

Acts 23 “Take Courage”
Acts 22:23- 23:11
May 3, 2026

Acts 22:23-29

23 As they were yelling and flinging aside their garments and throwing dust into the air,
24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, directing that he be
interrogated with the scourge to discover the reason they were shouting against him like
this. 25 As they stretched him out for the lash, Paul said to the centurion standing by, “Is
it legal for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen and is uncondemned?”
26 When the centurion heard this, he went and reported to the commander, saying,
“What are you going to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.”
27 The commander came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?”
“Yes,” he said.
28 The commander replied, “I bought this citizenship for a large amount of money.”
“But I was born a citizen,” Paul said.
29 So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately. The
commander too was alarmed when he realized Paul was a Roman citizen and he had
bound him.

Roman citizen.

Acts 22:30-23:11

30 The next day, since he wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by
the Jews, he released him and instructed the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to
convene. He brought Paul down and placed him before them.
Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before
God in all good conscience to this day.” 2 The high priest Ananias ordered those who
were standing next to him to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, “God is
going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! You are sitting there judging me according to
the law, and yet in violation of the law are you ordering me to be struck?”
4 Those standing nearby said, “Do you dare revile God’s high priest?”
5 “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest,” replied Paul. “For it is written,
You must not speak evil of a ruler of your people.” 6 When Paul realized that one part of
them were Sadducees and the other part were Pharisees, he cried out in the Sanhedrin,
“Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am being judged because of the hope
of the resurrection of the dead!” 7 When he said this, a dispute broke out between the
Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 For the Sadducees say
there is no resurrection, and neither angel nor spirit, but the Pharisees affirm them all.
9 The shouting grew loud, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ party got up and
argued vehemently, “We find nothing evil in this man. What if a spirit or an angel has
spoken to him?” [b]
10 When the dispute became violent, the commander feared that Paul might be torn
apart by them and ordered the troops to go down, take him away from them, and bring
him into the barracks.

11 The following night, the Lord stood by him and said, "Have courage! For as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so it is necessary for you to testify in Rome."

Resurrection debate.

Matthew 10:16-20

16 "Look, I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as serpents and as innocent as doves. 17 Beware of them, because they will hand you over to local courts[f] and flog you in their synagogues. 18 You will even be brought before governors and kings because of me, to bear witness to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they hand you over, don't worry about how or what you are to speak. For you will be given what to say at that hour, 20 because it isn't you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father is speaking through you.

"Sheep surrounded by wolves" means that the Christian's life in the world will be miraculous.

Risk your life with discernment.

We experience the nearness of God through our witnessing.

Acts 23:6

6 When Paul realized that one part of them were Sadducees and the other part were Pharisees, he cried out in the Sanhedrin, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am being judged because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead!"

"The hope of the resurrection."

"Christians who do most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next." - C.S. Lewis.

Acts 23:11

11 The following night, the Lord stood by him and said, "Have courage! For as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so it is necessary for you to testify in Rome."

The Christian life results from an encounter with Christ and a continuing with Him.

No servant of God dies a premature death.

Life Group Discussion Questions

- What did God say to you through His Word during our Sunday gathering?
- Have you ever found yourself in a situation in which your faith in Christ made you feel defensive and vulnerable?
- Summarize Paul's encounter with the Roman guard in Acts 22:23-29 and the Sanhedrin in Acts 23:1-11. How are they alike? How are they different?
- How is Paul perceptive and clever in both situations?

- Discuss the meaning of Matthew 10:16-20. If followers of Jesus are to be sheep, snakes, and doves then what might all of that imagery mean?
- What is “the hope of the resurrection?” How is that hope helping Paul endure challenging encounters? How is that same hope adjusting your heart? What is a challenge you are currently facing and how does the resurrection help?
- Jesus stands next to Paul in Acts 23:11. Why do you think Jesus physically shows up? What does this mean for us when we are in the midst of really hard things?
- How committed are you to the gospel mission of sharing Christ with others? When was the last time you shared Jesus with someone else? What is keeping you from being bold and free?
- Spend a few minutes praying for one another as you conclude.