

**2 Msg's ago** - Paul was at the end of a **Series** of **back-to-back Failures & Blow-Ups**

**Things** were looking really **GRIM** - & Paul was **WORN-OUT**

& **then** - when Paul was **alone** in a **Dark Prison cell**  
The **Lord Jesus** Himself came to **Encourage** Paul

### **Acts 23:11**

***11 . . . the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome."***

**Jesus** says to Paul - in that **Dark & Difficult Time**  
***Take Courage - I am with you - & You & I are going to ROME***

Now - the Lord **didn't lay out** a **Road Map** for Paul  
In fact, He **couldn't** give Paul the **details**

**1st)** Because Paul **couldn't grasp**  
**how** all the details would **work together**

**2nd)** Because Paul might've **jumped ship** if he **HEARD** the Details

If Paul **KNEW** ahead of time - the **road** he'd have to take  
to **accomplish** God's Will for his life . . .

He **May've** (at least) **Questioned** the whole Idea

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**Maybe** you can **RELATE** to that in your **own** Christian Walk

Maybe **someone implied** to you  
that your **Road to Victory** in the Christian Life  
was going to be like a **Sail Boat Ride** in the **Caribbean**

You just **sit back**, **relax**, and **enjoy** all the  
**beautiful surroundings** God has prepared **JUST** for **YOU** . . .

& **then**, at some point - **YOU WOKE UP !!**

& **you realized** that;

**1)** The Christian Life is a **BATTLE**

**2)** God has a **BIGGER PLAN** - that is actually **NOT centered**  
on our **Personal Pleasure**

**But** God's plan **IS** for **our** Ultimate **GOOD**  
& **more importantly**, it is for **His** Eternal **GLORY**

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But **sometimes** - that plan includes  
some very **DIFFICULT Situations**

& Today - we see **ANOTHER** one of those  
**DIFFICULT situations** for Paul

But what **really sticks out** to me today is -  
that **It seems** to me that Paul is **Watching**, & **Waiting** . . .

for God to **OPEN a DOOR** for him,  
for God to **SET his PATH** before him

**Paul** seems to be Patiently **WATCHING** for God to **WORK** -  
& then Confidently **JOINING IN** when God **OPENS THE DOOR**

Paul knows **IN GENERAL** God's Plan  
(**Jesus** told him he was going to **Rome**)

He's been **Patiently Waiting** for **TWO Years** - in Prison  
For God to **OPEN THAT DOOR**

& **Because** He's been Expectantly **Watching** & **Waiting** -  
He is **Ready to ACT**, when He sees **God move**

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**MAN** - What a **GREAT PLACE** for us to be with God

**We CAN DO the SAME thing we see Paul do today**

- 1) We can **LOOK PAST** our current **circumstances**
- 2) We can **KNOW** God is at work in the **midst** of them
- 3) We can **WATCH** for a way to **JOIN GOD** in His Plan

**Let's Pray** - we can **learn today** from the Apostle Paul  
how to **LOOK** for God's **OPEN DOOR**

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**Last Msg** - we looked at how our **MOTIVES** cause our **ACTIONS**

& the **MOTIVES** of the **Roman Governor** caused him  
to take an **ACTION** that left Paul in Prison for **TWO YEARS**

The **Last Verse** of **Ch 24** (from last week) **tells** the story

## Acts 24:27 (esv)

*27 When two years had elapsed, Felix (Gov from last msg) was succeeded by Porcius Festus (New Gov). And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.*

That's NICE of him - Felix decides to just let Paul Rot in Prison  
Cause he can't figure out how to Personally Benefit from him

& so finally - Felix is REMOVED by ROME  
& Porcius Festus is sent to be Governor over Judea

One of the Main Reasons FELIX was Removed by Rome

Was because he allowed a group of Assassins known as  
“Sicarii Bandits” to do whatever they wanted  
as long as they PAID him off

These “Sicarii Bandits” were probably the Assassins  
who committed to KILL Paul for the Jewish Leaders back in Ch 23

& although we don't know much about Gov FESTUS - we do know  
he was sent by Rome to get rid of these Assassins - which he did

