

▼ **Waiting For God's Next Move**

Rocklyn Clarke Sr. - Sunday December 26, 2021

© 2021 Life Church Ministries, Inc.

<http://www.LifeChurchBoston.org/>

• **Read the Passage: Acts 22:30 - 23:35**

The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day." At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!"

Those who were standing near Paul said, "You dare to insult God's high priest?"

Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'"

Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead." When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.)

There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. "We find nothing wrong with this man," they said. "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. More than forty men were involved in this plot. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here."

But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul.

Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him." So he took him to the commander.

The centurion said, "Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you."

The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, "What is it you want to tell me?"

He said: "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him. Don't give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request."

The commander dismissed the young man and cautioned him, "Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me."

Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix."

He wrote a letter as follows: Claudius Lysias, To His Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings.

This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin. I found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment. When I was informed of a plot to be carried out against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his accusers to present to you their case against him.

So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, he said, "I will hear your case when your accusers get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

▼ **Sermon's Purpose (what listeners should know and do)**

- Understand the context:
- Understand what does and doesn't get you into trouble.
- Respect legitimate authority.
- Proclaim the resurrection of Jesus.
- When the Gospel gets you in trouble - Trust Jesus!
- Your testimony (authority, components, salvation, using, giving, obstacles).
- While you wait for God's next move . . .

▼ **Understand the context:**

- ▼ Paul is bringing gifts for the poor among the Jerusalem churches.
 - Romans 15:25-27
 - 2 Corinthians 8 - 9

- ▼ After delivering the gifts to Jerusalem, Paul planned to have the Romans aid him in getting to Spain.
 - Romans 15:23-33
- ▼ Paul is ready to die to complete his mission even though the Holy Spirit has warned him in every city that prison and hardship await him.
 - Acts 20:22-24
- ▼ Paul is committed to the Whole Will of God.
 - Acts 20:25-31
- ▼ **Understand what does and doesn't get you into trouble.**
 - ▼ "Acceptable" messages:
 - Jesus was a good teacher.
 - Jesus was oppressed, part of a marginalized community.
 - Jesus is "my" path to God.
 - ▼ Messages that get you in trouble:
 - Jesus is alive - risen from the dead.
 - Jesus is Israel's King and the world's Lord. - Acts 2:36
 - Jesus has authority above all "gods" and "goddesses". - Ephesians 1:18-23
 - Every tongue will confess, every knee will bow to Jesus. - Philippians 2:9-11
- ▼ **Respect legitimate authority and speak truth to power.**
 - Paul acknowledged the authority of the Sanhedrin.
 - Paul spoke up about the unlawful order to have him struck on the mouth.
 - Paul acknowledged the respect due to the office of the High Priest.
- ▼ **Proclaim the resurrection of Jesus.**
 - Paul proclaims the resurrection of the dead up front.
 - ▼ The resurrection is an essential part of Paul's message.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, 20-28
 - ▼ Without the resurrection of the dead, our faith in Jesus is pointless.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 29-34
- ▼ **When the Gospel gets you in trouble - Trust Jesus!**
 - The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." - Acts 23:11 (NIV)

- Luke then reports the assassination plot against Paul.
- Luke then reports the exposure of the plot.
- Jesus' word overrides the conspiracy to assassinate Paul.

▼ **You have authority to testify!**

▼ Matthew 9:35-38

- Jesus sees the condition of the people and has compassion on them.
- Out of his compassion he teaches the disciples how they should respond to what they see - by asking the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest field.
- Jesus then sends the 12 disciples out in pairs. - Matthew 10:1-8

▼ **The Components of a Testimony**

▼ Four Components:

- Life before following Christ.
- Realizing the need to follow Christ.
- Deciding to follow Christ.
- Life now.

▼ **Picturing Salvation**

- How can you help someone understand salvation?
- Tell them that it means following Jesus in a publicly verifiable way.
- Use the Bible to tell them a story / show them picture.

▼ Checkout these stories / pictures of the disciples following Jesus:

- Jesus calls his first disciples - Matthew 4:18-22

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

- Jesus teaches his disciples - Matthew 5:1-2

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying:

- Jesus calls Matthew - Matthew 9:9-13

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and

ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?”

