

Acts 21:37-23:35
Week 11 Summary
Acts 21:37-23:35

Acts 21:37-22:29 (Another riot or as Paul would say: Tuesday)

Luke's narrative picks up with Paul bound in chains and removed from the angry mob that had been beating him. This whole section is a critique of Roman justice. Firstly, it features the Roman commander improperly taking the victim of a beating and attempting to beat the truth out of him. Before the commander can begin "questioning" Paul, Paul declares himself to be a Roman citizen from birth. The commander quickly realizes his error and stops this abuse of power. A proper hearing before the Sanhedrin is scheduled. Secondly, in a similar way, Paul had used his zeal for torah to abuse Christians (both men and women) in his pursuit of legal righteousness. Jesus confronts Paul (then Saul) of the reality of who he is. Paul's zeal is then redirected in accordance with the Gospel.

22:30-23:11 (Déjà vu all over again)

Paul now faces his accusers in a more civilized forum. As Paul begins his opening statement by declaring his conscience clear, the High Priest pushes back by having Paul struck. Paul responds sharply not realizing that Ananias whom he has known for some time has been promoted to the position of High Priest for the year. How are we as Christians supposed to respond when we've overstepped, been rude or arrogant, or are just plain wrong? We follow Paul's example: we acknowledge our mistake and apologize. Perhaps this is a word the "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3b) needed to hear.

Paul probably realizes that he is not about to have the chance to finish his defence at this point. Recognizing the division with his accusers, he blurts out the core message: our hope of the resurrection. With this trial now practically over, Jesus reveals to Paul that he must also testify in Rome.

23:12-23:35 (All in a day's work for a Roman soldier)

Here we have a repeat of Paul's escape from Damascus in chapter 9. Paul learns of a plot to have him killed. He learns of it through his nephew who is instructed to let the commander know. The commander who was shamed into doing right by Paul in the "Tuesday riot", now sees an opportunity to not only pass the buck, but also elevate himself in the process. No Roman soldier wanted to serve in the troublesome province of Palestine. He sends Paul to Governor Felix in Caesarea along with a well-crafted letter. He presents himself as the faithful quick-thinking commander who saved the life of a Roman citizen from another Jewish mob. The thought of a promotion or better yet a transfer I'm sure never crossed his mind. Luke has now set the stage for the next trial.

Faithful Presence
"Chapter Nine"

1. What do you think of Fitch's ideas on prayer?
2. Is there anything you think he's missed or you would change?
3. How would taking this discipline change the way Northview engages in prayer?