

ARRESTED

ACTS 21-25

ARRESTED, PART 3: CAN'T TELL ENEMIES FROM FRIENDS

Have you ever asked - "Why is this happening to me?", "How could they do this to me?", "I can't believe the lies that are being told about me?" If you live your life as a fully devoted follower of Christ, it can almost be guaranteed that you will utter one of those statements in your lifetime.

BIG IDEA: Don't let what's going on around you destroy the faith inside of you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's the funniest put down/diss/smack talk you've heard recently? What made it so funny? Was the target of the "burn a friend or enemy?"
2. With your Bible or Bible App, read Acts 23:1-11 -

Gazing intently at the high council, Paul began: "Brothers, I have always lived before God with a clear conscience!" Instantly Ananias the high priest commanded those close to Paul to slap him on the mouth. 3 But Paul said to him, "God will slap you, you corrupt hypocrite! What kind of judge are you to break the law yourself by ordering me struck like that?" Those standing near Paul said to him, "Do you dare to insult God's high priest?" "I'm sorry, brothers. I didn't realize he was the high priest," Paul replied, "for the Scriptures say, 'You must not speak evil of any of your rulers.'" Paul realized that some members of the high council were Sadducees and some were Pharisees, so he shouted, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, as were my ancestors! And I am on trial because my hope is in the resurrection of the dead!" This divided the council—the Pharisees against the Sadducees—for the Sadducees say there is no resurrection or angels or spirits, but the Pharisees believe in all of these. So there was a great uproar. Some of the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees jumped up and began to argue forcefully. "We see nothing wrong with him," they shouted. "Perhaps a spirit or an angel spoke to him." As the conflict grew more violent, the commander was afraid they would tear Paul apart. So he ordered his soldiers to go and rescue him by force and take him back to the fortress. That night the Lord appeared to Paul and said, "Be encouraged, Paul. Just as you have been a witness to me here in Jerusalem, you must preach the Good News in Rome as well."

Acts 23:1-11 (NLT)

3. What sparks this exchange of insults? Paul used to be part of the religious leaders. Why were they now acting like his enemies?
4. With your Bible or Bible App, read Acts 23:12-35.
5. Why were the Roman officials on Paul's side? How did God use this situation to further His plan for Paul?
6. Carlo taught us three things to remember: Friends can become enemies, enemies can become friends, and God is in control. Have you ever experienced the first two? What happened? How did you respond? How should we react when this happens?
7. What can we do to trust this even when our situations are confusing? Are you currently in confusing circumstances? How might God be using them to further His plans?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Just because you are facing opposition does not mean that you are losing. The presence of enemies does not mean that you are stuck. What do you feel God is asking you to do in response to this message this week? What's your next step? Commit this week to love anyway, not lose hope, and stay close to Jesus.

