
Resolved to Live – As a Witness for Jesus

“...about all that Jesus began to do and teach” (Acts 1:1).

R2L: According to the Plan of God Rather Than the Plots of Men

(Acts 23:12-35)

12 When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. 13 There were more than forty who formed this plot. 14 They came to the chief priests and the elders and said, “We have bound ourselves under a solemn oath to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 “Now therefore, you and the Council notify the commander to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case by a more thorough investigation; and we for our part are ready to slay him before he comes near the place.” 16 But the son of Paul’s sister heard of their ambush, and he came and entered the barracks and told Paul. 17 Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, “Lead this young man to the commander, for he has something to report to him.” 18 So he took him and led him to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to lead this young man to you since he has something to tell you.” 19 The commander took him by the hand and stepping aside, began to inquire of him privately, “What is it that you have to report to me?” 20 And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down tomorrow to the Council, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more thoroughly about him. 21 “So do not listen to them, for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him who have bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they slay him; and now they are ready and waiting for the promise from you.” 22 So the commander let the young man go, instructing him, “Tell no one that you have notified me of these things.” 23 And he called to him two of the centurions and said, “Get two hundred soldiers ready by the third hour of the night to proceed to Caesarea, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen.” 24 They were also to provide mounts to put Paul on and bring him safely to Felix the governor. 25 And he wrote a letter having this form: 26 “Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings. 27 “When this man was arrested by the Jews and was about to be slain by them, I came up to them with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. 28 “And wanting to ascertain the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their Council; 29 and I found him to be accused over questions about their Law, but under no accusation deserving death or imprisonment. 30 “When I was informed that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, also instructing his accusers to bring charges against him before you.” 31 So the soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. 32 But the next day, leaving the horsemen to go on with him, they returned to the barracks. 33 When these had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. 34 When he had read it, he asked from what province he was, and when he learned that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, “I will give you a hearing after your accusers arrive also,” giving orders for him to be kept in Herod’s Praetorium.

People can be intimidating, can they not? Because of the perceived power or authority of others; because of what we fear others can or might do to us, we can often shrink back from doing what we might otherwise do. This is particularly true in Christianity and what we are increasingly experiencing in our culture today. It is okay to be a “Christian” if you must, but don’t you dare say anything about right and wrong; what is moral and immoral. Keep your beliefs to yourself; lay low; keep quiet; say nothing when it comes to science or cultural normals and maybe, just maybe, we will tolerate you.

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I don't know exactly what comes to your mind when you hear the word “Christian” – but what ought to come to our minds is this; that a Christian is someone who cannot stop speaking about Jesus Christ. We saw an example of this back in Acts 4:19-20, when Peter and John had been arrested for healing the lame man and, being called before the Jewish ruling counsel, were ordered not to speak any longer about Jesus. Remember what Peter and John said? They said,

19 Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; 20 for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.

Beloved, a Christian is someone who “cannot stop speaking about what [he or she] has seen and heard” concerning Jesus Christ. People may threaten and seek to intimidate, but in the end, for the Christian walking intimately with Jesus, he or she would rather obey God and speak the truth of the gospel than to remain silent. Around 374 AD, Eusebuis of Samosata we imprisoned for traveling throughout the area of Israel and Syria restoring orthodox teachers in the church who had been removed by heretical teachers. While in prison, he penned the following words on the wall of his prison cell in Europe: “I believe in love even when I don't feel it. I believe in God even when He is silent.” Later, when the emperor Valens threatened Eusebuis with the confiscation of all his goods, along with torture, banishment, or even death, the courageous Christian replied, “He needs not fear confiscation, who has nothing to lose; nor banishment, to whom heaven is his country; nor torments, when his body can be destroyed at one blow; nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty from sin and sorrow.”

