

Acts 21:15-22:29 Becoming All Things to All Men

A friend of mine has this saying painted on a wall in his Church: We will do anything short of sin to reach people for Christ!

A) I think the apostle Paul would have agreed whole heartedly with that statement -

B) Because he said this in 1 Corinthians 9

V.22 I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some

²⁰ When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law.

²¹ When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ.

The Law of Christ: Love God with all heart..... strength and love your neighbor as yourself.

²² When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. **Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone,** doing everything I can to save some. 1 Corinthians 9:20-22 NLT

C) We will see Paul exemplify that mindset in the text before us today. All things to all men ... Some

We have before us today a Huge passage 65 verses

A) One very long narrative that takes place over a couple of days

B) When I thought about the best way to approach this part of Paul's story -

1) I thought - **Netflix series** - chop into tiny episodes - that leaves you hanging every week

C) Or a Movie - Big Chunks - still a Sequel or two I choose the Latter

1) Strap in - fast paced ride

Today is Part 1 - The Arrest -

A) We will gain from Paul's example about how to stand for Jesus / share Jesus in difficult times

B) 4 things We will learn from Paul's example today:

- **How to combat rumors with love, grace, and understanding**
- **The power and importance of sharing your own story with Jesus**
- **How everything hinges on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead**
- **There are times when the right thing to do is to stand for our rights**

C) We have seen in our previous studies that Paul has been eagerly trying to make it to Jerusalem by the feast of Pentecost

Paul was eager to get to Jerusalem because he wanted to preach Jesus to the Jews,

A) And the population swelled during Pentecost

B) Normal Population of Jerusalem 60-80K

1) But The feast of Passover / Pentecost - Tabernacles - 3 required feast The population would swell to 900K

We pick up the story in V.15 where we see that Paul finally arrives

A) Traveling with 12-15 guys many of them gentiles picked on the journey

B) Many of these guys have never been to Jerusalem - 1) the Being Gentiles - no reason to visit Israel or Jerusalem

C) Now they were going to the place - where all the stories of Jesus they had been hearing about - 1) see firsthand - Israel trip - no doubt excited.

15 And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. 16 Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge. 17 And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren **received us gladly.**

European Conferences - Amazing the brotherhood -

18 On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. **Meet with James the brother of Jesus - the head of the church WOW!!!** -

19 When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. **(GIVES A Testimony of what God was doing among the gentiles)** 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord.

D)We could wish the chapter would have ended right there -

1)with everyone rejoicing over what God did among the gentiles - **Unfortunately it doesn't -**

And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads **(1,000's)** of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law;

A)The first part of that statement was music to Paul's ears -

B)there were 1,000's of his countrymen who had come to faith in Christ

C)But the 2nd part about them being zealous for the law was probably a little concerning -

D)See although there were many Jews who came to faith in Jesus

1)Many of them were still clinging to their Jewish ROOTS - continuing to live under the law of Moses.

E)One commentator I read put it this way - They were saved by believing in Jesus

1)but they believed **they were kept** by following the law of Moses -ceremonial - rituals, washings, etc.

And these law minded Jewish believers were not sure what to do with Paul.

A)Paul is going to discover there were rumors being spread about him amongst the believers in Jerusalem.

21 but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. **Rumors- not true**

B)Rumors are like a fire once they get started they are hard to put out and can grow to be out of control.

A woman living in a small village in a Middle Eastern country heard a bit of gossip one day about a neighbor of hers. Well she repeated the gossip to a few other people in the village and within a short time the whole village knew the story.

The slandered person was deeply hurt and most unhappy. But then the lady responsible for spreading the rumor learned that it was completely untrue, so she went to a wise old sage to find out what she could do to repair the damage.

After listening to her problem, he said, "Go to the marketplace, purchase a fowl, and have it killed. Then on your way home pluck its feathers one by one and drop them along the path!" **Though surprised by this unusual advice, the woman did as she was told.**

The next day she informed the old sage that she had done as instructed. Then the sage instructed her **"Now go and collect all those feathers and bring them back to me**

The lady followed the same path, but to her dismay the wind had blown all the feathers away. After searching all day long, she returned with only three feathers in hand.

"That is when the old wise sage, said: **"it is easy to drop them, but impossible to bring them all back.**

Then he said this: So too it does not take much to spread a false rumor, **but you can never completely undo the wrong."**

So true that is the nature of a Rumor.

