



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 76 “The Road to being Bold”
By Pastor Jody May 04/28/2024**

Acts 21:27-40 ESV

Paul Arrested in the Temple

²⁷ When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, 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 is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” ²⁹ For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. ³⁰ Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. ³¹ And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. ³² He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³³ Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. ³⁵ And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, ³⁶ for the mob of the people followed, crying out, “Away with him!”

Paul Speaks to the People

³⁷ As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” And he said, “Do you know Greek? ³⁸ Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?” ³⁹ Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.” ⁴⁰ And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

[READ THE TEXT]

Pastor – “People of God, this is the Word of God.”

People – “Thanks be to God.”



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[PRAY]

[INTRO. & BACKGROUND]

As we saw last week Paul had chosen humility instead of being bold and speak out, in the face of other Christians who had some doubts about him. It was brought to Paul’s attention in front of this reunion/state of the union address, in front of all the elders who were connected to the tens of thousands Jewish converts in the city that they had come to believe that Paul was doing away with the law of Moses. They had been indoctrinated by someone, and as you will see today, we learn there is a foreign presence, non-Christian, that has been among the Jews, teaching that Paul held a disdain for what it was to be Jewish, or to be a converted Hebrew. Mainly, that you didn’t have to be circumcised to show your adherence to the law or your allegiance to God.

Well according to Galatians they got the message right but the intent wrong. Paul was telling Gentiles that circumcision was not necessary for Salvation, nor any other Jewish custom (see Gal 3), but he was in no way telling Jews they had to stop the practice, understanding that was a cultural distinctive. This had gotten Paul a bad name though among Jews that weren’t even believers in Galatia, they were actually deceivers, for the Jews in Galatia wanted to subject Gentiles to Jewish customs to make them slaves to law so that they could be manipulated. There is nothing as demonic as people using cultural beliefs to dirty the message of the Gospel.

[ILLUSTRATION]

You can’t be saved because you were not Christened by the Catholic/Orthodox church.

You can’t be saved because you’re in the Catholic/Orthodox church.

You can’t be saved because you don’t speak in tongues, you work on Sundays, or you play instruments in the church, or you don’t use the KJV, or you don’t follow Saturday as your Sabbath, or you display and/or get tattoos, or you grow your hair long as a man or you don’t cover your head as a woman, or you don’t tithe, or you don’t wear dresses or a tie to corporate worship, or you vote more liberal than conservative, or you don’t believe in teaching climate management, or you don’t go door-to-door knocking evangelizing. **These**



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things are personal preferences and are lies if they are taught that those practices are needed to be saved.

Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a results of works, so that no one may boast.

What churches **may do cautiously** is practice their Christian Liberty and not mandate autonomous church practices on outside believers while always being willing to give a defense for why you do a thing or believe a thing so as to instruct and clarify beliefs promoting unity and doctrinal purity among the elect. As Paul said, *“To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.”* (1 Cor. 9:22) we become a tolerant (**weak/less offensive**) Christian (not of the world but of other Christians) SO THAT we may win some over to a better doctrine, because yes, sometimes church practices are wrong or bad for other believers.

Now that is a good reminder of last week and how through humility we are to be with other believers. But there is also a time where practicing humility has put you in the cross hairs of some hostile people and that’s no accident. Being placed as a target of worldly anger and disdain is a direct act of a Sovereign God, it was no mistake. That’s why it is important for us to practice faith and patience with endurance because God will most likely give you your chance to stand up and be bold for Him. It just so happens though, that those opportunities come through practicing humility, and this is how it exactly has happened for the Apostle Paul.

MP:

Practicing Humility will win us the opportunities to be Bold for God

This morning, we are beginning a 2-part sermon because we wouldn’t have time to finish this today. Today we are looking at how Paul was set up by his opportunity, that’s code for God’s Sovereignty in putting him there, to be able to speak boldly for God. Then next week we will look at his bold proclamation and most likely that will take a couple of weeks as well. I hope you are



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learning, as am I, that you can't rush these things in the book of Acts for sometimes the narrative story has a lot of hidden meanings and twists that are applicable for our lives. So today as prep work for this bold proclamation we will look at the **Allegations** of the non-converted Jews, that **Abuse** that follows with no defense, and then the **Argument** beginnings that will pave the way for next week.

