

Acts 23:11-35 “The Power of the Spirit to Protect for Mission”

Intro. How would lives be different if people sensed that God was calling them to take action for Him, and they knew that God would protect them as they lived on mission?

How would *your* life be different?

Subject: Jesus assures Paul of his mission & protection

Object: Live on mission for Jesus [To live on mission means: knowing Christ and seeking to make Him known; & loving God and living His word].

Context: Paul rescued by Roman authorities from hostile Jewish mob, and kept in custody at the Roman fortress adjacent to the temple in less than ideal circumstances.

A. Christ's promise [11]

1. Christ's comfort: But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul: Paul did not have to wait long to be encouraged by Jesus

a. Despite the prophetic warnings that he would suffer at Jerusalem, Paul was likely discouraged, dejected, and disappointed. He had come to Jerusalem to present financial gift from the Gentile churches & hoped to establish love and unity between Jews and Gentiles, but instead he was violently opposed. Probably felt ineffective.

b. Christ stood by: not alone [Matt.28:29-30, Ac.18 vision at Corinth don't be afraid,

c. be of good cheer: be strengthened, comforted, words of hope, no greater comfort than hearing words of encouragement from Jesus.

i. **Josh.1** 4x be of good courage

ii. **Mt.14:27 Be of good cheer! It is I do not be afraid.**

iii. **Jn.,16:33** These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

?. What are some promises in God's word that provide comfort for you?

? how do you hear from God?

2. Christ's commission: for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome: Paul will be used to represent Christ in Rome as he had in Jerusalem. Paul was commended for his witness for Christ in Jerusalem God wasn't upset with Paul. Assurance that he need not fear death in Jerusalem for he would go to Rome. Paul will share the gospel in Rome.

a. the promised mission assures promised protection until the mission is completed

i. **Ac.12** re Peter sleeping despite death threat, because Jesus told Peter he would live to be an old man & he wasn't an old man yet (Jn.21:18)

? What are some actions/missions that you sense God has called you to do?

B. The enemy's plot [12-22]

a. **A plan to stop the gospel [12-15]** Silence the messenger and stop the message.

12And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. **13**Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy.**14**They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, “We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. **15**Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near.

- i. More than 40 men conspire to ambush and kill Paul. They want the chief priest & council to ask for Paul to be sent for further questioning & they will ambush & kill him
- ii. God’s encouragement today is likely preparation for tomorrow

b. The plan to stop the gospel is revealed [16-22]

16So when Paul’s sister’s son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. **17**Then Paul called one of the centurions to *him* and said, “Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him.” **18**So he took him and brought *him* to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner called me to *him* and asked *me* to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you.”**19**Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, “What is it that you have to tell me?”**20**And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. **21**But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you.”**22**So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded *him*, “Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me:

- i. Paul’s nephew learns of the plot and warns Paul and the commander
- ii. God working supernaturally in a natural way
- iii. **Esther 4:13-14:** plot to destroy the Jews revealed, Mordecai honored, her fear
?What are some ways that your culture is trying to silence the message of the gospel?
** enemy of men’s souls plot to silence the gospel [cf. behind a liberal media opposed to the gospel, culture opposed to Christ, pluralism, relativism, political correctness, radical Islam, Anti-Semitism,etc.]

C. Christ’s protection [23-35]

23And he called for two centurions, saying, “Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night;**24**and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring *him* safely to Felix the governor.” **25**He wrote a letter in the following manner:**26**Claudius Lysias, To the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings. **27**This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman.**28**And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. **29**I found out

that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains. 30And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him. Farewell. 31Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought *him* by night to Antipatris. 32The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks. 33When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. 34And when the governor had read *it*, he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that *he was* from Cilicia, 35he said, “I will hear you when your accusers also have come.” And he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s Praetorium.

i. Paul escapes to Caesarea with a military escort of 470 Roman soldiers, and a letter referring the case to Governor Felix [Claudius omits the part about binding Paul & almost beating him]. Once they were beyond Antipatris the foot soldiers return to Jerusalem [23-33]

ii. Paul will remain in palace dungeon for five days waiting his trial before Felix 34-35

Conc. How would lives be different if people sensed that God was calling them to take action for Him, and they knew that God would protect them as they lived on mission?

How would *your* life be different? Let’s live on mission for Jesus!

Discussion Qs:

1. What are some promises in God’s word that provide comfort for you?
2. What are some actions/missions that you sense God has called you to do?
3. What are some ways that your culture is trying to silence the message of the gospel?
4. How should *knowing* that Christ would protect a believer impact their willingness to live on mission for Jesus?