The Christian is one who is willing to speak up for Jesus regardless of the cost and this is what we find in our text this morning in the example of Paul. This is a difficult message for many to hear because both preachers and sermon hearers are more concerned with comfort than sacrifice; with getting something from Christ (which of course He does give) but often with little consideration for what he or she might, or even must, give to Christ. The Christian is one who is increasingly realizing that his words and actions are truly a matter of *life and death*. The Christian's message is a matter of life and death for those to whom he shares the gospel and sometimes sharing the gospel can be a matter of life and death itself.

Too many messages being preached picture being a Christian as a way of making life better; of being healthier and wealthier. But that is not the NT picture of a Christian. The NT teaches that the person who comes to follow Christ becomes a wanted man or woman. To be a Christian is to place a target on your head. To be a Christian is to declare yourself to be the enemy of Satan who holds in his hands a world system that absolutely hates the Lord Jesus Christ and anything associated with Him.

Just some fifty years before Eusebuis, an important church meeting called the Nicene Council met to compose the Nicene Creed, a church statement that upheld the deity of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit. The hymn that we sing, “*Holy, Holy, Holy*” is inspired by this creed. What you may not know is that of the 318 delegates that attended this council in the 4th century AD, about 312, that is 98% of them, had lost an eye, a hand, or had a limp because they had been tortured for their Christian faith. Only 12 had been “fortunate” enough not to have suffered such physical torture. And yet we think it strange if we are looked down upon by some family or friends because of our commitment to Christ.

You know, our Lord Jesus Christ spoke at great lengths about counting the cost; that being a follower of Him does indeed cost you something. The cost involved in being a Christian man or

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woman is not in order to earn salvation; for that is not possible. Let me remind you that to be saved, each one must confess that we have nothing to offer that merits the blessings of a holy God. We must also confess that Jesus is the only one through who we might be saved. This we know, but often we do not tell those who might come to Christ; nor do we remind ourselves that to identify with Jesus is to be a target that is resisted and even hated by the world. As Jesus said in John 15:18-19

18 If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

This is what it means to be a Christian, beloved. We will rub the world the wrong way. We will be marginalized and demonized. So what are we to do? Our text this morning helps us prepare for the battles that lie ahead. By looking at what happened to Paul in Acts 23:12-35, we are reminded that living for Christ is a matter of life and death matter and that if we would do our Savior honor, we must be resolved to live according to the plan of God rather than in fear of the plots of men. I have divided the text into two sections; the first is trusting God in the predicaments and the second, which flows out of the first, is trusting God’s providence.

I. Trusting God in the Predicament (12-15)

We all find ourselves in predicaments; those times or circumstances that seem to us less than ideal; at times even precarious, but in which believers, who know that God is sovereign; that He is in control; are to trust in Him, that He will do what is good, right and best. Our predicaments might involve our health; it might involve problems with our children or in a marriage or with family; in might involve a conflict at work, or maybe even a run in with the IRS. We will all find ourselves in predicaments.

In our text, Paul is in a predicament. He is being held in the fortress of Antonia in Jerusalem. Recall that he came to Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey in order to deliver a love-gift of money to the needy saints there. In the course of time, some Jews got angry with Paul and began to slander Him in the temple, inciting a mob that nearly ripped his body apart. If it were not for the Roman commander, Claudius Lysias, intervening, Paul would have been killed.

On the next day, Paul was taken before Jewish Council, the Sanhedrin, again, chaos ensued and another angry mob sought to tear him limb from limb, forcing the commander to take Paul back to the barracks. That night, having been beaten and alone, the Lord encouraged Paul. According to verse 11, **“the Lord stood at his side and said, ‘Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.’”**

Beloved, from a human point of view, nothing was going right for Paul. His circumstances were seemingly going from bad to worse. While Paul could have wondered what God was doing, God Himself was not wringing His hands trying to figure out if He could make all this work. I believe Paul was confident and trusting in his God. For when **“the Lord stood near”** Paul, this made all the difference in the world.

As we work through our text (and this is true for when you are studying narratives like the book of Acts), here is how you need to approach it; you need to *look for God* in the text. What do you see God doing; how is He orchestrating and accomplishing His perfect plan for His servant.

