

The Acts of the Apostles, Part 50:
Righteousness, Fairness, & Perseverance

Key Scripture: Acts 22:22 - Acts 23:5

Acts 22:22-30

Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live." 23 And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, 24 the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this. 25 But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?" 26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen." 27 So the tribune came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" And he said, "Yes." 28 The tribune answered, "I bought this citizenship for a large sum." Paul said, "But I am a citizen by birth." 29 So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.

30 But on the next day, desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.

Acts 23:1-5

And looking intently at the council, Paul said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day." 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?" 4 Those who stood by said, "Would you revile God's high priest?" 5 And Paul said, "I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

❖ Context

- Paul's Situation

❖ Trouble in the Text - Two points of tension

- First, Paul's "examination"
- Second, Paul is physically assaulted while being questioned by the Jewish Council

❖ Main Trouble

- Paul is behaving **righteously**, yet he is not being treated **fairly**.

❖ Trouble in the World

- Righteousness verses Fairness and Justice in the World today

❖ Justice System

- The purpose of the system is to ensure the **innocent are protected** and the **guilty are punished**

- However

- Sometimes the innocent are convicted
 - And
- Sometimes the guilty are set free

❖ Grace in the Text: Acts 23:6-11

- “Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.” And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ party stood up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?” And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks. The following night 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.””

❖ Grace in the World

- Thank God that He has provided us a framework for justice
 - Just because sinful men and women abuse the system does not make the system *broken*.
 - It simply means people are *broken*.
 - And Jesus has provided us with **salvation** through Him!

❖ Application

- John 15:18, “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.”
 - John 16:33, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world!”
- Endure and persevere in the tribulations of the world.
 - Continue to share the Gospel with the lost, deceived, and broken people of the world.
 - Jesus died to *save us*!
 - Praise God!