies in 62-63, either the end of 62 or the beginning of 63, they're not that precise, only a couple of months difference. And so, in one way, what Luke is doing is he's actually giving the equivalent of footnotes. He's giving to his original readers, like, all these other things that you want to find out about, just go to these different cities.
Paul talked to these different people, and just, and then you can go to Jerusalem, you can talk to these people, and he's going to give you a specific person, Philip and his daughters. It's a way that if people, the original hearers, who are skeptics, or those who want to believe more, wanted to know more, they could actually go in and seek these people out. But here's the big point. If you could put up the first point, that would be very helpful. Acts is a true story from somewhere, somewhere, to every somewhere, and to every someone. It's all in the news a lot over the last little while about nowhere people, right? The type of person who can have their, they can live in their chalet in Aspen, you know, they can have a beachfront house, you know, on the Mediterranean, they, you know, have another place in Hong Kong, or wherever. In a sense, they're nowhere people, they have nowhere jobs, and part of the problem is they have a large influence on people like you and me, who are somewhere people. I don't own a condo in Aspen, just in case you were wondering. If I did, I would share it with you. I don't own a condo in Florida. If I did, I would share it with you. I would tell you how you could use it, but I don't. I'm a somewhere person. And so, all of these little historical details are showing that not only is it a true story of what actually happened, but it's happening somewhere. It's not a nowhere story. It's not a once upon a time story. It's not a

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mythical story or a fairy tale. It's a somewhere story, but because ultimately this is the Bible and that God wrote it, it means it is a story about a somewhere and someones to every somewhere and every someone, and this will become more important when we see the end of the story and how important stories like this are to form us to be able to have good community, to be able to love, and to have courage.
This somewhere stuff is important for these three things which we all desire. So, let's continue, and we're going to come now to sort of the heart of the story and the heart of the problem, that why I read Invictus at the beginning. Look at verse 8. On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the Evangelist, who was one of the seven and stayed with him. Those are the seven are the people that the apostles, before persecution hit, they picked seven people to help distribute food to the poor, who are coming from non-Jewish, non-multi-generational Jewish backgrounds. Verse 9, he had four unmarried daughters who prophesied, and while we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea, and just sort of paused, he's going to do something really weird. It's just weird. I mean, God made aardvarks that are weird animals. Why can't he do weird things, right? I mean, he's God, but it's weird. Verse 11, and this is Agabus, and coming to us, he took Paul's belt off him, bound his own hands and feet, and said, thus says the Holy Spirit, this is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the pagans. That's the prophetic message. Well, one moment, doesn't that sound different from what we just heard about the Holy Spirit telling Paul not to go? What's going on? Well, I'll tell you in a moment. Verse 12, when we heard this, we and the people there urged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Now, this next verse, which I'm going to read, in English, it can't be communicated, but the original language, what's being communicated is what's about to happen is profoundly emotionally disturbing to Paul. So you have to understand that what he's about to say, it's probably coming with him, maybe even sobbing, with tears. The whole room is sobbing. The whole room is in tears. It is thick with emotion, and Paul is overcome with emotion as he speaks. That's, in the original language, how it's being communicated.
Verse 13, then Paul answered, what are you doing? Weeping and breaking my heart. And you can just pause imagine there, the tears come to him. He can't say the next bit. Weeping and breaking my heart.
[12:59] For I am ready not only to be imprisoned, but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And since Paul would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, let the will of the Lord be done.