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God was at work in Paul’s life (just as He is working in *our lives*). We need to trust God in the predicaments that we find ourselves in, realizing that sometimes God’s plan includes *dangers, toils and snares*. It did for Paul and our text reveals two sources of struggle that caused Paul’s predicament.

A. The Jews took an oath to kill Paul (12-13).

12 When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. 13 There were more than forty who formed this plot.

We would love to live in a world that operated under the premise that if you do right, everyone will like you. It does not always work that way. In verses 12-13 we are introduced to forty men who had such a hatred for Paul that they took an oath not to take any food or drink until they murdered the man they considered to nothing but a trouble-maker; and sadly, they did it in the name of God and religion. Remember that up to this point, not one charge has been made against Paul. There was nothing for which they could point in Paul’s life that violated either Jewish or Roman law, yet they wanted him dead. Why? Because of his message. They hated this gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul was preaching that all men, all kinds of people, including Gentiles, could be saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ, the Jewish Messiah. This message grieved them so because there was something they loved more than God and His Word. “What was this?” you ask? They their traditions and national identity; they were more concerned with patriotism than with the Word of God; something that evangelical Christian can sometimes to easily confuse; patriotism is not Christianity. Being a good citizen, yes, but not the exaltation of a nation as being better or superior to all other peoples and nations.

So these men took an oath. In the Greek it is “anathema” – a curse. It is used to translate a Hebrew word, called a *cherem*. When a man took this oath he was saying in effect, “May God curse me if I fail to accomplish this.” And it was not just one such man making this oath, not five, or 25, but forty assassins after Paul; forty terrorists willing to die for the cause of killing him. And what inspired all this? Simple hatred. Let us beware of harboring hatred, it will only bring destruction to all involved. So we have forty Jewish zealots gunning for Paul, but as if this were not bad enough, there were others involved in this conspiracy against Paul...

B. The Jewish leaders joined the plot (14-15).

14 They came to the chief priests and the elders and said, “We have bound ourselves under a solemn oath to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 “Now therefore, you and the Council notify the commander to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case by a more thorough investigation; and we for our part are ready to slay him before he comes near the place.”

More injustice has been done in the name of religion. What a perversion of justice as these assassins ask the chief priests (the men who are supposed to be the spiritual leaders of Israel) and the elders (the men who are supposed to be mature and wise) to lie to the Roman commander so they might kill Paul. Ironically, those who were accusing Paul of breaking the Law (something they could never prove) were now violating at least two of God’s ten commandments, bearing false witness and intended murder, and yet they are convinced they are pleasing God. We read in verse 20 that the religious leaders did agree with this plot.

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All of this reveals two things that are true about Christianity. Let me point them out. First, authentic Christianity is *inspiring*. To find a genuine Christian can draw people in because they long for commitment and confidence that can be seen in the life of a genuine believer. But it also leads to a second truth, namely that authentic Christianity is also *intimidating*. When a genuine Christian enters a room his very presence, just because he represents the standards of the true God, reveals the spiritual shortcomings of the non-Christians. And when that believer starts to share Christ, the message reveals the inadequacies of the non-Christian’s belief system. Once exposed, the non-Christian has a choice to make. He must either repent and turn from his fallacy, or he will seek to remove the reminder of his need to repent.

In our text, we see that the Jewish leaders chose the latter course with Paul. Having preached the gospel of grace found in Jesus alone, they clutched to a system of works. Paul had insisted all were sinners who needed a relationship with Jesus, but they insisted they were good enough and stuck with their religion. Not being able to disprove the message, they sought to destroy the messenger. This is the predicament that Paul found himself in; one that he could only sit back and trust that God would accomplish His purposes through. And this leads us to the second of our points, not only must we trust God in the predicament, but we must be...

II. Trusting God’s Providence (16-35)

In the remainder of Acts 23, from verses 16-35, we find a series of providential workings of God. That is, we see God working through the people and circumstance to accomplish His purpose, which for Paul meant deliverance from this plot of men and on the path that would take Paul to Rome, just as the Lord promised back in verse 11. In verses 16-24 we see God working through people and in verses 25-35 we see God working through circumstances. Let us first note the four groups of people God worked through, followed by the two things He worked through...