But still - First things First - as a Good Politician - Festus begins  
by trying to ‘Snuggle Up’ to the Power Brokers in his Community

So Festus is going to go up to Jerusalem  
to meet with the Jewish Leaders

Who apparently have a plan to use these same ‘Assassins’ again -  
to try to FINISH what they started 2 years ago

### **Acts 25:1-3 (esv)**

**1 Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea.**

**2 And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him,**

**3 asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way.**

**Festus wanted a "Meet & Greet" - but the Jews wanted Paul dead**

& so the **1st Political FAVOR** they ask for  
is that Festus **bring Paul BACK** to Jerusalem

**Not because they wanted to "Try" him there -  
because they wanted the Assassins to **KILL HIM** on the way**

Paul's been **on ICE** for **2 years**  
& **these guys** are still **committed** to **Killing** him

But the **New Governor** isn't quite **ready** to **play** along

### **So we read in Acts 25:4-5 (esv)**

**4 Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly.**

**5 "So," said he, "let the men of authority among you go down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them bring charges against him."**

So **Festus** stays in **Jerusalem** a while longer

But **as soon** as he gets **back**  
He **knows** he's gonna have to **Handle** this "**PAUL**" Thing

**Acts 25:6 (esv)**

**6 After he stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought.**

**Here we go again - *Two years Later***

Two **Senseless** Years in Jail later

& we are **going** to see the **SAME Baseless Accusations**  
by **Paul's Enemies**

**AND** we are going to **continue** to see the **SAME**  
**Calm, Confident Defense** by **Paul**

**Paul had been sitting in prison for TWO Years**

**KNOWING** that God was **AT WORK**

& **WAITING** for God to **OPEN THE DOOR** - to get him to **ROME**

**Paul's** mind is **NOT** consumed with these **ACCUSATIONS**  
**OR** this **REPEAT** of a **TRIAL**

Paul's Mind is **CONSUMED** - with **HOW** (& **Where**)

God was Working **WITHIN** all of this - to bring His Will to pass

**Acts 25:7-8 (esv)**

**7 When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove. (same story)**

**8 Paul argued in his defense, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense."**

This is a **REPLAY** of **Two Previous Trials** for Paul

The Jews Continue with their FALSE Accusations  
& Paul Continues to Confidently state the TRUTH

Two Years in prison - Three Trials - ALL False Accusations . . .

WHY would God take Paul "Out of the Ministry" & put him in prison  
for Two Years - all on False Accusations

Well - If you've READ to the END of the Story - you KNOW  
*This was all part of the plan*

But what happens when we DON'T KNOW the End of the Story?  
How do we respond THEN?

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As Christians - we have got to Confidently Serve Jesus

Thru GOOD & BAD circumstances -

Thru TRUE & FALSE statements about us

But here is an Absolutely CRITICAL Lesson . . .

When we are in a similar place as Paul is here

We must be able to HONESTLY say to our Accusers - Confidently  
Your Accusations are NOT TRUE

Meaning we CAN'T give them anything  
that they can "Rightly" accuse us of

Then we've GOT TO KNOW - God is AT WORK

So we've got to be LOOKING FOR what He might be Doing  
& we've got to BE READY to JOIN HIM when He opens the Door

& I believe THAT is what we're seeing Paul do right here

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**Two Yrs** - 3 Trials - **ALL** False Accusations . . .

But **Paul** knows - God is going to "**OPEN A DOOR**" -

He's going to "**MAKE A WAY**" - & Paul is **LOOKING** for **THAT**

**It's like the entire time Paul is saying**

*"OK Lord, It's been Two Years, but I know you're doing something here,*

*I know you're about to open a door, to point the way, to set my path before me . . .*

*What is it Lord? & Where is it? . . . I'm watching & waiting*

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Paul is **NOT moved** by these **Relentless False Accusers**

They **DID KINDA** get to him back in **Ch 23**

But Paul **repented** of that, and he's **fully trusting God** at this point

I believe Paul is **LOOKING** for **God** to "**OPEN A DOOR**"

& Gov **FESTUS** is **also looking** for an **OPEN DOOR** - -

He's looking for a **WAY OUT** of this entire **MESS**

He just **got there** as **Governor** - he **inherited** this nightmare

& he **wants** it all to **go away**

& so **Festus** throws out a **Strange Offer** to Paul

hoping to **wash his hands** of the entire thing

**Acts 25:9 (esv)**

***9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?"***

**Really Festus? *That's all you've got?***

**Hey Paul** - How bout if I **send** you **back** with these **Crazy Haters** to Jerusalem **so they can do** whatever they **want** to you??