Let the will of the Lord be done. Now we're going to camp on this for a little bit, because it is the, it's a very profound, important Christian truth, even the faith, in the face of an invictus world, where we like saying that we're the captain of our soul, the master of our fate. It's, it's the heart of the whole story.
It's one of the most important truths in the Christian, in the Christian faith. So we need to pause here for a second. And, and, and as we pause on it, then I'm going to go back and explain the apparent, apparent contradiction.
So for honest, what we want is that invictus poem that stirs something deep within our soul. Let me see if I can find the words of it again. It matters not how straight the gate, how charged with punishments the scroll. It's the Bible. That's the scroll. It matters not how straight the gate, how charged with punishments the scroll. I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul.
Very powerful. It speaks very deep, deeply to us. It's what we want. As I said, it would get nods of approval in all of the different political parties, at the different coffee houses, different social classes would all nod. There's something in there that they'd say, yes, that's what I want. But here's the problem. There's lots of problems with it.
[14:34] Imagine for a moment you're married and you're having some marital trouble. And if you've ever been to marriage counseling, sometimes the marriage counselor speaks to the couple and sometimes they speak individually to each person. And how would you feel if in marriage counseling one day it came out that the therapist was saying to your husband, you need to take a grip of the invictus poem and say it to yourself in the mirror every day. And then after you said that, find a picture of your wife and say it in front of that picture. I don't know if I'm allowed to say this in the church, but you'd be royally pissed off. Imagine for a moment you're doing family counseling because you're having some trouble with your teenage kids and your young adults in their 20s. You

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know, there's four of you living in the house and you all decide to go for family therapy and the same type of thing.

There's group sessions and private ones. And if you found out you're the mom or the dad, or you're one of the brothers or the sisters, and you find out that they're telling one, that therapist is telling one person to say this invictus poem all the day. And you're thinking, what? I'm the one who needs that. Well, what if you find out if you were, you don't want to, you don't want to be the world's most unsuccessful marriage therapist or family counseling therapist.

Well, that, that doing that just for one person would be it. But if you are having trouble in your family or troubling your marriage and the marriage counselor tells both of you every day, I want you to say to the mirror, the invictus thing with passion. And then I want you to walk away and go into the bedroom where your wife or your, like, I'll say this for myself. So, and then, and then George, I want you to go in. I want you to have a picture of Louise. And I want you to say this with passion to Louise. And the same therapist saying Louise to do the same thing every day, say this with passion to the mirror and then go in when your husband's not around and say it in front of a picture of George with passion. How many people think the marriage is going to survive? None. Nobody should think it's going to survive. It's the world's worst marriage advice.

So here's part of the problem with Invictus. On one hand, it speaks to something in our soul, but here's the problem. What do we also really want? I mean, I, I get to overhear baristas talking when I'm the only one in the restaurant. And because I'm an, you know, getting to be a man of a certain age and I'm there all the time, I'm just like no different than the furniture.

And it doesn't matter if they're gay or straight. A lot of people want that one special person who can be their soul friend for the rest of their life. I hear them talking. Well, how can you have that one perfect soul person for the rest of your life and believe in Invictus? I mean, that's like trying to light a fire at the same time that you're pouring water on it. Like it just, it's not going to work.

[17:20] Well, that's a bummer, isn't it? So here's part of the problem. Let's think a little bit about this profound, this thing that I said is actually very profound in the Bible. Look again at, at verse in your Bible. Look again at verse 11, I mean, verse 13 and verse 14. Then Paul answered, what are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart?

For I am ready not only to be imprisoned, but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And since he would not be persuaded, we said, we ceased and said, let the will of the Lord be done.

Now, here's the thing. If you could put up the first image, the police image, Claire, here's the problem. Because we in effect have an Invictus soul, when we hear let your will be done, this is what we think. There's something really bad about us and God is a nasty judge like this nasty cop and he's going to throw us to the ground and he's going to put us, our face first in the ground. They're going to get their knee on top. God's going to get his knee on top of us and handcuff us. That's what we hear.

That's how an Invictus heart hears about suffering for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and let your will be done. Now, obviously, when we see that, we think, but that is sort of how we sort of think when we hear it. Now, you see, in this particular thing that, and so, you see, part of the, one of the things that the Bible reveals to us, you might not remember my prayer, but in my prayer I said that we could, we so get to know who Jesus is and what he's accomplished for us on the cross, that the Bible, in light of this, the Bible starts to reveal to us who we really are.

And so, this phrase, let your will be done, I'm willing to go to Jerusalem and die for the name of the Lord Jesus, it reveals an Invictus heart. It reveals as well that there's a bit of a fear in us that if we say to God, let your will be done, that something like this is going to happen.

