The Book of Acts Lesson 40

Acts 22:22- 23:11

“His Man Handles Mistreatment”

1. Paul was rescue comes from an unlikely source.
2. The Jewish audience could not stand to hear that God wanted to save gentiles. V.22
3. This may have made them feel that their place as God’s chosen people was being threatened.
4. In response to the word gentiles they showed their outrage.
5. When the chief captain saw this aggression Paul was brought into the safety of a Roman castle.
6. God was working to keep Paul safe even in this dark circumstance.
7. Roman law protected Paul from being bound and flogged. V. 25
8. In our efforts to be faithful Christians we will at times we will face opposition and rejection.
   1. We may be ridiculed.
   2. We may be insulted.
   3. We may be lied about.

Transition: We may be misrepresented, but in all of this we must be mindful not to misrepresent the Lord. Paul continued to witness in Acts23:1

1. Having the right to speak before the council, Paul’s defense was cut short. V. 1-5
2. The High priest was offended by Paul’s opening sentence and would hear no more.
   1. He commanded that Paul be smitten in the mouth.
   2. This was indeed against the law that they were supposed to have been trying to uphold.
3. Paul answered quickly but truthfully.
   1. Though Paul spoke the truth, he apologized when he realized he was speaking to someone in authority.
   2. By apologizing he did not compromise, but made himself subject to the governing powers.

Note: Paul’s rebuke examined. This does not give us license to insult others when they do something unjust. Christ’s example showed submission in the face of His accusers, even when He was smitten in the mouth. Paul spoke like this because he apparently did not know that the one he spoke to was the high priest. (This does not mean that Paul respected the doctrine of the High Priest, but that he recognized his authority as a governing entity.) There are many theories about why Paul didn’t know it was the High Priest. I find the most likely is that Paul’s thorn in the flesh was an impairment that affected his eyesight. This however cannot be certain. Paul was simply calling our Ananias’ contradictory action.

1. When opposition comes we must remember to show honor to whom honor is due.
   1. Though Paul’s response was true, this does not give us license to fight back against false accusers.
      1. Paul said what he said out of ignorance, not knowing that he was addressing the High Priest.
   2. One thing to note about Paul’s circumstances is that he didn’t try to deceive his way out of them. He consistently made Christ the focus of his message.
2. Paul spoke the truth and let it do the rest.
   1. Paul knew that the Sanhedrin was divided and brought up the hope that faith in Christ gives believer in the resurrection. V. 6
   2. The division among them once again resulted in Paul being whisked away to safety by Roman soldiers for the third time.

Transition: In the safety of the castle, the Lord spoke to Paul. V. 11

1. In all of the difficulties of life, Christ is the constant companion of His people.
2. Not knowing what his fate would be, Paul heard the words, “be of good cheer”.
   1. When you are misunderstood and rejected you have reason to be of good cheer.
   2. Christ is present with those who seek to honor Him.
   3. Even if your fate is uncertain you can rest in Christ’s faithful companionship.
      1. Psalm 33:18 *Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope on his mercy;*
      2. Trust that He sees your difficulties and cares about you as a parent loves their child.
   4. Unlike many of the popular preachers, the Bible doesn’t teach that God doesn’t care what you do and that He will always be on your side no matter what.
      1. God’s love is unconditional, but if you disobey Him there will be consequences.
      2. This comfort and peace is for to those who are trying to honor God with their lives. Not to those who disregard the Word of God in their lives.
      3. If you are disobeying God and suffering under the consequences for that, know that the same comfort is available to you if you will just forsake your sin and turn to God.
3. God is pleased when His children testify of Him.
   1. Paul testified in spite of the great pain and violence it brought his way.
   2. How many people did you invite to church this week?
   3. Try to be ready to share the gospel with those who will hear.
4. Though God’s plan for Paul had brought about much turmoil, He wasn’t done yet.
   1. Paul was to visit Rome to fulfill the same purpose he fulfilled in Jerusalem.
   2. No matter where you are in life, God isn’t done using your life.
      1. As long as you are breathing God can use you to be a witness for Him.
      2. This may mean that difficulties come, you may not even feel that good about the way that you witness, but we must be faithful in spite of that.

Conclusion: Many times as Christians we live our lives as if we had a fragile sign on. The truth is that living and working with people we will sometimes have to go through difficulties. This comes in many ways, sometimes friends or coworkers will find excuses to provoke us or criticize us. They may say things like, “Holy Joe doesn’t do that”, and this may even be true of our relationships with other Christians. Whatever the source of discouragement you have great reason to continue trusting Christ, knowing that He is by your side as you try to obey His word and be a witness in this world for Him.