So these rumors are flying around about Paul -

A)The leaders have a solution as to what Paul should do:

22 What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. 23 Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow.

B)Most likely A Nazarite vow which was a vow of consecration to the Lord

1)where one would abstain from certain foods, from wine and you wouldn't cut your hair for a period of time -

2)in order to draw near to God.

C)We saw back in Acts 18 - Paul had taken a similar Vow

24 Take them and be purified with them, and **pay their expenses** so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.

25 But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”

Paul if you want to be accepted by these Jewish leaders and your Jewish brethren -

A)Show them that you haven't completely forsaken your Jewish roots

B)Now there was nothing wrong with what they were asking of Paul -

1)and we saw a few chapters back where Paul had personally went through a similar vow of consecration

C)So there was nothing wrong with what they were asking - but at the same time it wasn't necessary

D)What is Paul going to do? What would you do?

We Learn from Paul how to combat rumors with Love, grace and understanding

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.

Note: Paul could have stood his ground -

A)He could have said God knows my heart -

B)God knows I am not teaching the Jews to forsake anything

C)And Paul also knew full well the freedom that we have in Jesus

1)There is no need to get caught up in unnecessary rituals

Paul would write these words to the church in Colossae - ¹⁶ So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Colossians 2:16

A)Paul clearly understood that all the rituals in the law of Moses were merely shadows pointing to Jesus 1) Jesus is **THE REAL DEAL**

B)Many of the Jewish Christians were still living in the shadows

C)So Paul could have resisted their request and boldly flaunted his freedom in Christ

1)But out of love He chooses to go along with this request

D)Paul would write in the book of 1 Corinthians

That the key to using your liberty in Christ properly is to show love toward others

A)Showing love means I am NOT going to do something that I know is ok for me to do -

B)if it might stumble or offend my bro or sister in Jesus

C)Paul went so far as to say: I would rather forfeit my liberty that cause another Christian to stumble.

D)So we see that Paul responded to these rumors with love, grace and understanding

1)He didn't compromise his faith - but he was willing to bend in an area that didn't matter one way or another

E)If it meant winning the hearts of his fellow Jewish brothers and sisters

Let's take this into our context.

A)We live in an age where there are many Rumors swirling out there about Christians.

B)Rumors and accusations like that we hate people living LGBTQ lifestyle

1)or we hate people that have had abortions or who work in an abortion clinic

C) Now those rumors might be true of some Christians -

1) but definitely not true of all - not true of Jesus

D) Been rightfully said - that Jesus has been the victim of a lot of bad PR

1) Most of it has come from his friends.

So how do we combat those rumors?

A) Let me state it another way - How do we show love and grace and understanding -

B) And still stand for what is true.

C) Comes down to this: Standing for the Biblical Principle of truth -

1) And at the same time - still loving a person who is lost and confused.

Here is one way we seek to do that here at CV

A) Come out to one of our Love life prayer walks on a Saturday

B) The team goes out and stands in front of Planned Parenthood and pray

C) They offer people going into that place to get information about an abortion - another alternative

D) There is NO yelling - no crazy signs of protest or hate speech

E) Just the truth - that is a baby living inside of you - that God loves and he loves you. Plan for you.

If the thought of having a baby is overwhelming to you -

A) WE have a team of people that will walk with you through the whole process

B) They will even help find a loving family that is willing to adopt that baby after you have it.

C) Our Church is a Love life house of refuge - simply means -

1) if someone in our community ends up with pregnant out of wedlock - surprise pregnancy

D) We are here to help them and that baby - no judgment - Show love - support

1) We want them to MEET JESUS

E) We can counteract the rumors that Christians hate people who are thinking about having an abortion

1) By loving on them in that way.

Here is another idea: If you know a person living a LGBTQ lifestyle - have them over for dinner?

A) Take them to lunch - Ask them their story - be willing to get to know them -

B) Jesus did that - that is why he was called the friend of sinners / of prostitutes - openly sexually immoral

1) Friend of tax collectors - thugs and embezzlers

C) He sat with people - he ate with people - drawn to him

Let that sink in - Jesus was considered the friend of the people -

A) That most of the amoral people in his society and those in the religious community despised

B) Somehow those people that others despised - felt comfortable being around Jesus.

C) Question: Who would make up the sinners - the prostitutes - tax collectors in our context?

Sinners? Anyone and everyone living in rebellion against God - choosing not to walk with God.