[19:20] Because, you see, the fact of the matter is, is that, in a sense, one of the big messages of the Bible is that every day when I wake up, my heart wants to say, God, today, like every day, not my will, but, not your will, but mine be done. Not your will, but mine be done. That's, in a sense, the cry of the human heart, which we don't normally recognize. We recognize it if we, if I was to talk to you about the role of money in your life and the role of generosity, you'd be very conscious of it if I talked to you about the Bible and sexuality, or other types of cherished types of things that strike at your power, the things that are important to you, your money, which is important to you, and you'd inwardly be saying, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, God, you can say that, but I'm not going to do it, because you're saying to God, not your will, but mine be done.

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Now, to understand this phrase, let your will, not mine be done, and to understand why that image of the cop doing that is not the right way to understand it, I want you to look again at verses 13 and 14. The answer is in the text. Then Paul answered, what are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned, but even to die in Jerusalem. Now, note here, he doesn't say in Jerusalem for Jesus. He says for the name of the Lord Jesus.
And that actually, that bit, the name, is very important here in the text. And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, let the will of the Lord be done. Now, why is that thing, the name of the Lord, for the name, very significant? Because in the Bible, when it talks about the name, the name of the Lord, the name of God, or whatever, the name is a way that they spoke back in Old Testament and New Testament times. The name reveals the identity and the purpose and the heart of the person. That's the importance of that. So when Paul is saying this, it's a shorthanded way for him saying, gosh, folks, once my heart has been captivated, and my heart is getting more and more captivated by this profound idea that God, the Son of God, set aside his throne and divine splendor and prerogatives and his appearance of God and worship and humbling himself, he took into himself human nature. He humbled himself even to the point of existing as a zygote attached to the womb of the Virgin Mary. And he actually went through the whole gestation process and birth process and childhood and teenagerhood. And he did all of that. And he lived the life that I should live but could never live. And he died on the cross in my place.
I was condemned by the sins and the things that I've done in my life. And in my place condemned, he stood. And he died for me. He tasted everything to taste of death for me. He rose from the grave on the third day. And now when I put my faith and trust in Jesus, I have this double thing which Christ does for me. Because of what he's done, all the wrong things I have ever done in my entire life have been forgiven. All the shame that I have felt has been wiped away because it fell on him. And the life that I should have lived, the perfect life that I should live, which I never have been able to do and never can do because I have an invictus heart, he clothed me with that. That's what he means by saying the name of the Lord Jesus. And he did it all because he's looking at me and knows me and he loves me.
He did it for me. Not just some abstraction, not just people in general, not like a nowhere thing. I'm a someone in a somewhere and this true someone did this all for me.
[23:34] in fact you know if you go back later on and you read luke chapter 22 verses 42 to 44 it's in matthew mark and luke and it's one of the things that happens when jesus is in the garden of gethsemane he's just instituted the last supper his disciples have been told that he's going to die on the he's going to die the next day and hours away just moments away from being captured hours away from being falsely accused hours away from being beaten and stripped naked and hung on a cross to die hours before that he's in the garden praying and he says to god god i know this is your will for me but if there's some way that this could be avoided please may that be the case and after a profound of a time of profound emotion he says not my will but yours be done not my will but yours be done and he's prepared then to drink the cup of the punishment of god not my will but yours be done and you see in a sense not in not in a sense in truth jesus lived that from the moment of being a zygote to the moment of his death every moment of every day jesus woke up and while you and i would say god once again today not your will but mine been done that statement by jesus is the culmination of every moment of his life that every moment in his life whether he was uh being falsely accused what whether he was being uh you know uh mocked and derided by people what whatever whether he was being in the presence of the devil and being tempted that at every moment jesus would always say to the father not my will but yours be done and so you see that on the when you put your faith and trust in christ not only is your shame done away not only is everything wrong that you've done done away but that perfect life of obedience clothes you as a gift of grace and one of the things which is so wonderful then about this phrase you see one of the things which is so wonderful about the gospels if you go back and look at is that the gospels affirm that the same god who created all things is the same god who saves all things and so that means for us as christians that when we hear when we say to god not my will but yours be done well go and look at genesis 2 and 3 it's the most remarkable thing before the fall we know what god's will is for us what is god's will for us you look at genesis 1 and 2 and then the first part of genesis 3 god's will is that you will be fruitful that you will be multiply that you will tend the world that you will take the chaos of the world and turn everything into a garden and that every day at the end of the day as you have been saying god not my will but yours be done and god says my will is that you will be fruitful that you will fill the earth that you will create that you will do all these wonderful things and at