1. ALLEGATIONS - Outcries, Lies, and the Shutting of the Gates.

²⁷When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd¹ and laid hands on him, ²⁸crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place.

For 7 days Paul has practiced being humble. He has paid for four other men of their entrance into the temple to start the process of going through a time of external cleansing. They were ending their Nazarite vow and they wanted to offer their hair as a burnt offering displaying their zeal for following God. Paul, as well, as he has come in from being around the Gentile world, was going through this cleansing process himself, so that he may show the Jews that he still practiced and adhered to the practices of Jewish culture and ceremony. It's towards the end of this time that it all breaks loose literally.

The text says Jews from Asia, and when you add that to their declaration that they knew a guy named **Trophimus** in v.29 the Ephesian, and most likely this means these were un-converted Jews from Ephesus. That means people who did not like Paul because for three years he had disrupted the business of Ephesus personally, while negating the prestige of the synagogue in that town. Paul, by starting that church in Ephesus, had made it rough on the Jews there. If you remember from the mob scene, they were treated hostile just as much as the Christians were ([Acts 19:33-34](#) w/Alexander) and that

¹ **Stirred up all the multitude** (συνεχεον παντα τον οχλον [*sunecheon panta ton ochlon*]). Imperfect (kept on) active of συγχεω [*suncheō*] or συγχυνω [*sunchunō*] (-υννω [-*unnō*]), to pour together, to confuse as in Acts 2:6; 9:22; 19:31, 32; 21:31 and here to stir up by the same sort of confusion created by Demetrius in Ephesus where the same word is used twice (19:31, 32). The Jews from Ephesus had learned it from Demetrius the silversmith.¹Robertson, A. T. (1933). [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#) (Ac 21:27). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.



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treatment was birthed because of the edict that came out of Corinth (by the proconsul Gallio of Achaia [Acts 18:12-17](#)) that proclaimed Jews and Christians were to be treated the same. I can only imagine then as the church grew in Ephesus while the synagogue only shrank there were many harsh feelings against Paul. As well you know in Asia there were Jews now actually seeking to kill him. There is a lot of animosity towards Paul, enough to cause this public spectacle.

Well, if the Jews learned anything over the years of dealing with Paul, they learned the lesson **if you can't get it done yourself then stir up a mob!** So, they cried out, stirred up, and laid hands on Paul. The same language we have seen in Acts that Luke uses to describe confusing the populace to do something based on emotional disturbance is now employed here in the Temple. There was a video this week of a couple of young ladies from NYU that were interviewed by a reporter asking them if they knew what they were protesting for and against as it pertains to NYU. They had no idea and actually said they wished they were more educated on why the demands to hold NYU accountable for a neutral stance on the war in the east.² BTW that is how communism starts with the campuses becoming places of protests instead of education (see China's history)³, this is a Jihad movement against America, that is orchestrated by Muslims. The point is when you get the mob going you don't even have to hold to the truth you just make up your own as you go along.

Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”²⁹ For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

Luke tells you *they supposed*, that means they had no evidence and here's why. It was illegal for a Gentile to enter the inner grounds of the temple. Trophimus would have had to produce some type of credentials for himself being in there which would have been something to show he was a Jew that had gone through ritualistic cleansing. There were also signs posted by

² <https://nypost.com/2024/04/25/us-news/clueless-columbia-student-at-nyu-rally-why-are-we-protesting/>

³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/China/Riots-and-protests>



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Herod around the inner part of the temple that said unwarranted entry received penalty of death, provided by the Romans, no Gentiles were allowed in. Therefore, Paul had no way of getting Trophimus in so when Luke says they ‘supposed’ he means they didn’t make a mistake, they lied. You see for the mob, whatever gets you the desired effect you want is ethically correct. Mob mentality functions as without ethics, because ethics don’t operate in confusion, they contradict each other.

³⁰ Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut.

LP

If the world can’t stop you from spreading the good news of Christ, then they will lie about what your message is.

