



“When Life Doesn’t Turn Out Like You Thought It Would”

Series: “REAL CHRISTIANITY: How It Changed the World.”, Part 12 of 13

Sunday, August 30, 2026

Big Idea: Even when the best-laid plans go bad, there can still be a redemptive outcome.

Text: Acts 20-28

Acts 20:22-23, “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.”

Acts 21:4, Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:10-11, After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, “The Holy Spirit says, ‘In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’”

Acts 21:12, When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:13-14, Then Paul answered, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.”

I. How you respond to adversity is more important than how you got there.

You are going to bring some hardships on yourself.

You will experience some hardships that you didn’t cause, and you don’t deserve.

1. Wise people tend to focus on the road ahead more than the rearview mirror.

“What’s the next step, Lord?”

2. Wise people look for the open-door of opportunity inherent in every crisis.

Philippians 1:12-14, Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

3. Wise people cooperate with God to bring a redemptive purpose out of the hardship.

Romans 8:28, And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.