

Paul's Plans, Closed Doors and Providence

By: Dan Jenkins

The study of Paul's life gives real insight into the doctrine of the freewill we have as we serve our God. In our arrogance sometimes we may think we are wise enough to determine what we should do. Take a moment to reflect on this as we look at Paul's plan to go to Ephesus, Bithynia and Rome to preach the word.

One cannot read the book of Acts without seeing Paul's desire to get the gospel into the great city of Ephesus. As he began his second missionary journey, he first visited the congregations he had established in Phrygia and Galatia on that first journey. He then headed toward Ephesus and the Roman province of Asia. His desire to go to this area did not happen as he planned. The door was closed and his plans changed. The Bible says, "They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia" (**Acts 16:6**).

With that door closed they headed north with a new plan. Paul and Silas and Timothy decided to "...go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them" (**Acts 16:7**). There were souls in Europe who needed the gospel and in a vision Paul saw a man from Macedonia who was pleading with him saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (**Acts 16:10**). He immediately headed toward Macedonia and in a short time established two powerful congregations—Philippi and Thessalonica. The door into Europe was opened into both of the provinces of Greece (Macedonia and Achaia). It is interesting to note that as Paul finished his

second journey, he stopped at Ephesus and when they asked him to stay, he said, "I will return again to you, God willing." Isn't this what James said we should say as we make plans? "Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or do that'" (**Jas. 4:15**).

When Paul began his third journey, he headed straight to Ephesus where he stayed for three years. Hundreds, perhaps thousands were converted and even publicly burned their pagan books. "So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed" (**Acts 19:20**). This same chapter says, "All who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus" (v. 10). The door was now open, but not when Paul first thought he should have gone to that great city.

Space does not permit us to look at all the details of Paul's plan to preach in Rome. As his third journey ended, he wrote to the Romans telling them of his plan to come to Rome and then carry the gospel to Spain (**Rom. 1:10, 13, 15; 15:28**). Read how this story turned out in the closing chapters of Acts.

So, when troubles come into your life, take comfort that God used closed doors to open doors into greater works! Remember to always say, "If the Lord wills, I will..."

Persuasion to Become a Christian

By: Selected

In Paul's defense before King Agrippa and the governor Festus, in Acts 26, he made a direct appeal to the king's knowledge and faith in the prophets (26:26-27). Agrippa's "almost" response has troubled and even hunted many for the last two millennia. "You almost persuaded me to become a Christian" (26:28). What does this rejection by the King show us is required to become a Christian? Persuasion!

First, consider the source of the persuasion. The gospel is "the power of God to salvation" (**Rom. 1:16**), and Paul knew that. He spoke "the words of truth and reason" (26:25) about "the Christ," who came to "suffer" and to "be the first to rise from the dead" (26:23). It is the wonderful news about the saving love and sacrifice of Jesus that compels us (**2 Cor. 5:14**) and calls us (**2 Thess. 2:14**) to the Lord. Jesus Himself said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (**John 12:32**). The only source of persuasion that is truly available and should ever be utilized is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Second, consider the one who persuades. Persuading an individual to become a Christian must never be about the persuader himself or herself but about Christ (**1 Cor. 2:1-2**). Paul did not make himself out to be anything. In fact, he identified himself as one who had been extended the amazing grace of God and was humbly obeying the commission that had been given to him (26:1-23). If we are going to "be well pleasing to Him," then we must "persuade men" (**2 Cor. 5:9-11**). That involves stepping out of our comfort zone and initiating conversations that will help prepare people to "appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (5:10).

Third, consider the method of persuasion. Various efforts can be persuasive, but not all methods are appropriate when

seeking to persuade someone to give their life to Christ. Proper and effective persuasion must be motivated by love (**Eph. 4:15**), saturated with grace (**Col. 4:6**), moved with compassion (**Matt. 9:36-38**), engaged in with humility (**Rom. 12:3**) and presented with gentleness and respect (**1 Pet. 3:15**). Our methods of persuasion must never get in the way of the persuading power of the gospel itself.

Finally, consider the focus of the persuasion. There are lost souls all around us who desperately need Jesus (**Luke 15:4**). Most of them do not even realize it. Agrippa did not realize how urgently he needed to be persuaded to become a Christian. Sadly, there is no evidence that he ever was "altogether" persuaded. Who have you been trying to persuade for Christ? Don't give up! Who will you meet this week who needs to be persuaded? Don't miss any opportunity!



Upcoming Events

Summer Series Wednesdays: Adults will be in the main auditorium for the theme “It’s Who You Know” and the youth will be in the fellowship hall learning Bible stories about God’s animals.

Sunday, July 6: Monthly potluck luncheon after morning worship with a 12:45pm service to follow. Please bring a covered dish/dessert to share.

Sunday, July 13: Youth devo after evening worship.

Area events:

Area events/details are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway. Please check them out.

Prayer List

Prayer Requests:

Mary Jo White had bypass surgery last week and is recovering.

Allen Clifton who has two more radiation treatments left.

Members

Jeff Cannady, Jerry FitzSimmons, James Hicks, and Veronica Serenil.

Service Roster

Week of June 29, 2025

Sunday Morning

Scripture Reading.....Caleb Lehtinen
Song Leader.....Jeff Cannady

Opening Prayer.....Ken Dorries
Closing Prayer.....Ron White

Lord’s Supper & Offering

Bread.....Jake Jacobs
Cup.....Benny Horton
Offering.....Mike Atkinson
Assist.....Ferman Rosales
Assist.....Dan Fielder
Assist.....Willie Fossati

Sunday Evening

Song Leader.....Jake Jobs

Opening Prayer.....Lupe Escojido
Closing Prayer.....Bryant Siegel

Lord’s Supper & Offering.....Benny Horton/
Steve Randle

Wednesday Evening

Adult Class.....Barry Lehtinen
Song Leader.....Jack Jobs
Devotional.....Barry Lehtinen

Other

Prepare Communion for July.....McCoys

Congregational News This Week

Birthdays

Kanin Jacobs.....July 9

Anniversaries

Mark & Nia FitzSimmons.....July 9

Please sign up to open/close the building, prepare communion, and host youth devos for 2025. The sign up sheets are on the bulletin board in the hallway.

If you have any prayer requests, upcoming events to be announced, or updates/corrections please contact our secretary, Nina Siegel, at (361) 573-0030 or email office.midtownchurch@gmail.com

Our Elders

Mark FitzSimmons
Ron White

Our Deacons

James Cammock—Evangelism
Lupe Escojido— Benevolence
Doug Jobes—Safety, Men's Encouragement &
Winter Youth Retreat
Kevin Sheeran—Worship Organization and
Communication
Bryant Siegel—Education and Finance

Our Minister

Cody McCoy

Weekly Reading

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be
comforted.
Matthew 5:4 NKJV

Service Times

Sunday Morning Bible Class.....9:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship.....5:00 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Class.....7:00 P.M.

Attendance Records

Week of June 22, 2025

A.M. Bible Class.....70
A.M. Worship.....110
P.M. Worship.....58
Wednesday Worship.....68

*Financial information is located on the bulletin
board in the hallway.*

Supported Works

John & Carla Moore *Bible Land Passages*

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