On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

- **The First Converts - Acts 2:36-47**

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

- ▼ Consider these terms from “[Following Jesus: Introduction](#)” Lesson 2

(<https://lifechurchboston.org/activities/classes-programs/following-jesus/introduction/>)

- Believer – someone who believes in or has faith in Jesus and therefore follows him. In the Bible, the term “believer” refers to much more than simply agreeing with an idea. It implies a level of commitment such that, when given a chance, you will act on the belief. For example, you demonstrate your belief that a chair will support your weight by sitting in it; you demonstrate your belief that an airplane will take you safely to your destination by flying in it.

[John 4:39-41](#); [Acts 2:44-47](#); [Acts 4:31-32](#); [Galatians 6:9-10](#); [James 2:1](#)

- Born again – those who believe in Jesus are born again from God’s Spirit. You must be born again to see or enter the Kingdom of God.

[John 3:1-21](#); [1Peter 1:22-23](#)

- Brother – those who follow Jesus are part of a new family and become brothers and sisters to one another.

[Matthew 12:46-50](#); [Matthew 23:8](#); [Acts 6:3](#); [Acts 9:28-30](#); [Acts 11:1](#); [Acts 11:29](#); [Acts 15](#)

- Christian – means “belonging to Christ” “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” – [Acts 11:19-26](#)
- Disciples – those who are trained by the one they are following.
[Matthew 5:1-2](#); [Acts 6:1-7](#); [Acts 9:1-31](#); [Acts 11:19-26](#); [Acts 18:23](#)
- Follower of Jesus – Someone who follows and organizes his/her life around the life of Jesus as revealed in the Bible, especially the four gospels (i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and as revealed by the Holy Spirit.
[Matthew 4:19](#); [Matthew 8:19-22](#); [Matthew 9:9](#); [Matthew 10:37-39](#); [Matthew 16:24-26](#); [Matthew 19:21-22](#); [Matthew 19:27-30](#); [John 1:43](#); [John 12:26](#); [John 21:19-22](#)
- Saints – those who are “sanctified”, or set apart for God’s use.
[Romans 1:1-8](#); [Ephesians 1:1-2](#); [Philippians 1:1-2](#)
- Saved – those who by following Jesus have been rescued from this world and from God’s wrath.
[Luke 8:12](#); [Luke 8:4-15](#); [John 10:1-9](#); [Acts 2:17-21](#); [Acts 4:8-12](#); [Romans 10:1-13](#)
- ▼ This is what salvation looks like.
 - ▼ People who
 - have been captivated by Jesus.
 - follow him in order to learn from him.
 - abandon their past teachers in favor of learning directly from Jesus.
 - ▼ Jesus
 - Welcomes them regardless of their past social status or degree of spiritual achievement.
 - Considers them to be disciples from the beginning.
 - Treats them with an expectation of success.
 - Their attention is focused on Jesus and they are not at all anxious about whether they are “in” or “out”.
- ▼ With salvation we receive a “superpower” - the ability to distinguish between Jesus and other sources and to pay attention to Jesus.

“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” - John 10:1-5 (NIV)

 - This is the flip side of the “faith” that is the evidence of salvation.
 - What we do with this “superpower” will determine the course of our spiritual life.

▼ Acts 19:1-7 (NIV)

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.

- Sometimes people who seem "well churchied" are not saved.

▼ Why it matters:

- You need to be clear about what your ministry to the person is.
- Saved people need to be discipled. Discipleship means more than just "pouring into someone". It means pouring into someone with a purpose to get them to a place of maturity within a limited amount of time (e.g. 3 years), after which you will move on to someone else.
- Unserved people cannot be discipled because they are not saved. They must be evangelized - they need the gospel!
- The promises of the Bible that we typically use to comfort people are not made to churchgoers or to religious people. They are made to saved people – followers of Jesus.

▼ Sample promises (for followers of Jesus only): "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.." – Romans 8:28 (NIV)

- "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." – Philippians 4:6-7
- "I can do everything through him who gives me strength." – Philippians 4:13
- "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." – Philippians 4:19
- "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." – 1 John 1:9 (NIV)
- "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.." – Romans 8:28 (NIV)
- "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" – Romans 8:32 (NIV)

- Believers often use these and many other Bible promises to pour into, comfort, and encourage others. If you're doing that to a religious or church-going person without knowing if they're saved, you may be lying to them!
- You need to know who and what you're working with so that you can serve people appropriately!

