

Devoted and Unshaken: The Book of Acts
“Faithful Under Fire” (#26) Acts 21:27- 22:29
Cornerstone Church of Poway
Pastor Ed Turley
October 19th, 2025

Sermon Notes

Big Idea: To be faithful under fire, we need courage to stand when it's costly, wisdom to share our story with grace, and trust to rest in God's plan when life feels unfair.

How To Be Faithful Under Fire:

1: Faithfulness Is Courage To Stand Firm When It's Costly (Acts 21:27–36)

When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, ²⁸ shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man **who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place.** And besides, he has **brought Greeks into the temple area** and defiled this holy place." ²⁹ (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.) ³⁰ The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. **Seizing Paul**, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. ³¹ While they were **trying to kill him**, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³² He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, **they stopped beating Paul.** ³³ The commander came up and **arrested him** and ordered him to be **bound with two chains.** Then he asked who he was and what he had done. ³⁴ Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that **Paul be taken into the barracks.** ³⁵ When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be **carried by the soldiers.** ³⁶ The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Away with him!" **Acts 21:27-36 (NIV)**

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2: Faithfulness Uses Wisdom To Share Our Story of Faith (Acts 21:37 – 22:21)

³⁷ As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, **"May I say something to you?"** "Do you speak Greek?" he replied. ³⁸ "Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?" ³⁹ Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people." ⁴⁰ Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic: **Acts 21:37-40 (NIV)**

¹ **"Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense."** ² When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said: ³ **"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. ⁴ I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, ⁵ as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.**

⁶ "About noon as I came **near Damascus**, suddenly **a bright light** from heaven flashed around

me. ⁷ I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, **'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'**
⁸ **"Who are you, Lord?"** I asked. **"I am Jesus of Nazareth,** whom you are persecuting,' he replied. ⁹ My **companions saw the light,** but they **did not understand the voice** of him who was speaking to me. ¹⁰ **"What shall I do, Lord?"** I asked. **"Get up,'** the Lord said, **'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.'** ¹¹ My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had **blinded me.** ¹² "A man named **Ananias** came to see me. He was a **devout observer of the law** and **highly respected** by all the Jews living there. ¹³ He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, **receive your sight!**' And at that very moment I was able to see him. ¹⁴ "Then he said: **'The God of our fathers** has chosen you **to know his will** and **to see the Righteous One** and **to hear words from his mouth.** ¹⁵ You will **be his witness** to all men of what you have **seen and heard.** ¹⁶ And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be **baptized** and wash your sins away, **calling on his name.'** ¹⁷ "When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸ and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. **'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'** ¹⁹ "Lord,' I replied, 'these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. ²⁰ And when the blood of your **martyr Stephen** was shed, I stood there **giving my approval** and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' ²¹ "Then the Lord said to me, **'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'**" **Acts 22:1-21 (NIV)**

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3: Faithfulness Trusts God's Plan Even When Life Feels Unfair (Acts 22:22–29)

²² The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, **"Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!"** ²³ As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, ²⁴ **the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks.** He directed that he **be flogged and questioned** in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. ²⁵ As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, **"Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"** ²⁶ When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. **"This man is a Roman citizen."** ²⁷ The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" "Yes, I am," he answered. ²⁸ Then the commander said, "I had to pay a big price for my citizenship." **"But I was born a citizen,"** Paul replied. ²⁹ Those who were about to question him withdrew immediately. **The commander himself was alarmed** when he realized that he had put Paul, **a Roman citizen, in chains.** ³⁰ The next day, since the commander wanted to **find out exactly why** Paul was being accused by the Jews, **he released him** and **ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble.** Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them. **Acts 22:22-30 (NIV)**

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➤ **Where do you need to show courage this week?**

My Next Right Steps, I Will:

- [] Share your story of faith to encourage someone this week
- [] Accept Jesus as My Savior and Lord
- [] Be baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ



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Talk It Over

Welcome & Prayer: Invite God's Spirit to guide the discussion.

Big Idea: To be faithful under fire, we need courage to stand when it's costly, wisdom to share our story with grace, and trust to rest in God's plan when life feels unfair.

Icebreaker – Faith Under Pressure

"Describe one pressure you feel as a Christian today — big or small — and one thing that helps you stay faithful."

Read Acts 21:27–22:29 Together

Ask someone to summarize what's happening in their own words.

Discuss the Message

1: Faithfulness Is Courage To Stand Firm When It's Costly

Why do we sometimes assume that following Jesus should make life easier?

Read John 15:18–20 and 2 Timothy 3:12.

What do these verses teach about opposition?

Reflection: Where might God be asking you to stay faithful even when it's uncomfortable?

2: Faithfulness Uses Wisdom To Share Our Story of Faith

How did Paul turn his arrest into an opportunity for testimony?

What part of your story shows how Jesus changed your life?

Read 1 Peter 3:15-16.

How can we be ready to share our faith with gentleness and respect?

Action Step: Try to identify one person this week you could share your story with.

Truth: "God can turn your story of pain into His platform of grace."

3: Faithfulness Trust God's Plan Even When Life Feels Unfair

Why do you think the crowd turned on Paul when he mentioned the Gentiles?

Read Philippians 1:12–14.

How did Paul view his imprisonment?

What helps you trust God's bigger plan when others misjudge you?

Reflection: How can your response in hardship point others to Christ?

Refrain: "When misunderstood, rest in God's unseen purpose."

Closing Reflection

Where do you need to show courage this week?

How can our group support you through prayer and encouragement?

Group Prayer

Pray for:

- Courage to stand firm in faith when it's costly.
- Wisdom to share our story with grace and truth.
- Trust in God's plan even when life feels unfair.