***How's that sound . . . ? Uh . . . Not Good?***

**Festus** is just trying **NOT** to **Stub his Toe** on his **First Trial** & he's trying to **play to the Jews** as much as he can

So he **throws out** this **crazy option** to Paul  
**Which wasn't** even remotely **legal** for him to do

But **Festus** Realizes - There are **NO ROMAN LAWS** being broken - these are **Religious** guys - arguing over **Religious** things

So **he tries** to get the **whole thing** sent back to **Jerusalem**

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& **RIGHT HERE** - is where Paul sees **GOD'S OPEN DOOR !!**  
& this is **so important** for us catch

**When** we are in **difficult circumstances** or **situations**  
When we are **Praying** & **Waiting** on God . . .

We've **got** to have our **SPIRITUAL EYES OPEN**

We've **got** to be **WATCHING** for **HIS HAND** at Work - &

We've **got** to **SEE** when He's **OPENING THE DOOR**

**AND** . . . We've **GOT to be READY** - to **STEP** thru it

**& Paul** . . . **IS** Ready

We can easily ASSUME He's been praying about  
God's next step for him - for the Past TWO YEARS

But I DON'T Believe he's been praying

*“Hey God, HOW in the world are you going to get Me OUT of  
this Prison, & make my circumstances better?”*

I believe Paul has remembered EVERY SINGLE DAY -  
that night in the Jerusalem Prison back in Acts 23:11

When Jesus Christ came & STOOD BY HIM - & told him

*“Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in  
Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.”*

I could easily see Paul Reviewing that Promise in his mind  
every single day - since that day

TAKE COURAGE - You are Going to ROME

& it IS going to take Courage - - But Paul IS going to GET There  
Because THAT is where God called him

& it seems to me - that RIGHT HERE - Paul sees God  
OPEN THAT DOOR - & he confidently Steps Right Thru it

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Again - Festus asks Paul if he wants to go back to Jerusalem  
to stand trial there (again) . . .

& in Vs's 10 & 11 - We see Paul take this Opportunity  
to JOIN GOD - Where God is WORKING

Acts 25:10-11 (esv) → →

**Acts 25:10-11 (esv)**

***10 But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well.***

***11 If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.”***

& **you KNOW** - at that moment - The **Full Orchestra** plays . . .  
***Bump Bump Bummmmm***

& then - **SILENCE** . . .

**Paul** said it . . . ***I APPEAL TO CAESAR !!***

It was **the right** of every **Roman Citizen** - if they ever **felt**  
they were **NOT getting Justice** from a Lower Roman **Court**

They **could say** those Fateful words . . . ***I APPEAL TO CAESAR !!***

**BUT** - **once** they said it - There was **NO Turning Back**  
the **machine** went into motion - & they were **on their way** to **ROME**

& it **wasn’t** like - Get **out on Bail**

& **hang around** until your **Appeal** is heard in **ROME**

This means you **REMAIN a Prisoner**

Until **CAESARS** Court in Rome - **hears** your case  
***which could be many, many years***

This was a **HUGE statement** for Paul to **make**

**Because it meant** he’d be **Traveling to Rome**

& **Remaining** for quite some time - **AS A PRISONER**

**ALL based on False Charges**  
with **NO GUILT** whatsoever on **Paul's** Part

Paul **RESIGNS** himself Right here  
to be a **PRISONER** for the **LORD**  
(*wrongly accused & wrongly charged*)

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**PLUS** - this creates Problems for **FESTUS** - the New GOV

**1st)** This **looks** to Rome - like his court **couldn't handle** the case

**2nd)** Festus **KNEW** - Paul was **CLEARLY INNOCENT** !!

**But . . .** The **Appeal** had been made  
& now - **Festus** felt like his **hands** were tied

**& so we read in Acts 25:12 (esv)**

***12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, "To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go."***