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the end of the day we will walk in the cool of the garden with a fresh breeze and we will walk unclothed beside each other and with each other sharing our day that's his will because he's the creator in some ways the whole path of holiness is god resetting the manufacturer's settings in your life but he's not only doing that he's also preparing you for something more glorious for the new heaven and the new earth where that same creational will of the father for you is is still your will and now who knows we will be making gardens everywhere and we will be doing it some of you are musical

jano will be in heaven and we'll all be singing when we do the work and i don't know who is here is the best dancer don't try to prove it right now but we'll all be dancing while we do that thing and doing algorithms and that's that's god's will for you and me so you see why is it that paul is able to say for the name of the lord jesus not my will but yours be done because if you could show the this pick the next picture the baby picture that's you in christ brothers and sisters you and i are just as weak and helpless as that little baby and god holds you in his strong hands and we'll never let you go you'll never let you go and it's from having this truth become what's a picture by ann geddes i don't pronounce her name an australian photographer check her out she's uh has lots of really neat pictures that this is this is your identity in christ brothers and sisters knowing this is what lets you do hard things he'll never let you go his strong hands of love are hidden in the shadows but that is you and me in christ just want to summarize this with a couple of points and if you don't get them because i'm going to go through them quite quickly it's just really summarizing what i've just said you can it'll be available online here if you put up the second point the main point of this whole text is for us to be able to understand that for the name we say for the name of the lord jesus let the will of the lord be done in christ knowing that picture knowing what he's done for us on the cross which means that that pictures is who you are in christ right now if you're depressed that's who you are in christ if you're feeling like that's that's who we are in christ and the third thing if you put the third point you know if you go back and you you think about the will of the lord be done you think of what jesus said not my will but the but but your will be done in a sense if you want to know if you're up here and you want to know how to become a christian if you're watching online and you want to know how to become a christian just say the words that jesus said to god because the christian life begins when you say to the triune god not my will but yours be done and god says with a big smile my will is that you would be my children by adoption and grace my will is that your sins will be wiped away your shame completely and utterly removed and that you will be clothed with the righteousness of christ and that someday you and your resurrected body will walk with me in the new heaven and the new earth in the cool of the day after a day of fruitfulness and beauty and glory that's my will for you so yes i take you as my child that is my will the christian life begins when you say to god not my will but yours be done the fourth point and you don't want to know how to grow as a christian given now that you know that there is a part of you that will always say god today or right now you know i'm going into this and i'm going into this fight with my i'm going to have a fight with my wife i'm going to have a situation with my boss i just want to know that for the next half hour i want to do my will not yours that's that's the problem in our heart how we grow in godliness is by saying to the triune god not my will but yours be done that's how you grow in godliness and here's the thing because it's not just how we become a christian how we grow as a christian but how we're glorified the glorification of the believer is an underappreciated truth of the bible if you could put up the fifth point that would be very helpful in the new heaven and
earth in your resurrected body you will say and i'm an old uh african-american spiritual made famous by martin luther king in a famous speech but in the new heaven and the new earth in your resurrected body you will sing free at last free at last praise god almighty i'm free at last not my will but yours be done not my will but yours be done free at last free at last praise god almighty i'm free at last so what's going on with that apparent contradiction just very briefly um in the original language there's um there's some uh wiggle room in the greek and in the um in other places in the bible they make a distinction between a prophecy and the interpretation of the prophecy and so in a sense what the bible what paul has done or what luke has done in writing the book of acts is he's given this statement made by some of them but what he's done and it's it fits with the original language there's an interpret there's a prophecy and the prophecy is paul is going to go to jerusalem and die or and and suffer but the interpretation that's added to that is therefore you should not go and that's all revealed with this agabus story it's in a sense enlarged it it takes the simple phrase and it it it uh pops it out to the two parts and agabus says whoever wears this belt is

