

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: **Acts: To Be Continued**
TITLE: **Living Into God's Will**
DATE: March 20, 2016
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In Acts, Luke shows Jesus' friends continuing the kingdom mission that Jesus started in his earthly life and ministry. The Book of Acts is all about Jesus' followers continuing his mission in the world. We are the ones God has entrusted with carrying the message of Jesus forward. **Today, we look at Acts 22:1-21** and focus on how living *into* God's will is different than being *in* or *out of* God's will.

For a believer, there's nothing more important than understanding and following God's will for your life. [Refer to messages from 3/6/16 and 3/13/16 for the first two parts of what Acts has to say about God's will.]

Last week we saw Paul return to Jerusalem, even when he knew it wasn't "safe." We ended on this point: **When it comes to following God's will for your life, you need to embrace the fact that God's non-interventions are part of his will for your life.**

At this point, Paul asks to address the angry mob that surrounds him before he is put in jail. They listen to him until he talks about God sending him to the Gentiles, at which point they get more upset and shout that he shouldn't be allowed to live. **What inspires Paul to tell this crowd of angry people about Jesus when he's just been beaten because of his faith in Jesus?**

In verse 14, Jesus called Paul to KNOW HIS WILL. The Greek word used here is the word that means *to personally understand and follow God's will by experiencing it*. This is the difference between knowing something as fact (such as the name of our first president) versus knowing something because you've lived it (such as knowing how your spouse or parent thinks about decorating your home, because you live in it).

What does it mean to KNOW God's will by experience?

1. We can know a lot about God's will from the Bible.
2. There are times when we can know God's situational will for our lives.
3. But, **if we simply think of God's will as obeying Bible verses or discerning God's will in specific situations, we tend to live our lives wondering if we are IN God's will or OUT of God's will.** This is not the best way to think about knowing God's will.
4. Instead, think of it like this: **We live in God's will like we live in air.**

God is orchestrating all the events of history toward one final end and that end is that this world will once again be the "very good" world he created in the beginning of time.

We don't live in or out of God's will. **We're always living in it and it doesn't change when our circumstances change.** **Knowing God's will means living into God's will no matter what your life circumstances happen to be.**

Paul understood that he was always living in the air of God's will.

We typically think of being in or out of God's will like there are two separate boxes—and we're in one or the other. But the Bible presents the will of God as one big box that we live inside as God moves history toward the future Kingdom he has promised. And inside God's will, we exercise free will. We can align ourselves with God's will or disconnect from it. When we see/feel we're disconnected all we need do is reconnect by turning from self-will back to God's will.

The Big Idea: Living into God's will means you're always moving forward into God's good future.

For Discussion:

1. Consider some areas of your life where you've noticed God's seeming non-intervention. What has been your response?
2. Does the idea that you are *always* living inside of God's will change your view of those non-interventions?
3. Thinking of yourself living inside of God's will, are you connected (aligned) or disconnected? What needs to happen for you to reconnect yourself to God's will?