

THE CHURCH UNLEASHED
"Negative Circumstances = Positive Opportunities"
Acts 22:1-21

INTRODUCTION:

1. **Week 1** - *"Convictions That Lead to Courage"* **Acts 21:1-14**
 - **Vs 14**

2. **Week 2** - *"The Humility of Leadership"* **Acts 21:15-26**
 - **Vs 20a**

3. **Week 3** - *"When It All Goes Wrong"* **Acts 21:27-40**
 - Paul's plan to unite the Jewish and Gentile believers would receive a serious blow when Jews from Asia recognized Paul and stirred up the Jews who were in Jerusalem celebrating Pentecost.

Dr. Al Mohler

"There is an awareness, that we are going to have to be ready now for a very long faithfulness; a very long obedience; that is going to be very costly, but is also going to be a great opportunity to point people to the City of God, to point them to the Gospel, while everything is falling apart around us."

*"There are also other urgencies; the **religious liberty court challenges** are going to be massive."*

*"The other daunting task is that **we are losing our young people**, not because they don't know what we believe, but they don't know why we believe what we believe. Because they are not deeply grounded in a **Biblical World View** that comes out of our relationship with Christ."*

*"**What kind of conviction does it take to withstand a full cultural onslaught!!!***

*"We really know what we believe, **when what we believe would hold under persecution.**"*

*"If we are not grounding the Church in the truth of what God's Word reveals, that the church can hold those truths under persecution, **then we're not teaching, we're not preaching**, and that is of the greatest urgency."*

4. A worldview is the framework from which we view reality and make sense of life and the world.

5. A Biblical Worldview is based on the infallible Word of God. When you believe the Bible is entirely true, then you allow it to be the foundation of everything you say and do.

6. *Colossians 2:8*

7. Throughout the history of God's people it has always been true that there are those who have been willing to give testimony for God against all odds.

a) **Daniel** - stood firm for his convictions and would not defile himself with a portion of the king's meat.

b) **Shadrach, Meshach and Abendnego** - would not worship Nebuchadnezzar's image and were thrown into the fiery furnace.

c) **Steven** - even while falling under the bloody stones as they beat the life out of him, announced the living reality of the Lord Jesus.

d) **Ignatius** boldly presented the Gospel of Christ to the Emperor and would not deny Christ. So Trajan made him hold fire in his hands while they dipped papers of oil and draped them around his body, and took hot irons and poked his flesh and when all was done, he threw him to wild animals.

e) **Isis burned a young 12 year old Christian girl** alive and while she was dying yelled to her mother that she forgave them.

FOUR PARTS TO YOUR TESTIMONY

I. PART #1 BEGIN BY CARING FOR THE LOST

A. SPEAK RESPECTFULLY

1. Vs 1

a) "*Brothers and fathers*"

B. SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE

1. 21:37-22:2

a) "*Hebrew language*" - Or dialect - *Aramaic*

2. Paul spoke **Hebrew** which was the language of scholarship and religion.

3. Paul spoke **Greek** which was the common language of the Gentiles.

4. But Paul also spoke **Aramaic**

II. PART #2 - YOUR LIFE BEFORE SALVATION

A. GIVE YOUR BACKGROUND

1. Vs 3a

a) *"I am a Jew"*

b) *"born in Tarsus in Cilicia"* - Paul was a Jew of the Dispersion.

1) Paul was a Hellenistic Jew which means he was brought up in the Greek culture.

2. His goal here was to identify with his audience.

a) The Hellenistic Jews who were there celebrating Pentecost.

b) The Hebraic Jews (Palestinian Jews) who were born right there in Palestine, might understand Paul's empathy for the Gentiles.

3. Vs 3a

a) *"educated at the feet of Gamaliel"*

b) Gamaliel was the most famous and revered rabbi of the day.

4. Vs 3b

a) *"being zealous for God as all of you are this day"*

B. SHARE YOUR PAST LIFE

1. Vs 4

a) *"I persecuted this Way to death"*

2. Vs 5

3. Acts 9:13-15

III. PART #3 - YOUR CONVERSION EXPERIENCE (Vs 6-16)

1. Paul's testimony is recounted 5 times in the New Testament.

a) Acts 9

b) Here in Acts 22 (before the Jewish crowd)

- c) **Acts 26** (Before Festus the Roman governor and King Agrippa)
- d) Then a more doctrinal version in **Philippians 3**.
- e) And finally in **1 Timothy 1**.

2. The Holy Spirit, in orchestrating the writing and assembling of the New Testament, had Paul's testimony included so many times because of its importance.

3. **Vs 6-16**

4. It's calling on the name of the Lord that removes sins. **Romans 6**

IV. PART 4 - HOW SALVATION CHANGED YOUR LIFE

1. **Vs 17-21**

2. Paul then escaped Damascus in the middle of the night and spent the next three years of his life in the desert, after which he journeyed to see Peter.

3. **Galatians 1:11-24**

4. **Acts 9:15-16**

CONCLUSION:

- **What can we learn?**

- a) **First** - Every born again Christ follower has a testimony.

- b) **Secondly** - Just share your testimony...3 parts

- 1) Before Salvation

- 2) Salvation

- 3) After Salvation

- c) **Thirdly** - Don't think for one minute that your testimony is not important.

- d) **Finally** - Give God all the Glory