You know, Jesus never spoke out against the mob, he actually added to their anger as when he told the council, “You say that I am the Son of God.” ([Luke 22:70-71](#)). Then they took him to Pilate out of the temple, where Jesus should have gotten a fair trial, and they took him to the Gentiles to get a death sentence instead. They wanted Pilate to put Jesus to death for their anger over the reality that Jesus might be the one the Messiah, so they wanted him dead, for fear He would take their place of prestige if they let Him. **This is Paul’s path now; the Jews had lost their prestige and they wanted it back.** The Temple closes its’ gates then on an ex Jewish Pharisee where he should have been protected by the mob, but they cast him out, to be mauled, stricken, and beaten.

Some speculate this last phrase, “*the gates were shut*” was Luke’s way of showing the last real function of the temple of Jerusalem. It was the last time they would have the chance to hear the Gospel and they chose not to even entertain the notion. You see, about the same time that this letter of Acts begins to circulate through the church world in the first century, is about the same time that people would know the Temple had been destroyed by the Romans. In 70 AD Jerusalem was besieged, the people starved to death, the temple razed to the ground for their rejection of the Lord Jesus all as He prophesied it would in [Luke 21:5-24](#).



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I want you to see here before moving on that one of the reasons that we are commanded to practice humility, is so that no man, no government, no king will ever have the right to say I didn't deserve my judgement, I didn't deserve what I had coming. God uses the saints to proclaim His glory but also to show the righteous judgment of His wrath as I am reminded of the words of Paul.

2 Corinthians 2:16 ESV

to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

We are not sufficient, but God is. We are not the judges, but God is. We will not enact vengeance, but God will. God will and He will repay all wickedness and refusal to receive His gospel, and He uses the witness of His people to say, “you were warned”. God used His Son to display the Mercy of God, and He even used men like Stephen, Peter, and now Paul to say please except this Mercy/Gospel, but they would not turn.

Practicing Humility will win us the opportunities to be Bold for God, and sometimes all you must do is just be present, keep silent, and let your life be a response to the anger and lies of the mob. Christian, are you living the type of life that reflects Christ or are those of the world just passing you by for they have no fear of the message you bear, **there's no need for false allegations against you?** Let your life be one of humility as you strive to live with this world in a positive way, and let their actions against you condemn themselves, there will come a day later where you will be vindicated. Be the light and let your life be the fragrance of death to death or life to life for others, for it is not your call to withhold the Truth of the Gospel, but it is God's Sovereign right to decide how He will use your proclamation.

2. ABUSE - Violence is the only answer the 'World' has for Christ.

³¹And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. ³²He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.



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Wow, I mean I need to point this out, when Stephen was killed ([Acts 7:54-60](#)) it was an ordered execution, sanctioned and allowed by the temple under Roman observance. For Peter when he, James, and John ([Acts 4:13-22](#)) were beat it was constrained and orderly and released for treatment. Here's Paul, and he gets no trial, the temple wash their hands of the incident and he's turned over to the mob like a pack of rabid dogs. I have actually seen someone like this killed before in third world countries it is not pretty. My other thought after all his work to show he's a righteous Jew where's the church in Jerusalem? Where are the thousands of Christians that should have been sticking up for Paul?

There is such a disturbance and maybe there was some brawling going on, because they empty out the Roman barracks. You see they had built the military quarters above the hill by the temple and made a direct path to the temple grounds to keep the peace, for it seemed that this temple was actually a hot bed for religious and political tensions. And as I have told you before the *Pax Roma* or 'peace by force' was not going to let this go on.

³³ Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.

This is what happens when you have a government not concerned with justice but peace. They arrest the guy that everyone is mad at and drag him to court and assume he's guilty before being proven innocent. Does that sound familiar to you, do you know of a government trying to arrest a man for political reasons to keep the peace? We thank the Lord that we live in a land that you are innocent until proven guilty, but it may require the sacrifice of some willing to lose their freedom to keep that right for us.

³⁵ And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, ³⁶ for the mob of the people followed, crying out, "Away with him!"

Did that last line of this scene seem familiar to you?

Luke 23:18-19 ESV



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But they all cried out together. **“Away with this man,** and release to us Barabbas”-¹⁹ a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder.

They (the mob) demanded the Abuse of Christ and asked for a man that had caused a riot in the city to be released instead. Here they were calling for the same thing except for Paul the crowd would be offered no guilt scapegoat, they had chosen with mob mentality that Paul will take all their displeasure.