A) Who would be the Prostitutes - those pursuing an openly sexually immoral life style ?

B) Those living in adultery - those engaging in sexual immorality outside of marriage

1) The neighbor living together - not married

C) Those pursuing the gay and lesbian lifestyle

What about the tax collectors?

A) Gang bangers - drunk dealers - gangsters

B) That is how tax collectors were view in that day and age.

C) Jesus was called the friend of all those types of people. - How Amazing is that

1) They were comfortable in his presence

Jesus said the #1 way that people in this world are going to know you are my disciples

A) That you belong to me and are with me - IS BY YOUR LOVE.

B) Not your great music - songs - not your Bible knowledge - your political persuasions

1) it is going to be seen in the way you love people - the way you love lost people.

C) We are living in the midst of a cultural war folks

We NEED TO STAND ON PRINCIPLES found in God's word

A) But we must learn the balance The fine line standing IN PRINCIPLE -

B) But at the same time still caring about people

C) We stand for principles at a School board meeting for instance -

1) to say that it violates the rights of our kids -

D) When a transgender person who is biologically a young man -

1) wants to use the same locker room as our daughters

E) Or when he wants to compete in the same sports as our girls - wrong not fair standing on principle

1) No confusion - God made them - male and female

I will Do that all day - and try to convey that principle as firmly but as lovingly as possible.

A) Not going to yell and raise my voice - but the Bible, human anatomy and science backs up that principle

B) But at the same time - if I had the opportunity to take that transgender student to lunch

1) and get to know them - I would totally do that.

C) Because that is what Jesus would do - Friend of Sinners - friend of those lost and confused.

D) They were comfortable around him - but he never ever compromised the principles of God's word.

E) I think we as his followers have to figure out how to do that as well in this current cultural moment

Church listen: if we are going to Combat the rumors that are being made against the church

A) And fulfill our mission as followers of Jesus to bring the gospel to a lost world

B) We have to figure out how to do this and being willing to break out of our comfort zones

C) So the first thing we learn from Paul is how to combat rumors

1) with conduct that is loving, gracious and understanding

Note this Paul does the right thing here

A) Showing love and grace and understanding to win the hearts of his fellow Jesus Brothers

B) And when you do the right thing - you expect the outcome to be good right?

C) Do you know that is not always the case.

1) You can do the right thing and experience a totally opposite outcome

D) That is what Paul is going to experience here

1) He goes with these guys to the temple

27 Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia **Unbelievers**, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." - **Not true** 29 (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

More rumors - this time from unbelievers - this is going to lead to Paul's arrest

A) But let me Remind you what we talked about last week -

B) Everything that is happening in Paul's life right now is taking him toward a goal - related to his calling

C) That Paul would one day share the gospel before Governors and Kings - and eventually Nero himself

1) Recall Acts 9 - testimony

D) Paul would be God's Chosen Vessel to share Jesus with the, It is the:

- 1) Jews - Yes
- 2) Gentiles - yes
- 3) Suffering - Yes
- 4) Kings and rulers - No

E) Paul doesn't know that is what God is doing - he is just in the moment trying to do his best to live for Jesus each day.

New Rumor - Paul is taking Gentiles into the temple. The Division of the temple courts

A) The outer court - That was as far as the Gentiles could go

B) Next was the court of the women - women go and pray

C) Then there was the inner court - Jewish men would take the sacrifice and give it to the priest to sacrifice

D) Now there was a sign that hung on the wall in the court of the Gentiles

1) That read: **Any Gentile that goes beyond this sign is responsible for his own death."**

Now the Romans respected the right of the Jews to stone to death

A) anybody who violated that rule by bringing Gentiles into the Jewish court.

B) The Jewish people believed that if a gentile came into the inner court of the temple -
1) they would profane it

C) They said that Gentiles were hated by God - worse than dogs
1) and were only serve as logs to fuel the fires of hell

By creating these rules and false ideas about God

A) The Jewish people were completely missing God's plan for them.

B) The reason God chose the Jews as his people was not because they were a superior race

C) It was the opposite - They were a small and insignificant group of people
1) that he would work through

D) His Purpose was to use the Jews to bring the rest of the world - to himself

E) Ultimately that would happen when he sent his Son Jesus born a Jew -

1) to rescue humanity from their sin

Our context - Imagine - The door of the courtyard - Unbelievers can't come in.

