

Acts 21:37-23:11

Keeping the Faith (and Love) in a Hurricane of Hatred

Context: Paul Was Attacked by a Mob at the Temple Because Of a Rumor That He Had Rejected the Law (the Word) of God

After Being Rescued by Roman Soldiers, Paul Asks Permission to Speak to the Very People Who Had Just Tried to Kill Him 21:37-39

Christian Ministry is NOT about Ministers?!?

Paul is much more interested in promoting the Person, Program and Provision of Jesus than in his own personal well-being = true agape love/Christlike servanthood

Paul Begins to Share His Testimony with the Crowd 21:40-22:21

His Background in Judaism 21:40-22:5

Validated that he was zealous for the Law (the Word) of God

His Conversion to Christ 22:6-22:14

Validated that God in Christ had transformed him from the inside out

His Call to Present Christ Far and Wide 22:15-22:21

Validated that his message to Jews and to Gentiles was of God

Today in the real world/when when trying to share the Good News, if nothing else “comes to mind” tell your story...really His story in you (your testimony as to how you came to trust in Christ)...and then (I would say) 1: close with John 3:16 and 2: ask the leading question “Does that make sense to you?” And yet, as Paul experiences in this passage, we will not always see positive responses when we do this thing! Which reminds me of another principle: pragmatism is not a biblical/godly test of truth!

The Crowd Rejects Paul's Message (w/o Hearing Him Out) 22:22

In a fallen (though religious) world "good people" are often rejected as "gross people" ...so don't expect the world to applaud your Christian faith/convictions.

The Commanding Officer of the Soldiers Protecting (Arresting) Paul Removes Him from the Scene and Plans to "Prepare Him" for Questioning...But Is Stopped by One Small Fact 22:23-29

Have You Heard of Citizen Kane? How about Citizen Paul!

Paul "pulls rank" and saves himself from much (additional) misery

Principle: When the facts and the law are on our side we should not hesitate to use them to our advantage (but not in a selfish-"I want MY preferences!" kind of way)

The Officer Punts Paul from His (Civil-Martial Law) Jurisdiction to the Sanhedrin's (Religious-Jewish Law) Jurisdiction 22:30

He realizes the issue here has nothing to do with his sphere of responsibility...but I'm sure Paul wouldn't have minded if he had simply released him with a warning!?!

Paul Begins to Share His Testimony with the Sanhedrin 23:1-6

He structures what he says specifically for this audience and maneuvers to major on the majors...IOWs: he is moving to the truth of the resurrection of Christ Jesus

Schism w/i the Sanhedrin Results in the Romans Retaining Paul in Their Custody (// God's Greater Purpose for Him) 23:7-11

A Roman army officer is compelled to save Paul from a group of angry Jewish preachers!

Principle: Beware of upsetting Brad or James; but at all costs avoid upsetting...

...both Brad and James at the same time!

Believers (Like the Apostle Paul, You and Me) Can Keep the Faith, Even When Facing the Possibility of Painful Death, Because Knowing and Resting in the Person, the Program and the Provision of Jesus Can Allow Us to Enjoy a Spiritual Stability That Trumps Even the Worst of Circumstances