A. God used Paul’s nephew (16).

16 But the son of Paul’s sister heard of their ambush, and he came and entered the barracks and told Paul.

Acts 23:16 is a bit surprising as we learn something new about Paul. Paul had a sister who obviously had a son; Paul’s nephew. Now, we don’t know if this young man was a believer or not, but he was at least sympathetic to Paul and evidently he had connections to high places. It might have been that Paul’s nephew was in Jerusalem to be trained as a Rabbi just as his uncle had been thirty years before. Whatever the case, God allowed Paul’s nephew to learn of this plot and was able to go to Paul and informed him of what was taking place.

B. God used a centurion (17).

17 Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, “Lead this young man to the commander, for he has something to report to him.”

Not only did God use Paul’s nephew, but we see God using a centurion. Verse 17 could be as surprising as verse 16. For the centurion was the man directly responsible to guard Paul. He did not work for Paul, but you might not get that impression from our text. Paul calls the centurion over and urges him to take his nephew to the commander. It seems unlikely that a Roman centurion would have been generally inclined to do something like this. It would seem God is moving people to accomplish His purposes. And there is more...

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C. God used a commander (18-22).

18 So he took him and led him to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to lead this young man to you since he has something to tell you.” 19 The commander took him by the hand and stepping aside, began to inquire of him privately, “What is it that you have to report to me?” 20 And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down tomorrow to the Council, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more thoroughly about him. 21 “So do not listen to them, for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him who have bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they slay him; and now they are ready and waiting for the promise from you.” 22 So the commander let the young man go, instructing him, “Tell no one that you have notified me of these things.”

Let us remember that Luke had limited space for writing this account. And yet we find him repeating things. Notice that Luke repeats the details of the plot. He is not simply padding the story...it is intentional. Luke might have said, “As the plot unfolded, the sovereign Lord saw it and intervened.” Rather than saying it, however, Luke just tells the story, repeating details so we will come to a conclusion, that conclusion is this, that God uses all kinds of people and things to accomplish His purposes. Here he used a nephew who overheard a conversation, a centurion who was willing to listen, and a Roman commander who took the report seriously all to unveil and eventually to thwart the sinister plot against Paul. While it may seem like it a times, nothing truly even just *happens* in life. But there is more...

D. God used Roman Soldiers (23-24)

23 And he called to him two of the centurions and said, “Get two hundred soldiers ready by the third hour of the night to proceed to Caesarea, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen.” 24 They were also to provide mounts to put Paul on and bring him safely to Felix the governor.

It is obvious that the commander was not going to take any chances. He could not risk another riot or any more chaos. So, let's do some math together. Two hundred soldiers plus seventy horsemen plus two hundred spearmen along with these two centurions equals four hundred seventy-two bodyguards!

There are a couple of things we might note. First, we see a cautious commander, not willing to risk anything for the sake of a riot. And second, I see the providence of our powerful God fulfilling His Word. It was the Lord who said in verse 11, “**You must witness in Rome also.**” Here then is God assuring that Paul would get there. Beloved, sometimes we are tempted in our predicaments of feeling either alone and/or forgotten, by God and others. But we must remember the promise of God, that He is always at work in the lives of His people. We must remember that God knows what He is doing. And therefore we must trust in the hands of providence, that the things that come into our lives are orchestrated by God to accomplish His purposes.

Pastor Chuck Swindoll said it this way, “If He [God] is able to stir up four hundred seventy-two earthly bodyguards to get Paul from Jerusalem to Caesarea, safely and securely, He will have no trouble getting you from here to wherever, safely and securely...” We can be encouraged.

