

Paul's Peace Price Romans 12:14-21

Acts 21

20 Years

Paul had preached by the end of 3rd journey at Jerusalem for Pentecost

Yet, half brotherhood (ethnic standpoint) suspicious of his preaching

If you selflessly invested years in Lord's service only to find your character questioned by many, how would you respond?

18 Months

2Corinthians 8:10

Organizing fund from Gentile churches to relieve poor saints in Jerusalem *1Corinthians 16; 2Corinthians 8,9; Romans 15; Acts 24:17*

Opportunity for Gentile believers to respond to prejudices of Jewish brethren with overwhelming dose of brotherly kindness - *Romans 15:27-28*

The messengers who carried the fund to Jerusalem were warmly received - *Acts 21:17*

Next day, elders confronted Paul with rumors circulating about his teaching - *Acts 21:21*

If you carried a cup of cold water in Good Samaritan fashion to brethren who were aloof, even hostile, toward you and your gift was welcomed but you were not, how would you reply?

6 Letters

Paul had written when he met with Jerusalem elders - Galatia, Thessalonica, Corinth, & Rome.

Paul's teaching on Law & gospel well documented, particularly in Galatians & Romans. Elders cite letter of *Acts 15:23-29*, as proof of own soundness, but Paul's six epistles not mentioned - *Acts 21:25*

Had Paul's critics read or heard Paul? Or merely heard about Paul?

If brethren wounded you by tolerating disparaging reports about you, but never came to you, and regarded you as the offender when they in fact offended you, how would you answer their offense?

50 Days

That was the length of Paul's trail of tears from Philippi to Jerusalem - *Acts 20:6,16,22-23*

Luke's account of Paul's "bound in spirit" journey seems purposely parallel to his record of Jesus' trek to Jerusalem - *Luke 9:51*

Even the remark of Paul's companions, seems reminiscent of Gethsemane - *Acts 21:14; Luke 22:42*

When elders informed Paul, many believed him the perpetrator of division rather than advocate for peace, Paul "opened not his mouth"

Peace proposal, involving appearance in temple, was a death sentence - *Acts 21:22-24*

Paul's compliance was not an act of cowardice or compromise, but of selfless courage. With nothing to gain, and his life to lose, he took up the cross that the brethren put on his back. He was not obliged, but chose the path of mercy *Acts 21:26*

If brethren were oblivious to your advocacy for peace and proposed that you pay the price to bridge a breach they caused, would you pay?

5 Haircuts

That's all the elders expected Paul to pay *Acts 21:23-24*

But they were expensive haircuts. Few, if any, in Jerusalem knew Paul's risks in coming there, much less in making an appearance in the temple during Pentecost. But Paul knew - The Spirit had been telling him for fifty days. Because of five haircuts, Paul was beaten by a mob, arrested, falsely charged, jailed, and narrowly escaped death *Acts 21:27-36*

It was ironic that a jury of Paul's own brethren were unwitting accomplices who conveniently "bound" and "delivered Paul to the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles - *Acts 21:11*

If your brethren assigned a price tag that cost you bodily harm at the hands of your worst enemies with the peril of costing life itself, would you pay?

4 Years

That's the long-term price Paul paid for peace

Two years in Caesarea - **Acts 24:27**

Two years in Rome - **Acts 28:30**

In between -- a shipwreck, snakebite and other perils **Acts 27**

If the pursuit of peace in the kingdom cost you four years in prison, how would you feel about the brotherhood?

What Price For Peace?

Folks talk easily of peace when it costs nothing, then shake their fists and lick their wounds when it costs a little

Paul spoke of peace after it cost him everything - **Ephesians 4:1-6**

Read his other prison missives - **Philippians 2:1-18; Colossians 3:12-17; Philemon 10-16**

He says that peace is worth whatever it costs me -- even my own peace.

The cost does not matter - **Only Peace Of Unity In Christ Counts**

Jason Moore