

# BOOK OF ACTS // WEEK 32

*Mike Drummond - 5/12/24*

## GROWING TOGETHER

- How have Mother's Day celebrations changed for you throughout the years?
- How did your mother enjoy spending Mother's Day?
- How do you hope to celebrate Mother's Day when it's your turn to be a mom?

## GROWING WITH GOD

Read [Acts 22:21-30](#), [Acts 23: 1-11](#), [Matthew 23:27](#) & [1 Peter 2:23](#) aloud and go over your sermon notes with one another. (Answer all or some of the questions)

This week's BIG Idea: Believers should maintain courage, authenticity, and confidence in God's plan, even amidst trials and opposition, continuing to testify about Jesus faithfully.

When Paul was speaking to the crowd and the Roman soldiers, he declared "Then the Lord said to me, "Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles." (Acts 22:21) In today's terms, Gentiles could be considered non-believers, people who have never heard of Jesus Christ, and everyone in between.

- **In what ways do you think Paul's message about being sent to the Gentiles might challenge our own attitudes or biases towards certain groups of people today?**
- **How can we ensure that we're reflecting God's love for all people in our own lives and communities, even when it challenges our preconceived notions or cultural norms?**

Acts 22:29 tells us that the Roman Commander was alarmed and immediately withdrew when he realized he had chained a Roman citizen. It was against the law to chain and shackle a Roman citizen without a trial and a judgment of guilt.

- **We see the Roman Commander's reaction when he realizes he has wrongly treated a Roman citizen. This raises a thought-provoking question: Do we sometimes rush to judge our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ without understanding their full story, just as the Roman Commander acted before knowing Paul's full identity?**
- **Why do we sometimes do that?**
- **How can we cultivate a culture of grace and understanding within our community, ensuring that we don't rush to judgment but instead approach one another with compassion and a desire to understand each other's stories?**

Our conscience is what we're all born with as part of being created in the image of God. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is received by Believers at the moment of salvation. Paul believed he was listening and acting on behalf of his conscience when he was acting in the capacity of a Pharisee. When he came to Christ, he acted by listening and obeying the Holy Spirit.

- **Can you share an experience where you felt torn between what your conscience dictated and what you believed the Holy Spirit was leading you to do?"**
- **If you did everything according to the Holy Spirit's leading, which areas of your life might look different?**

Reflecting on Paul's reaction to being struck by the high priest, we're reminded of the transparency of the Bible. It doesn't gloss over the flaws of even its most revered figures. Just as David's sins and Peter's mistakes are made evident to us, so too is Paul's outburst. Paul's response doesn't follow the example set by Jesus (1 Peter 2:23), who endured insults without retaliation. In a fallen world, there will always be moments of conflict or mistreatment towards us by others and towards others by us.

- **Are there times when you struggle to respond with grace, and if so, how do you seek to align your reactions with the teachings of Jesus?**
- **Talk about a time when your response was not in line with Jesus' example and you wish you could take back or do over if given the chance.**

We read in Acts 23:5 how Paul insults Ananias the High Priest while not realizing the position he held. There are several theories as to why Paul couldn't recognize the position and authority he was holding but one strong possibility is because Ananias didn't conduct himself accordingly.

- **Would it bother you if someone was surprised to find out you're Christian because they didn't see it in your actions?**
- **Do you think your behavior shows others that you're a Christian?**
- **How can we make sure that our actions always show our Christian beliefs?**

Picture Paul, battered and bruised, thrown back into his cell after facing rejection and violence. As he sits there, chained up and alone, his mind must be filled with doubts and questions. He had come to Jerusalem with a burning desire to testify about Jesus, only to face hostility and opposition. Now, in the midst of his darkest moment, he wonders if he's failed, if he's where God wants him to be, and if his ministry is over. But then, something incredible happens as written in Acts 23:11; The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, **"Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."**

- **Have you ever experienced a moment of doubt or despair like Paul did, where everything seemed to be going wrong and you questioned if you were doing the right thing?**
- **How do you think Paul felt when he received the message from the Lord to take courage and continue testifying about Jesus, even after facing rejection in Jerusalem?**
- **What does it mean to you personally that the Lord stood near Paul in his darkest moment? How does this demonstrate the faithfulness of Jesus in our own lives?**
- **In times of doubt or struggle, how can we remind ourselves of Jesus' presence with us, just as he was with Paul?**

# GROWING IN OBEDIENCE & SCRIPTURE

Here are insights Pastor Mike gave us to reflect on.

1. Wherever you are at, God has a plan.
2. He is working all things for the good of those who love Him.
3. We can trust in Him.

How do we hear from God like Paul did? Draw near to Him and He will draw near to you.

**1. Reflection and Prayer:** Take some time to reflect on moments in your life where you've faced doubt or despair. Consider how you responded and whether you leaned on your faith during those times. Then, spend time in prayer, asking God for strength and courage to trust in His faithfulness, even in the midst of uncertainty.

- Life Group Leaders - Follow up with individual members throughout the week to offer additional support and prayer if needed.

**2. Encouragement and Support:** Reach out to someone in your community who may be going through a challenging time. Offer them words of encouragement and support, letting them know that they are not alone. Share with them the message of Jesus' faithfulness and His presence with us, even in our darkest moments.

- Life Group Leaders - Organize opportunities for group members to gather for social activities or service projects, strengthening bonds of friendship and support.

**3. Living Out Faith:** Make a conscious effort to live out your faith in your daily life, even when circumstances are difficult. Let your actions and attitudes reflect the hope and assurance you have in Jesus, knowing that He is always near, even in the midst of trials. Seek opportunities to testify about Jesus to others, just as Paul was called to do, trusting that God is at work in every situation.

- Life Group Leaders - Offer practical suggestions and examples of how group members can integrate their faith into their daily lives, such as through intentional acts of kindness, prayer, or sharing their faith with others.

# GROWING IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP

This week's song list if you'd like to worship with your group.

- [Shout to the Lord - Hillsong Worship](#)
- [Worthy of it All/What A Beautiful Name - ORU Worship](#)
- [The Blessing - Kari Jobe & Cody Carnes](#)

# GROWING WITH CATALYST PEOPLE

Be sure to follow Catalyst Church on all the major social media platforms for the latest information and words of encouragement.