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going to go to jerusalem and have a hard time and so the response of everybody there is therefore you should not go but paul also understands because he's had this other revelation that is in fact god's will this time that he does go even though it means he's going to be captured and has a very very hard time and the overarching context is that for the name of the lord jesus christ he's willing to die i'm willing to submit because you know partially remember that's why i went through the whole three things because even in my death the end of my my life isn't my there's this i'm now in the hands of i'm this little weak baby in the hands of the strong head god and and and and after my death i wake up and i'm i'm a new creation it's not just ending here on this side of the grave there's purposes that go beyond my life and and and and go into eternity and and so here's the thing and here's why i was reading these somewhere texts if you go back and you read the a lot of the epistles and you read lots of the bible you'll notice that there's this dance between two types of things what's called the indicative and the imperative for you uh greek uh grammar nerds and the indicative is when the bible tells you some truth about you know about your you're you've been redeemed or or christ is in you or union with christ or your glory they give you these things but then the question is also therefore how shall i live like what shall i do and so the bible gives you this constant dance between statements of truth indicatives and then the therefores therefore what should you do and so for instance if you go back and you read the book of ephesians the first three chapters i don't think there's a single imperative if there is there's just one in the first three chapters and then there's a whole like scores of them in the last three chapters because the first three chapters are all these truths about us in christ and the last three chapters are therefore this is what it means for marriage this is what it means for this this is what it means for this this is what it means for this you've read the book of romans you come up to the end of chapter 11 hardly any imperatives it's all about what christ has done and then 12 13 14 15 16 is all about therefore how shall you live and it's all mixed all the way through and it's not only commands like that one of the things that god does which is so wonderful is he gives us stories and he gives us stories with nuances and as i talked about a couple of weeks ago at the beginning of acts 20 paul avoids being killed in a boat but then later on he feels he's led to go
to to be uh to to go by the holy spirit to go to to jerusalem and die and we not only have all these truths but we have these stories and this is why we need each other brother and brothers and sisters it's neat it's why we need to have churches and that we we pray that we have churches where whether it's through the sermons and you see these texts now you can puzzle over them but not just that but when you you're you're together with your friends from church or when you're in the woman's group or the men's group or the bible hudson's bible study or any of the other bible studies and you look at these texts and then as you come up your time you can share your life and i have this hard time and in front of me and then you have brothers and sisters who can say well think of this truth and think of this truth and think of this truth and then they can puzzle over the imperatives in your life as to whether this is a time that you should take a stand and suffer or you should make a concession or whether this is a time that you stand tall and we can't figure these things out by ourselves we need christ to walk with us we need the holy spirit to fill us and we need each other and we don't only need each other we need people who are dead you need to read corrie ten boom and dorothy sayers and learn about monica the mother of saint augustine and you need to learn about saint john of damascus and augustine and calvin and you need to read all dead people too or at least talk to a christian who knows who can read an old dead person because we can't figure this stuff out by ourselves and it's not a cookie cutter religion it's a relation and there you go that's the big point but i want to bring you two other things i'm just going to have to summarize the rest of the stories because you see this is why what do what does the invictus world do the invictus world destroys community but if you know the name of the lord jesus and therefore let the will of the lord be done his will is that you have brothers and sisters and you share your lives together and we should pray that we be such a church but it also in the very next two stories it touches on the things we deeply want it touches on how this profound truth as it grips us creates the conditions to love and also for courage which is what we desperately want so if you just go you'll have to read it all i'm sort of running out of time if you know that the whole part of the story from verse 15 to verse 26 it's all about paul goes down to jerusalem he gets there and uh actually if you just want to look at something really cool look at verse 20 uh verse 20 uh and so paul's now speaking to the church and the some of the christian leaders in jerusalem it says and when they heard it they glorified god and they said to him you see brother how many thousands there are among the jews of those who have believed and they're all zealous for the law here's the thing the alex o'connor's of the world and the

