

Road Trip (Part 2)

Detour in Cyprus – Spiritual Warfare on the Road

Acts 20:24 (NKJV) — *“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy...”*

Introduction: Detours on the journey of faith are inevitable.

- In Acts 13:4–12, Paul and Barnabas encounter opposition in Cyprus—spiritual warfare in the form of a sorcerer named Elymas.
- *While the gospel always faces opposition, the power of God is always greater.*

I. Expect opposition on the road: Acts 13:4–8

A. Openness to the Word

1. Sent by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:4), Paul and Barnabas preach across Cyprus.
2. In Paphos, they meet:
 - **Sergius Paulus** – Roman proconsul, intelligent and spiritually curious.
 - **Bar-Jesus (Elymas)** – Jewish sorcerer and false prophet (Acts 13:6–7).
3. **Elymas** opposes them and seeks to turn the proconsul from the faith (Acts 13:8).

B. Opposition to the word

1. Spiritual opposition is expected in faithful ministry: (Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim 3:12)
2. Opposition arises because a spiritual battle is raging for souls (Ephesians 6:12).
3. Pattern seen in:
 - Acts 8 — Philip vs. Simon the sorcerer.
 - Acts 16 — Paul vs. demon-possessed girl in Philippi.
 - Here in Acts 13 — Paul vs. Elymas.

C. Application and illustration

1. The enemy often strikes when you make spiritual progress. (Jn 8:44; 1 Pe. 4:12)
2. Expect resistance as confirmation that you’re on the right road.

“If you never run into the devil, you might be going the same direction as him.”

II. Confront the opposition with God’s power: Acts 13:9–11

A. Paul’s bold confrontation

- Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, confronts Elymas directly (Acts 13:9–10).
- Calls him “full of all deceit... son of the devil... enemy of all righteousness.”
- Elymas had been twisting “the straight ways of the Lord.”

B. God’s power displayed

1. Acts 13:11 — Paul pronounces judgment; Elymas is struck blind.
2. A dramatic power encounter: God’s authority triumphs over deception.
3. Parallel to Paul’s own temporary blindness on the road to Damascus.

C. Principles for Us

1. **Speak the truth boldly and in love** (Eph. 6:14-15)
Paul’s love for Sergius drove him to confront deception.
2. **Rely on God’s power** (Jude 9; 2 Cor. 10:4; Js 4:7)
3. **Take spiritual warfare seriously** (1 Pe 5:8)
Wiersbe: “Respect it. Then you can handle it.” (Ephesians 6:10–18)
4. **Love motivates confrontation**
 - a. Elymas’s blindness was temporary (Acts 13:11) – perhaps a mercy like Paul’s past.
 - b. God’s judgment may be redemptive, not just punitive.

III. Trust God to triumph and change lives: Acts 13:12

A. The gospel breaks through

- Acts 13:12 — “Then the proconsul believed... astonished at the teaching of the Lord.”
- His conversion was not just from witnessing a miracle but hearing the truth.

B. The detour becomes a divine appointment

(Phil.1:12; Rom. 1:16; Jn 1:5; Mt. 16:18)

C. A significant conversion

- Possibly Paul’s first fully Gentile convert in his missionary work.
- Shift from "Saul" to "Paul" may connect to this encounter.
- 2 Tim. 4:17–18 — “The Lord stood with me... and will deliver me...”

D. Application

1. **Persevere in witnessing** (Gal. 6:9)
2. **Find joy in the journey** (Js 1:2)
3. **People are watching** - Your faith under fire testifies to the truth of Christ.

“The world at its worst needs the church at its best.”

Conclusion: Detours Are Part of the Journey, be prepared!

(Eph 6:11; 1 John 4:4; Rom 16:20; Col 2:15; Acts 4:29;

Detours are opportunities for growth, testimony, and God’s glory.

Next step

- **Pray for boldness and spiritual discernment.**
- Identify “Elymas” moments in your life and surrender them to God.
- Commit to prayer, truth, and Spirit-led boldness in every battle you face.