

ACTS: Church On Mission
Part 56- Signs Of A True Disciple Of Jesus
Acts 21:37-22:22

INTRO:

- Paul's just been beaten & arrested after trying hard to please the Jews in Jerusalem who believed rumors about him
- What follows is very key to understanding Paul as a Christian, & to me, what it means for any of us to really follow Jesus

1. Paul Makes Himself Look Strong

- 21:37- 22:5- "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? Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt & led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?" 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." And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned w/ his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying: "Brothers & fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you." And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers being zealous for God as all of you are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding & delivering to prison both men & women, as the high priest & the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, & I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there & bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.""
- Acts 21:13- "Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem **for the name of the Lord Jesus.**"

2. Paul Makes Jesus Look Stronger Than Himself

- What follows is astounding- as soon as he gets the air cleared & regains some dignity- he chooses to tell a story that makes him look really foolish & weak- the story of His conversion to Jesus VS. 22:6-21- "As I was on my way & drew near to Damascus, about noon a **great light from heaven suddenly** shone around me.

And I fell to the ground & heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' Now those who were w/ me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, & go into Damascus, & there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were w/ me, & came into Damascus. "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, & standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight & saw him. And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen & heard. And now why do you wait? Rise & be baptized & wash away your sins, calling on his name.' "When I had returned to Jerusalem & was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance & saw him saying to me, 'Make haste & get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned & beat those who believed in you. And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by & approving & watching over the garments of those who killed him.' And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

- VS. 6- In the desert at noon... "bright light"...something that was brighter than the sun came out of no where & blinded Paul...
- Rev 1:16b- "...& his face was like the sun shining in full strength"
- VS. 7- Meeting Jesus humbled him to the ground
- Interesting that in the Bible, no one can stand up upon meeting the I AM- nor will anyone when He returns...
- VS. 8- Sees Jesus as Lord- not as his peer or his homeboy
- "Lord"= Master, One who is in authority, "sir" (Michael B😊)
- VS. 10- Asks Jesus To Tell Him What To Do:
- This shows that this "fight" has been a no contest
- VS. 11- Has To Be Led By The Hand

- VS. 14- Told he'll be a witness to what's happened to him
- VS. 16- Next, Paul get's baptized in the Name of Jesus
- VS. 17-21- Finally we see Paul try to choose his audience & ultimately being sent to those who he previously hated

7 Signs That You've Missed What It Means To Be A Christian:

1. You're Still Defending Yourself Based On Your Past

- Philippians 3:4b-8- "If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the 8th day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. **But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ**"

2. You Don't Want To Appear Weak/Needy Of Mercy

3. You Struggle w/ Being Publically Identified W/ Jesus

4. You Refuse To Be Led

5. You want to negotiate the terms of your obedience

6. You are still full of hatred towards your enemies

- Colossians 3:13- "bearing with one another &, if one has a complaint against another, **forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.**"

7. You Still Have Hatred In Your Heart Towards Other Races

- 22:22- "**Up to this word they listened to him.** Then they raised their voices & said, "**Away w/ such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.**"
- 2 Corinthians 5:21- "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
- Philippians 2:9-11- "Therefore God has highly exalted him & bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow**, in heaven & on earth & under the earth, & every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."