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Leader Guide

Unhindered

May 21, 2023

Main Passage: Acts 23:11; 25:9-12; 28:23-31

Theological Theme

The gospel was spreading and changing lives, but Paul continued to be persecuted and attacked. Christians should be prepared for difficult times as they share the gospel.

Introduction

- ? What comes to mind when you think of persecution?
- ? How did Jesus prepare His followers to face this type of persecution?

1. Comfort for Paul (Acts 23:11)

This verse follows the account of Paul standing before the Sanhedrin, a council of Pharisees and Sadducees, to plead his case and explain his faith. This caused a huge uproar and much division among those listening. It was bad enough that the commander worried that Paul might be torn apart by the crowd. (See Acts 23:1-10.)

- ? When have you wrestled with a difficult situation through the night? How does the setting of the night often accompany our thoughts in these moments?
- ? Read Matthew 28:20. How does this verse, along with Jesus's promises regarding the Holy Spirit (see John 14; 16), remind us that Jesus is also with us no matter what we face? How does that change your perspective on the difficulties you face in Jesus's name?
- ? Application: What is God calling you to do that gives you confidence He is using you and you have purpose in Him?

2. Paul Takes a Stand (Acts 25:9-12)

Following a failed murder plot against Paul in Acts 23, he was held in Caesarea where Festus was the governing authority at the beginning of Acts 25. Festus was concerned with keeping the Jews happy and with administering justice. Because Paul was a Roman citizen, Festus struggled with how to handle his case. At the beginning of this passage, Festus asked Paul about his willingness to be tried in Jerusalem.

- ? How did Paul's actions give an example of faithfulness to Jesus's call in less-than-ideal circumstances?
- ? Application: What difficult or bold thing is God calling you to do?

3. The Gospel Keeps Going (Acts 28:23-31)

After facing several more trials along the way, Acts 28 finally finds Paul in Rome. The Jewish community gathered around him, and we read that he taught them day and night about Jesus. He shared about the kingdom of God and related to the Jews using language they would connect with as he shared the truth about Jesus. Again, we are reminded Paul was not responsible for what resulted in the hearts of the hearers but for his faithfulness in taking advantage of the opportunities as they came. Some were convinced and believed while others did not.

- ❓ How does it encourage you that the results of your sharing the gospel are not your responsibility?
- ❓ Application: What threatens to hinder you from obeying God? How can you overcome this obstacle by relying on God's power?

Call to Action:

As a group, have an intentional time of prayer for multiplication and our global workers in unreached areas of the world.

*Adapted from Seven Arrows by Matt Rogers pastor of The Church at Cherrydale, Greenville, SC

Here's How to Become a Christ-Follower:

Read the following verses and ask after each one: "What does this say to me?"

- **All have sinned:** Romans 3:23 & 1 John 1:8
- **The wages of sin:** Romans 6:23 & John 3:18
- **But while we were sinners, salvation was provided:** Romans 5:8
- **Become a Christ-follower:** Romans 10:9-10 Confess and Believe

Accepting Christ is Just the Beginning:

Next Steps:

- Publicly profess your faith by being baptized (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 3:21; Romans 6:4).
- Join a church which follows the Bible, where you can grow in your faith through prayer, Bible study and fellowship with other Christians.
- Get involved in groups for encouragement and accountability.
- Begin a daily personal worship experience with God where you study the Bible and pray.
- Share with others what Jesus has done for you. Tell your story (Romans 10:14; Matthew 28:19-20).
- Begin to live for God (Romans 12:1-2, 9-18; James 1:19-27).