Beloved, God is orchestrating people and events to accomplish His plans in our lives. You are not here by accident people. Some of you know this, others of you are struggling with it. While I cannot tell you if God will keep you in Rogers, Bentonville, or Northwest Arkansas, I can tell you that while you are here, it is not a mistake or accident; that God intends His purposes to be accomplished in you and that you are responsible to be doing all you can to grow in the grace

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and knowledge of Jesus Christ; to be a participating member of the body of Christ; and to tell others you have contact with about Jesus as Lord and Savior. So I say again, beloved, *nothing just happens in life*, not when there’s a sovereign God on the throne.

But God’s providence, His orchestrating of things to accomplish His purposes is not limited to the use of people. God also uses things, as is evident in the final two “things” God used...

E. God used a letter (25-30)

25 And he wrote a letter having this form: 26 “Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings. 27 “When this man was arrested by the Jews and was about to be slain by them, I came up to them with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. 28 “And wanting to ascertain the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their Council; 29 and I found him to be accused over questions about their Law, but under no accusation deserving death or imprisonment. 30 “When I was informed that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, also instructing his accusers to bring charges against him before you.”

Luke included this letter for us to see God’s providence. Remember that Lysias is not a Christian. Throughout the letter we see the profuse use of the pronoun, “I”. He certainly tells the truth about Paul, but he also works things in such a way as to put himself in a positive light. He is being honest, but also a self-protecting civil servant. And the point is this, that God used Lysias and his letter to get Paul out of Jerusalem, on to Caesarea and eventually to Rome. Our God can and does use unregenerate, self-serving people to accomplish His plan for His people. So, when we, as a church, are looking for and praying about a new temporary building to meet in until we can build our own, we are not placing ourselves at the whims of building owners who want to charge high prices, but we are in the hands of a providential God who will lead us where He wants us. God might use people, He might use a letter; and finally...

F. God used a legal process (31-35)

31 So the soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. [Antipatris was a Roman military post and rest stop for travelers heading from Jerusalem to Caesarea. This leg of the trip was about 35 miles, and the fact that the soldiers made it in one night indicates a double-time march.]. 32 But the next day, leaving the horsemen to go on with him, they returned to the barracks. 33 When these had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. 34 When he had read it, he asked from what province he was, and when he learned that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, “I will give you a hearing after your accusers arrive also,” giving orders for him to be kept in Herod’s Praetorium.

Our God uses people, letters and even legal processes. When Governor Felix asks what province Paul is from, he has legal process in mind. The region of Cilicia [where Tarsus was located, Paul’s home town] was part of the territory under the jurisdiction of Felix, hence his response, “*I will give you a hearing...*” If Paul had been from another region, Felix would have deferred the case. This Felix was quite a character with a remarkable story. He started life as a slave. His brother, Pallas, was a favorite of Nero. Through the influence of Pallas, Felix made the remarkable move from being a slave to a freedman and then to being a governor. Tacitus, the Roman historian, said of him, “*He exercised the prerogatives of a king with the spirit of a slave.*” This is not to suggest that Felix was a saint. He married three princesses, one right after the other—the second was a granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra; the third was Drusilla, the

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daughter of Herod Agrippa I who left her husband to marry Felix. This man was also known to hire thugs to murder his own closest supporters. This is the one Paul was about to face.

Beloved, we must be resolved to acknowledge the sovereignty and providence of God in our lives. If we do not, every predicament becomes something that will cause you to lose your mind. But as you trust in the providence of God, believing that He is in control, then any predicament in life can be faced with great assurance. To be sure, we never know what is coming, but we know the One who does! The resolved believer is the one who lives with this *big picture* in mind.

How could Paul keep going through all of his trials and difficulties? He trusted God in the midst of every predicament, believing it for God’s glory and for either his own or the church’s good. When God saved Paul twenty some odd years earlier, He clearly informed Paul and those with him saying, before this, the Lord made it clear, **“15 Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; 16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake”** (Acts 9:15-16).

God means what He says and what He promised for Paul, He was now fulfilling. When Paul was a freeman, he did not testify before kings. But now he is a *prisoner*. In Acts 24 we will see him testify before Governor Felix, in Acts 25 before Governor Festus, in Acts 26 before King Agrippa, and in Acts 28 he will be in Rome, speaking to the highest dignitaries of the then known world; just as God has promised.