▼ Learn how to use your testimony

- ▼ What follows is a basic approach that you should learn. The Holy Spirit may lead you to do things differently from time to time, but it's important to have a default approach.
 - Unless the Holy Spirit leads you otherwise, plan to share your testimony with people who are at the 4th threshold – Seekers.
 - Lead with your testimony – not the Bible. – Acts 17:16-34
 - Your testimony should point to the truth that Jesus is alive – risen from the dead. – Acts 17:30-31
 - The response of seekers to your testimony will often create an opportunity to explore the life of Jesus with them. – Acts 17:32-34

▼ Five Thresholds

▼ Trust

- “Church people are hypocrites, but you're different. I like you!”
- This means unchurched people who trust you to interact NOT someone who trusts you to talk about Jesus. They can genuinely trust you without being ready to hear about Jesus from you.
- Pray for them. Hang out with them. Ask good questions to provoke curiosity.
- Don't be a “Bible Answer Man”! Don't invite them to church yet.
- Who trusts you?

▼ Curiosity

- “Why are so many church people hypocrites?”
- Pray for them. Hang out with them. Imitate the way Jesus challenges people in John 3, John 4, and John 5.
- Invite them to social activities with other Christians rather than church.
- Who in your network is curious about your spiritual life?

▼ Openness to Change

- “Am I really better than the hypocritical church people I've known or am I sometimes a hypocrite too?”
- Pray for them. Hang out with them. Pray with them and challenge them to bring their questions to God in prayer. Study the Bible with them.

- Invite them to social activities with other Christians rather than church.
- Who in your network is open to change?
- ▼ Seeking
 - “Where can I find a spiritual group that can help me overcome my own hypocrisy?”
 - Pray for them. Pray with them. Hang out with them. Share your testimony. Share the Gospel. Share the Big Picture. Study the Bible with them.
 - Invite them to social activities with other Christians.
 - Invite them to your life group. Invite them to church.
 - Who in your network is seeking?
- ▼ Following
 - “I am following Jesus!”
 - Pray for them. Pray with them. Bring them to your life group. Bring them to church.
 - Disciple them
- ▼ Your Testimony & The Resurrection of Jesus
 - Your Testimony & The Resurrection of Jesus – Acts 10:39-46a (NIV)

“We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen — by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.
 - Your Testimony & The Resurrection of Jesus - Acts 17:29-34 (NIV)

“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone — an image made by man’s design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”

When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” At that, Paul left the Council. A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.
 - Your Testimony & The Resurrection of Jesus – 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (NIV)

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.

- **Victory Through Your Testimony – Revelation 12:7-12 (NIV)**

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”

- ▼ **Learn how to give your own testimony:**

- ▼ Content

- Introduction
- Your life before Christ
- How you realized that you needed to follow Jesus
- How you began following Jesus
- Your life now
- Conclusion

- ▼ Introduction

- May I tell you the greatest thing that ever happened in my life?”

- ▼ Your life before Christ

- Your ethnicity, where you were born, where you were raised.
- ▼ The spiritual beliefs you were raised with and/or that you eventually adopted.
 - What was your basis for deciding right or wrong?
- Your beliefs about and attitude towards Jesus and Christians.
- Examples that illustrate your former beliefs.
- What were your most important goals?

- ▼ How you realized that you needed to follow Christ.

- Followers are characterized by whom they follow and the determination with which they follow.
- A follower of Jesus wants to understand and pursue Jesus’ agenda! The “energy” for this comes from Jesus through them - NOT from you! Merely enjoying church does not make someone a follower of Jesus.
- When and how did the concept of following Jesus become real for you?