A) Or a sign on the front door. - You Can't come in until you are a follower of Jesus

B) Oh pastor Rob - that would be stupid - silly - we would never do something like that.

C) True: We wouldn't post a sign - but can we by our attitudes convey the same message.

D) If you are going to be a part of this church - you better fall in line on all our convictions -
1) socially and morally

E) Unless you believe the same way that we do politically you are not welcome here? - OUCH -
1) stepping on toes

The story is told of a time when Gandhi who was a practicing Hindu, was intrigued by Christianity.

A) In his reading of the Gospels, Gandhi was impressed by Jesus whom Christians worshiped and followed.

B) He wanted to know more about this Jesus that Christians referred to as "the Christ, the Messiah."

C) One Sunday morning Gandhi decided that he would visit one of the Christian churches in Calcutta.

Upon seeking entrance to the church sanctuary, he was stopped at the door by the ushers.

A) He was told he was not welcome, nor would he be permitted to attend this particular church

B) Because it was for high-caste Indians and whites only.

C) He was neither high caste, nor was he white.

Because of that rejection, Gandhi turned his back on Christianity.

A)He would later write these words: **“I’d be a Christian if it were not for the Christians.”** “

B)Unfortunately that is the sentiment of many people today - they have been turned off by Christians

1)Who have NOT reflected the heart of Christ at all - toward those who are outside the faith.

C)Matthew 11:28 Jesus said **Come to me all of you who are weary and heavy laden - and I will give you rest**

1)The heart of Jesus toward the broken and confused around us - come to me

D)The church is supposed to be a hospital for the broken - **not a waiting room for the healthy.**

E)Revelation 22 - The Spirit and the Bride - that is us - say Come - **but Actions speak louder than words**
Back to our story: So Paul was being accused of profaning the temple.

30 And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.

31 Now as they were seeking **to kill him,**
RELIGIOUS ZEAL news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. .
A no/no for a Roman commander - Rome was looking on and your job would be in jeopardy if they heard that you were allowing an outbreak to happen

32 He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, **they stopped beating Paul.** 33 Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. 34 And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another. **No clear answer - mobs - why here**

So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. 35 When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. 36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, “Away with him!”- **intense**

37 Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, “May I speak to you?”

He replied, **“Can you speak Greek? 38 Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?”**

Now there was a dude a few years before who came up from Egypt,

A)He was a renegade who had gathered a group of people together

B)He had gathered quite a following of zealots against Rome - living out in the wilderness

C)He and his renegade band were attacked and defeated by the Romans - but the leader had escaped

D)This Roman Commander thinks - Paul is that leader - he has come back to stir up the crowd again.

1)So then he said, **“Aren't you that Egyptian?”**

39 But Paul said, **“I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people.”**

Don’t you just love Paul - can I speak to these people that want to kill me?.

A)I have GOVT protection - and a captive audience

B)Paul is going to proceed to tell his testimony in Coming to Christ

40 So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, saying,- **captive audience beaten and bloodied**

The next thing we are going to learn from Paul is the power from sharing our story.

A)Lost people will be interested to hear your story

B)Whether you were saved out of the pit - or saved from it - like me

C)I know - I could have easily ended up a mess - certain turning points in my life

1)Jesus rescued me from.

Chapter 22

22 “Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now.” 2 And when they heard that he spoke to them in the **Hebrew language**, they kept all the more silent.

Power of a testimony - speaking their language - Romans can't understand him

Then he said: 3 “I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of **Gamaliel, The Chief rabbi - today Harvard education**

taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. 4 **I persecuted this Way to the death, {I had Christians killed}** binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, 5 as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.

They were in full agreement with this part of Paul's story - nodding their heads - a few Amens-preach

6 “Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. 7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ 8 So I answered, ‘**Who are You, Lord?**’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’

9 “And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. 10 So I said, ‘**What shall I do, Lord?**’

Pause in Paul's testimony for our next point - We learn from Paul that everything hinges on the Resurrection

A) Paul gets to this pivotal place in his story - where everything in his life changed -

B) It happened when he encountered a Risen Jesus

C) Suddenly he realized that the stories about Jesus was true -

1) **He had risen from the dead - he is the Messiah**

C) Upon encountering Jesus - Paul asked two pivotal questions - that would change the course of his life

1) **V.8 Who are you Lord ? V.10 What shall I do Lord?**

Those two questions became the passion and the pursuit of Paul's life -for the rest of his life

A) **His Passion** - Who are you Lord - His passion was to know Jesus - Grow in his knowledge of Jesus

B) **His pursuit** - What do you want me to do? -

C) Paul's passion and pursuit is the Passion and pursuit of our church - TO KNOW JESUS AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN!