Beloved, I may not know what God is specifically doing in your life today, but there is one thing I do know for certain; that God is at work in the lives of His people. I know that He is working on strategic things in your circumstances that will result in His glory and your good. It will only be for your good if you know Him and will submit to Him. We all will struggle with doubts at times concerning God’s control, but always remember this; Paul left town with an escort fit for a king. He left behind him forty hungry men. He left because God will always have His own way. And so, we must be resolved to live according to the plans of God rather than in fear of the plots of men.

The following account of Lorrie Anderson, a missionary to the head-shrinking Candoshi Shapra Indians of Peru around 1950 illustrates this point. Lorrie was looking for a quiet place for her daily time of Bible reading and prayer, so she went down by the edge of the river. After reading the Bible, she took up her prayer list. Eyes closed, she did not see the deadly anaconda weaving through the water until it struck, burying its fangs into her flesh. It withdrew to strike, hitting her arm again and again as it held her, screaming, in its coils. It reared up for the death blows. Then suddenly the giant snake, never known to release its prey, relaxed its grip and slithered off through the water. While Lorrie was being treated, a witch doctor from a nearby village burst into the hut and stared at her. She couldn’t believe Lorrie had survived. She said her son-in-law, also a witch doctor, had chanted to the spirit of the anaconda that morning and sent it to kill the young missionary. "I’m certain," Lorrie said, "that except for the protection of God, it would have worked."

God will do extraordinary things to accomplish His purposes. But with that said, let me also remind you that He does not always use extraordinary measures. He does not promise to always remove us from dangers. There are times in which God chooses to leave us in danger. But even then we are not alone, for He has promised to be with us. On the occasion of our text, God used the Romans to deliver Paul. Ten years later He allowed the same Romans to kill him. But whether by life or by death, Paul was resolved to live according to the plan of God.

As I close, let me leave you with a few applications we can draw from our text.

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1. God never promises us a life of ease.

Paul came face to face with danger as soon after he became a Christian, and it never let up until the day God took him home to glory. From the day Paul left Damascus in a basket under the cover of darkness (Acts 9:22ff.), until this day, it was not easy for Paul. But God never said it would be. Nor for us.

2. God uses ordinary circumstances to accomplish His extraordinary plan.

Yes, God can do extraordinary things, and sometimes He does. But what He delights to do, and what He typically does, is work through the *little things*. God loves to work through the little, every day, ordinary events of our lives. The extraordinary God often works in ordinary ways to bring about extraordinary results.

Somerset Maugham, the English writer, once wrote a story about a janitor at St. Peter's Church in London. One day a young vicar discovered that the janitor was illiterate and fired him. Jobless, the man invested his meager savings in a tiny tobacco shop, where he prospered, bought another, expanded, and ended up with a chain of tobacco stores worth several hundred thousand dollars. One day the man's banker said, "You've done well for an illiterate, but where would you be if you could read and write?" "Well," replied the man, "I'd be janitor of St. Peter's Church in Neville Square." God often works through the ordinary to accomplish the extraordinary.

3. God is in no hurry.

If we look at Acts 23 from the human perspective, Claudius Lysias was just doing his job. But from God's perspective, he was doing *God's* job. There was another Roman soldier, who from the human perspective was just doing his job. What was his job, to authorize his men to crucify Jesus. But little did he know that he was actually working for God. According to the divine plan, this Roman centurion was nailing the Chosen One to the cross; the one who had come to die for the sins of His people. He came to die for your sins and my sins, beloved. On that day, God did not deliver His Son from the cross, but to the cross. On that day He judged His own Son in our place. God did deliver His Son though, three days later. Beloved, God has a plan, and He's not in a hurry.

4. God calls us to trust Him.

We must never be tempted to turn *from* Him, but to Him, fully resolved to live according to His plan, as revealed in His Word, rather than fearing the plots of men.

Soli Deo Gloria

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