- ▼ How you began following Christ.
 - Not everyone comes to Jesus the same way.
- ▼ Can you confidently say that you are a follower of Jesus?
 - If not, stick around - keep coming!
 - ▼ If so, do you remember a distinct point in time when you began following Jesus?
 - If so, tell it!
 - If not, describe the earliest time that you can recall realizing that you have become a follower of Jesus.
- ▼ Your life now:
 - What is following Jesus like for you?
 - How much of your agenda does Jesus occupy?
- ▼ Conclusion
 - Say: “Perhaps this has also happened to you?”
 - Don’t say: “Would you like to have this happen to you?”
- ▼ Proficiency
 - Practice with other brothers and sisters.
 - Learn to share your testimony in 1 minute. Otherwise you may be in danger of preaching instead of witnessing.
 - Shave down the details.
 - Get rid of religious jargon.
 - •We will be giving you the opportunity to outline, write out, and share your testimony with each other in your life groups over the next few months!
- ▼ **What’s getting in the way of your testimony?**
 - Paul was the target of an assassination conspiracy.
 - Is anyone trying to kill you? If so, Jesus has your back.
 - ▼ If not, what else may be getting in the way?
 - What’s keeping you from getting to know new unchurched people?
 - What’s keeping you from influencing the unchurched people you know?
 - Let’s explore this in our life groups!
- ▼ **While you wait for God’s next move . . .**
 - ▼ Waiting after you’ve blown it. - Galatians 6:1-5

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the

law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load.

- If God points out something for you to deal with - deal with it.
- Submit to the restoration process.
- Let God use you.

▼ **Waiting when you haven't blown it. - Philippians 1:12-18**

Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,

- God can use your chains.
- People can be encouraged by how you function in the system.
- Paul rejoiced that the gospel was preached whether from false motives or true.

▼ **Conclusion**

▼ **Make disciples!**

- Collaborate with your brothers and sisters in Christ and develop new relationships with unchurched people.
- Ask the Father to guide you in leading people through the five thresholds.
- Share the gospel. The best preparation is to practice, make mistakes, learn from them, and try again.

▼ **Followup**

▶ **Old Questions**

- **Q&A**

▼ **Life Group Meeting**

▼ **Welcome (5 - 10 minutes)**

- [Icebreaker](#)

- Worship (optional for life group meetings during Sunday service)
- ▼ Word
 - ▼ Discussion Questions


For each question, spend 1 – 2 minutes in silence before you begin to respond.

 - 1 Are you busy dealing with God's most recent move, waiting on God's next move, or both? Discuss.
 - 2 Describe your most recent opportunities to influence unchurched people you know or to get to know new unchurched people.
- ▼ Witness
 - ▼ Work on your testimony: describe your life before you came to Jesus. Include at least some of the suggested components:
 - Your ethnicity, where you were born, where you were raised.
 - ▼ The spiritual beliefs you were raised with and/or that you eventually adopted.
 - What was your basis for deciding right or wrong?
 - Your beliefs about and attitude towards Jesus and Christians.
 - Examples that illustrate your former beliefs.
 - What were your most important goals?
 - Pray for 1 or 2 people that you want to become followers of Jesus.
 - Pray for boldness to build your relationships with unchurched people and to talk about Jesus.



Waiting For God's Next Move

Sunday December 26, 2021



Our Passage – Acts 22:30 – 23:35 (1 of 4)

The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, “My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.” At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!”

Those who were standing near Paul said, “You dare to insult God’s high priest?”

Paul replied, “Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: ‘Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.’”



Our Passage – Acts 22:30 – 23:35 (2 of 4)

Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead.” When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.)

There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. “We find nothing wrong with this man,” they said. “What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, **“Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”**



Our Passage – Acts 22:30 – 23:35 (3 of 4)

The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. More than forty men were involved in this plot. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here.”

But when the son of Paul’s sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul.

Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him.” So he took him to the commander.

The centurion said, “Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you.”

The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, “What is it you want to tell me?”

He said: “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him. Don’t give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request.”



Our Passage – Acts 22:30 – 23:35 (4 of 4)

The commander dismissed the young man and cautioned him, “Don’t tell anyone that you have reported this to me.”

Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, “Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix.”

He wrote a letter as follows: Claudius Lysias, To His Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings.

This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin. I found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment. When I was informed of a plot to be carried out against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his accusers to present to you their case against him.

So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, he said, “I will hear your case when your accusers get here.” Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod’s palace.



Overview:

Understand the context.

Understand what does and doesn't get you into trouble.

Respect legitimate authority.

Proclaim the resurrection of Jesus.

When the Gospel gets you in trouble - Trust Jesus!

Your testimony

While you wait for God's next move . . .



Overview - Detail:

Understand the context:

Paul gets into trouble while trying to serve the poor

Understand what does and doesn't get you into trouble.

