

Grace: Moment by Moment

Acts 23

June 9, 2019

Let's talk about your life. My life just might go in a while

I'm not proud of it, but it's true

Life as moments vs. a narrative

I'm a dramatic person with a vivid imagination.

Movie is our expectation, but how many of us really live life like a movie?

→ If we are honest, we live a life composed of normal moments.

• Our Acts narrative may seem at this point like it's full of narrative, but these are moments where we can see the grace of God.

① Spiritual maturity is marked by how much we allow and see a big God in everyday moments.

No matter how hard,

Your life is filled with moments of abundant grace.

Seeing them as a gift of God will produce worship + gratitude in your life

②

Grace → Promises → Trust → Power of Grace → Obedience → Word → Living → Glory

→ In this account we see three elements of God's grace

① God's grace makes us different

② God's grace gives us courage

③ God's grace works in our details

God's grace makes us different

Acts 22:30-23:5 – 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. And looking intently at the council, Paul said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day." And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. 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?" Those who stood by said, "Would you revile God's high priest?" 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.'"

- ⑤ Paul Before Council
- Paul: lived w/ good conscience
- not perfect, but resting in grace & upholding Good
- But this... breaking point - hypocrisy too much
- Ananias = bad, greedy
- Mocking Paul

- ① CORRUPTION, BUT PAUL REMAINS HUMBLE
- MOMENTS LIKE THIS REVEAL THEIR HEARTS TOWARDS THEM
- THE DANGER OF HYPOCRISY

- ② PAUL: RIGHTEOUS ABOVE, BUT HUMBLE IN SIN ABOVE VS. RIGHTEOUS ABOVE TEAR DOWN/BUILD UP
- GRACE IN THIS MOMENT TO CHANGE COMPOSE

Acts 23:6-10 – 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.

- ⑤ Text is clear, but we don't know Paul's motives
- Council arguing about all sorts of things now - UNTAMED PASSIONS
- Paul taken away again

①

- ② WHETHER PUNISHED OR NOT, PAUL LIVES TO SEE ANOTHER DAY

EVEN WHEN LIFE HINGING ON PAUL'S DECISION

- GRACE IN THIS MOMENT TO DISTRACT HIS DETRACTORS

2 Corinthians 6:1-10 – Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

Paul did lose his temper, sure.

But it's amazing he didn't do more

Even in the most trying of circumstances, Paul remained humble to and

received the grace of God

His trust in God's promise & presence bolstered him against all obstacles

↳ "working together with him", the grace is not received in vain

Put no obstacles in anyone's way that God may be glorified

God's grace gives us courage

Acts 23:11 – 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.”

① I AM NERVOUS

LOVE

(w/ grace)

② BE ENCOURAGED

COURAGE

(fear)

③ I AM NOT DONE WITH YOU.

LOVE

(despair)

Philippians 1:18b-21 – Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

① GOD IS NERVOUS → GRACE OFFERED
→ SPIRIT DWELLING



② FULL COURAGE → HELD UP BY PRAYERS & PRESENCE



③ HONORED IN BODY → WITH THIS GRACE-FILLED FEEL, GOD WILL BE HONORED IN MY
body, my moments

God's grace works in the details

Acts 23:12-15 – When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near.”

we know your "brood" we are shepherd of your people

THIS IS WHY WE ARE D MORE THAN RELIGION.

- THESE WERE MEN WHO KNEW A LOT ABOUT GOD, BUT THEIR HEARTS WERE FULL FROM HIM
- MURDER!

EXPLAIN

Acts 23:16-22 – Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him.” So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, “Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you.” The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, “What is it that you have to tell me?” And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him. But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent.” So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, “Tell no one that you have informed me of these things.”

① Paul still protective, even in confidence

② Some how Phileas help in his words
→ Phileas

Acts 23:23-30 – Then he called two of the centurions and said, “Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night. Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor.” And he wrote a letter to this effect: “Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him.”

Paul's protection made official in government terms

Acts 23:31-35 – So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him. When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, he said, "I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive." And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.

IN SPIRIT OF IMPRISONMENT, IN SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP

GOD'S HAND IS WORKING

CONTEXT: PERSECUTION, DRAGGED BEFORE COURTS, SERVANT NOT ABOVE MASTERS

Matthew 10:28-33 – And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

DICHOTOMY OF GOD'S LOVE

Too much self = "How can God make MY life better?"

BUT, if we talk only in generalities, we miss out on the revelation he promises.

Don't gloss over this

God doesn't care about you generally → "Oh yeah, I've heard of him"

if you are his, and he is yours.

He knows the number of hairs on your head. Do you know?

He knows your thoughts, your dreams, your insecurities

He knows ...

And here the crazy part... he still loves us! still

Grace is not a spare part that makes life easier

but it is powerful, it is real, and our Father is forcing us to avail ourselves to more of him - or more of his grace.

SET TABLE