D) **Everything in Paul's life - that we have seen in our study of the book of Acts up to this point**

1) was marked by that moment

E) **Every decision, every journey - every beating - conflict -**

1) Hinged on the reality that JESUS HAD RISEN and was alive

Paul was living for an audience of ONE

Lou Little was football coach at Georgetown University, he had on his squad a player of average ability who rarely got into the game. But Coach Little was fond of this player. He especially liked the way he walked arm-in-arm with his father on campus.

One day, shortly before a big game against Fordham, the boy's mother called with the news that his father had died that morning of a heart attack.

The student went home with a heavy heart but was back three days later. “Coach,” he pleaded, “**will you start me in the game against Fordham? I think that is what my father would have liked most.**”

After a moment of hesitation, Little said, “**Okay, but only for a play or two.**”

True to his word, he allowed the boy to start the game on defense -but he never took him out.

For sixty action-packed minutes that inspired young man ran and blocked like an All-American.

After the game the coach praised him. **“Son, you have never played like that before. What got into you?”**

The boy replied “Remember how my father and I used to go arm-in-arm?” “Well, my dad was totally blind, and today was the first time he ever saw me play!” WOW!!!

His desire to please someone he loved, someone not visibly present, made all the difference.

A) So too BECAUSE PAUL was living for an audience of one -

B) living for one he could not see - but knew was alive

C) Jesus Risen from the dead - sitting on the throne in heaven - watching Paul - cheering him on

1) Made Paul willing to go where-ever and do whatever Jesus called him to do -

D) What audience are you living for? Parents? Spouse? Friends?

E) When we truly believe that Jesus is Risen from the dead - He is alive - he is in heaven

1) That HE is praying for us - cheering us on it makes all the difference in the world

Now here is what is remarkable to me - at this point - this crowd that a few minutes ago was like a riot -

A) Is mesmerized in hearing Paul’s story

B) They were drawn into this story about the Resurrection

10 So I said, **‘What shall I do, Lord?’** And the Lord said to me, ‘Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.’ 11 And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 “Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, 13 came to me; and he stood and said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that same hour I looked up at him. 14 Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you

should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. 15 For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’

17 “Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance 18 and saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.’ 19 So I said, ‘Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. 20 And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ 21 Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.’ ”

Now it is at this moment that everything goes south –

A) The moment that Paul mentions Jesus was sending him to the Gentiles

B) The hatred and prejudice of the Jewish people toward the Gentiles - was so strong.

C) Everything that Paul just said to them doesn’t matter - their minds are made up-

1) Paul is a false teacher

22 And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!”

23 Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air,

D) This crowd is going crazy again - Away with him - Kill him

As I read this this thought came to my mind:

A) I think the reason why some Christians can come across so judgmental toward lost people is this:

B) We forget what it was like to be lost - we forget all the stupid things we used to do

1) and the crazy things we believed - before we knew Jesus

C) Lord help us -

So this crowd is going crazy.

24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him.

So this commander thinks, "We'll get the truth out of him -- we'll scourge it out of him!"

A)We will beat it out of him.

B)This brings us to our forth and final point today

C)there are times when the right thing to do is stand for our rights

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman."

27 Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?"

He said, "Yes."

28 The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship."

And Paul said, "**But I was born a citizen.**"

29 Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander **was also afraid** after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

The law of Rome said explicitly that no Roman was to be bound without due process of law.

A)Furthermore, they were not to be beaten under any circumstances, even if convicted.

B)The penalty for doing so was death.

C)So this Roman Commander knew he could be in trouble when he learned that Paul was a citizen

1)and that he had both bound Paul and was on the very verge of beating him with a terrible bloody scourge.

D)Here God used the state to protect his apostle

But this is what I want you to catch-

A)Paul used his rights as a Roman citizen not as his first resort but as his last resort.

B)More than standing for his rights - Paul was interested in seeing people come to know Jesus.

Wrap this up:

A)We need to be people who are living for an audience of ONE - FREEING

B)We need to be people committed to knowing Jesus and making him - KNOWN

C)We need to be a church that is a hospital for the broken - not a waiting room for the healthy

D)We need to be people who are willing to do anything short of sin - to reach people for Jesus.