The Book of Acts Lesson 41

Acts 23:12-35

“Hungry Henchmen and a Selfish Savior”

# A multitude formed itself against Paul’s life.

1. The Jewish desire to lynch Paul was stifled by the Roman enforcement of law and order.
2. The group of 40 men conspire with the Sanhedrin to bring Paul out to die.
   1. They were committed not to eat until Paul was dead.
   2. They were willing to go against Roman law and authorities to kill Paul.

Transition: Although the men were determined and focused by a murderous goal they could not overcome the intervention of the Lord. Because their plot was so big it allowed for Paul’s nephew to hear and warn Paul.

# The hungry henchmen did not prevail. v.16-33

1. Paul experienced the promise of God in Isaiah 53:17

*“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper;”*

1. According to God’s direct promise to Paul (Acts 23:11) He would protect him and help him to take him to Rome.
2. God did not intervene with great forceful might, just a young man.
   1. Luke does not tell us much about Paul’s family, but they apparently cared about Paul’s life enough to warn him.
   2. God has a way of putting the right people in the right place at the right time.
   3. This young man is another manifestation of God’s might being made manifest through things that are weak and unimpressive.

Note: It is interesting to see Paul’s family mentioned here but Luke does not deem it important to elaborate on their situations. All we know is that they helped Paul escape the plot to kill him.

1. We also see that Paul’s mistreatment also contributed to his rescue. v.25-30
   1. Lysias bound Paul and prepared to torture him in Acts 22:25 which was against Roman law because Paul was a Roman citizen.
   2. In his letter to Felix we see a self-proclaimed and self-centered hero.
      1. He bends the truth and places his discovery that Paul was a Roman citizen

before his rescue, to highlight his loyalty to Rome.

* + 1. Lysias’ quick response to the keep Paul safe from the plot is likely prompted in an attempt to cover up the fact that he had mistreated a Roman citizen.

1. Paul stood before Felix, safe and secure to await his accusers. v.31-35

Transition: There is much that we can learn from Paul’s example and about God’s role in our lives.

# God’s people can trust His providence

1. Paul found himself between the unjust accusations of zealous Jewish communities and the Roman establishment which upheld the law.
   1. He knew that his Jewish accusers did not have a case against him and was found innocent on multiple occasions.
   2. Paul’s found himself vulnerable with his life on the line.
   3. His only hope of escaping his accusers was the truth of God’s Word and His power to deliver.
2. You may find yourself in positions of vulnerability in your Christian life.
   1. Your life may not be in the balance, but you must also show courage.
      1. Not courage of the flesh, but of faith.
   2. Do not think that you will escape difficulties by bending the rules or finding loopholes in the Christian life.
   3. God will not always work in the ways that you expect Him to, but remember that He is able to put the right person in the right place at the right time to lend you the help you need.
   4. This applies to many areas of our lives that require faith:
      1. Providing financially
      2. Finding the right spouse
      3. Facing health issues
      4. Finding wisdom for decisions
      5. Facing loneliness
      6. Etc.

Wherever you may find yourself today, take Paul’s example and emulate that as you face difficulties in your life. It may even be that you are facing consequences for being at church this morning, if a friend or relative does not like that you come to church just remember that God is with you. God has a plan for your life, and although it will sometimes lead you through scary places remember that if you just keep depending on Him He will come through and bless you in ways you could have never imagined. The reality of our situation is that we serve a good God who sees everything we go through and is forevermore able to help His people as they struggle to find their way through a world filled with hungry henchmen and selfish saviors.