LP

Violence is not the result of rebellion, it is the result of a disdain for Christ.

Family, the threat of Christ to those in charge, to those that perceive the church as a threat, there is only one path, and that is to do whatever it takes to make the church go away. In Canada right now they are trying to pass a law that makes it illegal to preach publically. Bill C-367 has come out this month when in 2022 a similar bill was abolished, but this one is trying to say to publically quote the Bible is against the law.⁴ Trudeau is trying to say this is an attempt to curb antisemitism. In case you think I am making that up, the research I got this from is not allowed to be shown in Canada because they are trying to pass this bill under cover of darkness.

The world when it comes to threatening of their control by the true king will always choose abuse of the church. As Americans the question becomes one of not ‘if’ we say something because the call to do so is given to us in the Gospels, but ‘when’ is the right time? When is the right time to use the position that humility has gotten us in to be able to proclaim with boldness the will of God.

3. ARGUMENT - After Humility then comes BOLDNESS

Paul Speaks to the People

³⁷ As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” And he said, “Do you know Greek? ³⁸ Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men

⁴ <https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/international-news/great-reset/canada-moves-to-ban-christianity-changes-to-bill-c-367/>



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of the Assassins out into the wilderness?” ³⁹Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.” ⁴⁰And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

Paul had waited for his moment when he was in the hands of the authorities. He had waited when he could use their protection for the chance to address the Jews. He had made the tactical decision to allow his loss of freedom to give him a chance to proclaim the gospel in a way that he has had not had a chance to do so before. You see in Paul’s travels when the attitudes of the mob had been too much he had fled under cover of night, he had been beaten and left for dead, he had been silenced in Corinth and not given a chance to speak, in Athens the brothers whisked him away for safety reasons, but now he wasn’t running anymore. I wonder if Paul saw all the irony in this moment, just as Stephen gave his last address before the mob, before Paul condemned him, here now was Paul walking the same steps, looking at the same future.

He had just turned his back on being a free man, but he was given the opportunity now to speak for Christ to a captive audience that only wanted his demise. Paul’s choice to be humble had cost him his freedom **BUT** it had also given him a captive audience and now they couldn’t get away. We will see later in the book of Acts that Paul finally calls for a hearing with Caesar, which then wherever he went put him under the protection of the Roman Guards and put him within earshot of those that would rather not hear from him. The humility that Paul had started off with had moved his ministry from speaking to those that wanted to hear the Gospel to those that had a disdain for it.

LP

Humility will give birth to boldness, but we may have to be willing to lose some freedoms to exercise it.

[CHALLENGE]

Getting the chance to speak boldly for Jesus I think something every true Christian dreams about but I don’t think we understand the cost to be able to do so. Those that speak the loudest and boldest for Christ are usually those



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that give their lives to do so. So family, in preparation for next week and in reflection of this tumultuous time we live in let me ask you, are you willing yet to give up some freedoms, so you get the chance to speak for our Lord? If we lost some of our religious freedoms over the next few years, would you be willing to endure allegations, abuse, and perhaps arrests to be able to offer an argument for He who endured all of that for you?

My prayer for us HCC is that we all answer yes because the world now really needs some bold Christians to risk it all to perhaps to get a chance to say some words for Jesus, to be the fragrance of death to death for some BUT also to be the fragrance of life to life for others.

MP:

Practicing Humility will win us the opportunities to be Bold for God

Let's pray together and ask God to prepare our hearts for the cost of sharing the Gospel and prepare our hearts for Paul's address next week.

[PRAYER]

[CALL TO OBEY]

Elder – Read

James 1:22-25 ESV

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

[COMMUNION]

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]



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* The Congregation will stand
Elder – “Christians, what do you believe?”

Congregation - Read

John 15:18-20 and 16:30

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you...”

In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

[OFFERING+LAST SONG] –

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that has sovereignly set up our lives to give us the opportunities to speak boldly for Him, may you rise to the occasion.

Go in the name of the Son, that humbled Himself to declare with boldness from an empty tomb that His people would be enslaved to sin no more.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that gives you the power to live a life that is the fragrance of the Gospel, now go and share this good news boldly with others.