The **GOV** gathers up his **legal council** - & I'm sure says  
***"What in the world are we going to do now?"***

But it was **Too Late** - **Festus** was **caught** in the **middle** -  
**On one hand** - The **Jews** were right there, watching

& he **didn't** want to just **SET PAUL FREE**  
because that would **COST HIM** Politically with them

But **on the Other Hand** - He knew **Paul** was **Innocent**

& **He knew** he'd have to **come up** with some **STORY**  
for **sending Paul** to Caesar

& so - **faced** with a **No-Win situation** - Festus Answers;  
“***To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.***”

& Now - **Paul's Journey** to Rome - is **SET**  
But it is **Definitely NOT** how Paul would've **Planned** it

But **God** had **Ordained it**  
& **Jesus** had **told Paul** that **ROME** is where he was going

& **Paul** had been looking for That **OPEN DOOR**  
for **Two years** in Prison

& **Now** - Suddenly - **A New Gov** - a **New Trial** - & **BAAM**

**Paul's** gonna be **Delivered to ROME**  
***Courtesy of the Roman Legal System***

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**SO** - **WHAT DO WE LEARN** from this **change of Events**  
that Really **OPENED THE DOOR** for Paul to be sent to **ROME**

**1st)** We've got to see that **Paul's Accusers** - play almost **NO ROLE**  
**Except** to get Paul to a **place** where he can **Appeal to Caesar**

& **more importantly** - Paul pays very **little attention**,  
& spends very **little time** - on their **accusations**

He **knows** there's a **Bigger Picture**  
He **knows** there's a **Greater Plan**

& Paul is **confident** that somehow  
these guys - are **PART** of God's plan

**HOW ABOUT US ??**

Do we look at Difficult Circumstances - & False Accusations  
as part of God's overall Plan for US ??

I can tell you for many years I DID NOT

I thought every difficulty & every difficult person  
were all somehow IN THE WAY of God's Plan

But NOT SO MUCH anymore for me (*& it's taken a long time*)

These days (A little more) I'm trying to look for THE DOOR  
that God is OPENING in the midst of My Difficulties

I KNOW God Has a GOOD PLAN & a GOOD PURPOSE  
I KNOW God is AT WORK in the midst of My Difficulties

& so I'm trying harder to LOOK  
for THE DOOR that God might be OPENING

& I pray God would SHOW me JUST the Door  
NOT the Entire Plan - - NOT His Entire Purpose . . .

God, just don't let me miss the door

Lord, please OPEN my Spiritual Eyes that I would SEE, & KNOW  
when to STEP THRU the Door you are Opening

& please give me the Strength, The Confidence, & The Peace

to WAIT, & to WATCH, & to be READY to JOIN YOU,  
when you OPEN THAT DOOR

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There are plenty of other HEROES in the Bible  
that have SEEN God OPEN a DOOR - & have JOINED him

God Opened a Door for Abraham  
to leave his homeland - & journey into the unknown

Abraham JOINED GOD & became the Father of God's People

God Opened a Door for Moses - at a Burning Bush  
& Moses JOINED GOD in Delivering his people

God Opened A Door for a Shepherd boy named David  
& David JOINED GOD - & slew Goliath

God Opened so many doors - for so many of the Heroes of the Bible  
Joseph - Daniel - Nehemiah - Isaiah - & on & on

& then in the NT - Mary - Joseph - & The Disciples

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### All thru the Bible

God's people have found themselves in Difficult Circumstances -  
God was AT WORK in those circumstances . . .

& when God Opened a Door for them to JOIN Him  
they had the Eyes to See - & the Ears to Hear . . .

& they had the Faith to Respond  
& God CARRIED them - Right to place He Had for them

& you & I - Can do the SAME THING !!

God is AT WORK in your Circumstances  
& He will OPEN a DOOR for you to JOIN HIM in what HE'S Doing

We just need - Eyes to See - & Ears to Hear  
So we'll Know WHEN to Step Thru that OPEN DOOR