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atheists of the world they can't just explain how on earth christianity grew if there wasn't a resurrection the word for thousands there means more than ten thousand more than ten thousand people in jerusalem they could find the body they could show the body there's no body the tomb is empty thousands of people become christians but here's the story paul uh so they say listen we've heard uh that we have thousands and thousands and thousands of jewish people becoming christians it's really fantastic and and yeah yeah we know we've told the pagans that they don't have to follow the jewish laws but listen it would really be helpful for us if you showed them that it's still all right to follow some jewish customs as long as they don't put their faith and trust in it to make them right with god they accept jesus but if they want to be a nazirite if they want to have their kids circumcised that's all right and it's it's a matter of indifference and so because it's a matter of indifference paul agrees to undergo a jewish purification ritual for the sake of thousands of jewish christians if you could put up the sixth point for the name of the lord jesus let the will of the will of the lord be done forms you to be free and secure enough
to make concessions for the flourishing of others i'm that little baby held in jesus's hands so yeah i can make some concessions so that somebody else can flourish see that's why for the name of the lord jesus and let your will be done as that grips us it'll help your marriage of all sorts of things it'll also give you courage the very next story is uh it all goes wrong paul knows he's going to get at some point in time grabbed he's slandered while he's in the temple and while he's in the temple a group of people who knew him from ephesus they make accusations against him which aren't true they grab him and they start punching and kicking him to try to kill him they want to punch him and kick him to death and so the a mob forms as as the the lie spreads and more and more people want to punch and kick paul until he's dead they move outside of the the actual temple bit the the gates are closed and um the roman tribunes because they have a fortress that overlooks the big courtyard they see that there's a riot going on so they come rushing down the stairs to break up the mob the murderous mob and so they come with soldiers and in those days you're not innocent until presumed guilty that the roman tribune assumes that the that paul is the one at fault he grabs paul and um and uh goes to take him away and the the crowd is so murderous uh listen to what verses 35 and 36 this is how murderous the crowd is and when he came to the steps they're they're now he's already chained he's surrounded by soldiers the he is is uh is paul and when paul came to the states the steps paul was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd the mob for the mob of the people followed crying out away with him which is a hebrew way of saying kill him kill him kill him absolutely terrifying a mob of hundreds if not thousands trying to punch you and kick you to death so insane with hatred they don't even care about the soldiers and then you look down to verse 39 after they get him up to the top of the steps and there's a bit of a conversation about being whether he's an egyptian and what does paul say paul says to the tribune i am a jew from tarsus and cilicia a citizen of no obscure city i beg you permit me to speak to the people if you could put up the final point for the name of the lord jesus let the will of the lord be done forms you to be free and secure to stand unbowed before a murderous mob way better than invictus to know that you are held in the hands of jesus provides that as that becomes more real to you what he's done for you on the cross his love for you his will for you as that becomes more real that gives you the courage to stand and speak before the murderous mob what did they used to say of martin luther king if you've watched film clips of them being surrounded by hateful white supremacists with dogs and batons and being beaten and what did they do they knelt in front of them and prayed because it was real enough to martin luther king that he was able to kneel in the front of tyrants and stand and speak before tyrants like valenza the movement of polish solidarity that helped to bring down the evil union of soviet socialist republics it was said of them that they were on their knees before god that they could stand unbowed to top before tyrants
[43:51] for the name of the lord jesus christ let your will be done invite you to stand bow our heads in prayer father we give you thanks and praise that you know our heart you know when we find your word boring we know that there are big parts of our days even though we're christians that there are big parts of our day and big parts of our life and maybe whole areas of our life maybe around our sexuality or a time or our money or around issues of forgiveness or or whatever it is father or power uh that we say to you uh without realizing it uh today god not not your will but mine be done and we know that you knew all those things and yet still jesus died on the cross for us and so father we give you thanks and praise for his full knowledge of each one of us as we really are uh and the full depths of his sacrifice on the cross for us and so father we ask that you bring this gospel truth more and more real to our heart and and and the response that is this truth is real to our heart

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that the the way of wisdom the way of love the way of community the way of courage the way of our salvation is to say father to you that in the name of the lord jesus not my will but yours be done and father may this truth and that response may your holy spirit make that more and more real in our lives so that uh that we will grow in godliness that our church will walk in the beauty of holiness and that we can proclaim a message of hope to this world that our city and this country that desperately needs the only true hope there is which is found in jesus so father do this wonderful work in our lives and we ask this in the name of jesus and all god's people said amen

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