Proclaiming the resurrection get you into trouble – good trouble!

Respect legitimate authority.

Proclaim the resurrection of Jesus.



Proclaim the Resurrection of Jesus

Paul proclaims the resurrection of the dead up front.

The resurrection is an essential part of Paul's message.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11, 20-28

Without the resurrection of the dead, our faith in Jesus is pointless.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 29-34



Overview - Detail

When the Gospel gets you in trouble - Trust Jesus!

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, **“Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”** - Acts 23:11 (NIV)

Your testimony (authority, components, salvation, using, giving, obstacles).

You have authority to testify – Matthew 9:35-38

Testimony Components

While you wait for God’s next move



The Components of a Testimony

Four Components:

- Life before following Christ.
- Realizing the need to follow Christ.
- Deciding to follow Christ.
- Life now.



Picturing Salvation

How can you help someone understand salvation?

- Tell them that it means following Jesus in a publicly verifiable way.
- Use the Bible to tell them a story / show them a picture.
- Checkout these stories / pictures of the disciples following Jesus:
 - Jesus calls his first disciples - Matthew 4:18-22
 - Jesus teaches his disciples - Matthew 5:1-2
 - Jesus calls Matthew - Matthew 9:9-13
 - The First Converts - Acts 2:36-47



Learn How To Use Your Testimony

What follows is a basic approach that you should learn. The Holy Spirit may lead you to do things differently from time to time, but it's important to have a default approach.

- Unless the Holy Spirit leads you otherwise, plan to share your testimony with people who are at the 4th threshold – Seekers.
- Lead with your testimony – not the Bible. – Acts 17:16-34
- Your testimony should point to the truth that Jesus is alive – risen from the dead. – Acts 17:30-31
- The response of seekers to your testimony will often create an opportunity to explore the life of Jesus with them. – Acts 17:32-34



Five Thresholds

Trust

Curiosity

Openness to Change

Seeking

Following



How To Give Your Own Testimony

Practice sharing this in 1 – 2 minutes without religious jargon.

- Introduction
 - “May I tell you the greatest thing that ever happened in my life?”
- Your life before Christ
- How you realized that you needed to follow Christ
- How you began following Christ
- Your life now
- Conclusion
 - Say: “Perhaps this has also happened to you?”



What's Getting In The Way?

- Paul was the target of an assassination conspiracy.
- Is anyone trying to kill you? If so, Jesus has your back!
- If not, what else may be getting in the way?
 - What's keeping you from getting to know new unchurched people?
 - What's keeping you from influencing the unchurched people you know?
- Let's explore this in our life groups!



While You Wait For God's Next Move

Waiting after you've blown it. - Galatians 6:1-5

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load.

- If God points out something for you to deal with – deal with it.
- Submit to the restoration process.
- Let God use you.



While You Wait For God's Next Move

Waiting when you haven't blown it. - Philippians 1:12-18

Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, . . .

- God can use your chains.
- People can be encouraged by how you function in the system.
- Paul rejoiced that the gospel was preached whether from false motives or true.



Life Group Meeting

Welcome (5 - 10 minutes)

Worship (optional for life group meetings during Sunday service)

Word

Witness



Life Group Meeting

Welcome (5-10 minutes)

- [Icebreaker](#)

Worship (optional for life group meetings during Sunday service)

Word - Discussion Questions

For each question, spend 1 – 2 minutes in silence before you begin to respond.

1. Are you busy dealing with God's most recent move, waiting on God's next move, or both? Discuss.
2. Describe your most recent opportunities to influence unchurched people you know or to get to know new unchurched people.

Witness (next page)



Life Group Meeting

Witness

- Testimony (if you haven't shared this already):
 - Describe your life before Jesus:
 - Your ethnicity, where you were born, where you were raised.
 - The spiritual beliefs you were raised with and/or that you eventually adopted.
 - How you decided right or wrong?
 - Your beliefs about and attitude towards Jesus and Christians.
 - Examples that illustrate your former beliefs.
 - What were your most important goals?
 - Describe how you realized you needed to follow Jesus.
- Pray for 1 or 2 people that you want to become followers of Jesus.
- Pray for boldness to build your relationships with unchurched people and to talk about Jesus.