



**SERIES: ACTS - WHEN THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN**  
**MESSAGE TITLE: "PLOT TWIST"**

**SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS**  
**DATE: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2020**

## MESSAGE SUMMARY

## BIBLICAL TEXT(S): *Acts 22:23-24:27*

In Acts chapters 22-24, Paul has a hard time. He's almost flogged, but his Roman citizenship keeps him from that. Then he's put on trial by the Sanhedrin, which ends in chaos and leads to some of them forming a plot to assassinate him. In the midst of the chaos, God encourages Paul not to give up because he is going to send him to Rome.

However, Paul's journey to Rome is longer and less straightforward than he might have expected. Paul ends up in custody, held at the imperial capital city in Judea, Caesarea, for two years before he makes any progress towards Rome. This story is a reminder to us that God is with us and God is at work in our lives, even if our outward circumstances might not look that way at all times.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. These can help your group understand and apply the teaching more profitably*

## LEAN IN

***These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.***

1. Did you ever get out of a punishment as a kid or teen? What happened?
2. Have you ever signed up for something and it was completely different from what you expected? What happened? Did it turn out well or poorly?
3. Would you describe yourself as a patient person? Why or why not?
4. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday's sermon? Why was it significant to you?

## LOOK DOWN

***These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.***

1. What did God use in Acts 22 to keep Paul from being flogged?
2. In your own words, what happened when Paul appeared before the Sanhedrin in Acts 23? Did it go well or poorly for Paul?
3. How did God encourage Paul in Acts 23:11?
4. What happened after God told Paul he was going to Rome? Who wanted to harm Paul and how was Paul kept safe?
5. Sum up Paul's time spent in prison in Caesarea. How long was he there and what happened to him during that time?

*cont.*

## CONTINUED:

**LOOK OUT**

*These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Paul's Roman citizenship kept him from being unfairly beaten. What things/people/circumstances have you seen God use to keep someone from harm in a similar way?
2. Paul was treated unfairly by the Sanhedrin. What stands out to you about how he acted? What do you learn from this?
3. How have you seen or heard of God encouraging people in our own time in a similar way that Paul is encouraged? What has that looked like?
4. Though God had promised Paul that he would go to Rome, Paul found himself imprisoned for two years in Caesarea. What kinds of things are people that you know waiting on God to come through on?
5. Paul was able to remain confident that God was with him, even when his circumstances seemed to say the opposite. Do you know anyone else who has a similar story? How did they follow Paul's example?

**LOOK IN**

*These are questions that help you consider personal application. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. In this story and throughout the book of Acts, we see that sometimes God intervenes to keep people safe and other times he allows them to come to harm or even be killed. What about that do you find comforting? What do you find challenging?
2. Does how Paul responds to unfair treatment encourage or challenge you? How?
3. Have you ever heard (though maybe not through an audible voice) God tell you to do anything or make a promise to you? What did you hear and what happened afterwards?
4. Is there anything that you are waiting for God on right now? How does this passage/sermon encourage or challenge you?
5. What would it look like in your life right now if you were completely confident that God is with you? What would you do differently? What might be the same?

**LIVE IT OUT**

*cont.*

## CONTINUED:

***These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.***

1. Are you currently walking through an unfair circumstance in your life? Spend some time before God asking for his perspective on your situation. Ask friends, family, or your small group to pray for you as you seek you see your life as God does.
2. Are you waiting on God to fulfill a promise to you or to make good on something he's told you? Spend some time in prayer this week, asking that God would give you patience and faith as you wait on his perfect timing.
3. What might you need to do this week to live in confidence that God is with you? Think through one action, practice, or thought and commit to doing it for 7 days?

*Thanks to Ashleigh Rich and the Adult Discipleship Team for this week's notes and questions.*