

Monday, June 1, 2026

The Holy Spirit as Keeper

Acts 22:27-28

As you enter your time with God today, take a moment to quiet your mind. Breathe this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus, come. Fill me with your Spirit. Open my heart that you might share your words of life with me."

We read today from Acts 22:27-28. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What does this passage teach us about the Holy Spirit as Keeper?

If you have ever read the book by Louis Sachar or seen the movie production with Shia LaBeouf of the story "Holes", you've thought a little bit about "coincidences". Sachar strings together a series of crazy events that center around Stanley Yelnats, a character who believes himself the unluckiest person in the world. Stanley ends up incarcerated for stealing a pair of valuable shoes, a crime which he did not commit. His punishment is to work at a juvenile work camp on a dry lake where the corrupt and power-hungry warden and leadership of the workcamp force the inmates to dig holes six feet deep and six feet wide in the lakebed in a valley where it has not rained for decades.

It's an easy and whimsical read where through strange circumstances, Stanley and another inmate, Zero, escape and find themselves on a mountain called "God's Thumb" where a pristine mountain spring gives water to grow sweet onions that sustain both the boys while they plan what to do next.

Here's where all the 'coincidences' come in. Stanley and Zero decide to return to camp because Stanley found something in one of the holes that he wants to investigate further. They return and find a locked satchel from decades before, but it has Stanley's name on it! The warden and guards find them but do not want to approach the convicts because the boys are surrounded by lizards that carry a fatal bite. The lizards do not bite the boys because they are repelled by the scent of sweet onions, the only diet the boys have eaten for several days. State authorities arrive just in time for the boys to be rescued, Stanley and Zero to be freed, the satchel provides untold wealth for the families of both boys and Zero even finds his long-lost mother.

It turns out that the interaction between the boys redeemed a century-old curse between the two families that when redeemed, made Stanley the luckiest boy in the world. Coincidence after coincidence and suddenly two families with convicted sons have a hope and a future that they could not have even imagined.

Sachar certainly creates a captivating and satisfying tale that stirs the senses where the world works to make things right.

But this is not just some Pollyanna dream that comes to us in Disney movies. Amazing 'coincidences' have always been a part of God's plan of redemption.

*"The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" "Yes I am," he answered. Then the commander said, "I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship." "But I was born a citizen," Paul replied.*

This is another one of those texts that if we move too fast, we miss how God has fulfilled his promise of “knitting all things together for our good.”

Paul is caught up in the religious landscape of Jerusalem. He has returned to Jerusalem a changed man from his missionary journeys. He is zealous to share the gospel and not afraid to confront the crowds that at times have sought to shout him down. After an altercation outside the temple, a Centurion takes him to the barracks to quell the almost riot outside. He prepares to flog Paul to acquiesce to the will of the violent crowds to appease them. He has Paul stretched out and is ready to start beating him when Paul addresses him directly.

“Hey Mr.? Yeah, you in charge. Is this what you do to citizens of Rome even before a judge has pronounced a sentence?”

We cannot quite understand the position the centurion is now in. He’s about to beat a man who can end his career. Now he must extricate himself from this situation. This is a political hot potato.

Which is exactly how the Spirit intended it. God could have chosen anyone to carry Paul’s mantle of leadership in the early church, but he specifically chose Paul.

Paul was a God-fearing Jew (coincidence). He was raised knowing the Law inside and out (coincidence). He was born to Roman citizen parents (coincidence). He had been a teacher to Jews for years, but God shifted his focus towards the Gentiles (coincidence). This altercation sets him up to eventually end up in Rome where he will plead his case before Caesar and along the way, he will share the gospel with every ruler, politico, military leader, and shipmate along the way so fulfilling the prophecy that Christ spoke over him on the road to Damascus (coincidence?)

That’s how the Spirit works. God fulfills his promise to be with us always, but his presence is not passive. God is actively at work to redeem and transform us and our world through every little detail of our lives. It is at work in the day to day, week to week activities of life. His will is also at work in where we’re born, when we’re born, who we are born to, and every little detail of our existence.

The Spirit is our Keeper. We see that in the life of Paul as he begins this last missionary journey to Rome. We see it in our lives too when we look for the ways that God has worked all the ‘coincidences’ out for his glory.

*May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.*

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

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