

Sermon Discussion Guide:

Paul Before the Council

Sunday, November 26, 2023

Scripture: **Acts 22:30–23:11**

Series: **The Spirit & The Church**

OVERVIEW

Paul is opposed by the Jewish leaders and the Roman authorities because rumors and gossip are spread about him. After addressing the crowd, he is brought before the Sanhedrin, the council of the religious elite in Jerusalem. Ananias, the High Priest, doesn't allow Paul to speak, but orders him to be struck. Paul rebukes and insults him, claiming not to realize that he is the High Priest. Paul provokes an argument between the Pharisees and Sadducees regarding the resurrection, chaos ensues, and Paul is brought to the Roman barracks for safekeeping. There, he is visited by Jesus, who encourages him in his mission.

Some ways that we can respond to the mess in our lives are: fear, anger, anxiety, or sadness. Jesus himself ministers to us in our pain, since He knows our suffering through personal experience. Believe that Jesus is near to you when life is messy—even when you doubt or blame. Call out to Him for help, appealing to his promises and character, with thankfulness for his care. Listen to Him by staying in the Word, and with His people.

When your life is messy, God is close. Listen to Him.

CORROBORATING TEXTS

2 Corinthians 1:12, 1 Timothy 4:17-18, Psalm 145:18, Psalm 34:18, Isaiah 53:5, 2 Thessalonians 3:3

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Acts 23:1, Paul says, "I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day." What does it mean to have a clear conscience? How do we know if we have one?
2. Do you think Paul is lying when he says that he didn't know Ananias was the High Priest? Does it matter whether this is a record of Paul sinning?
3. Has there been a messy season in your life when you have particularly felt the nearness of Jesus?
4. What are some ways that help you not only get into the Word, but get the Word into you?
5. We need the church and will come to ruin without it. When are you most tempted to go it alone, just you and your Bible?