

## “Grief to Grace!”

### 1. Intro:

- 1.1. **Prayer:** Pray for **teachers** in their new year (public, Christian, home school).
- 1.2. Here’s a question to ponder that we’ll talk about at the very end... **Would you say you relate to God more as a servant to his Master, or a child to his/her Father?**
- 1.3. Well, one more time we left Paul in danger...so let’s go get him.

### 2. GRIEF TO GRACE! (1-35)

- 2.1. **TONGUE & CHEEK LASHING!** (1-5)
- 2.2. (1) **I have lived in all good conscience before God** –
  - 2.2.1. Greek lit. – “*lived as a citizen with God.*”
  - 2.2.2. Meaning, “*I am **not** guilty & you are wrong in judging me.*”
  - 2.2.2.1. My charges are baseless.
- 2.3. (2) The high priest’s action was **unwarranted & illegal**. (innocent to proven guilty)
  - 2.3.1. Their **oral tradition** said, “**He who strikes the cheek of an Israelite, strikes, as it were, the glory of God.**” [William Barclay, pg.164]
- 2.4. (3) **God will strike you** – prophetic...as this was fulfilled only a few years later, when he was 1<sup>st</sup> deposed, then assassinated.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.5. **Whitewashed wall** – contrasting a *decent exterior* w/a *unclean interior*.
- 2.6. (3b) **For you sit...** - Paul basically calls him a *stinking hypocrite!*
  - 2.6.1. **Apostolic flesh?**
- 2.7. (5) **I didn’t know** – **Didn’t he?**
  - 2.7.1. [1] Paul **didn’t know** his tormentor’s identity because of his defective vision?
  - 2.7.2. [2] Paul was speaking in **irony** saying, “*He didn’t act like a high priest; so how could I recognize him as such when he was totally out of character.*”
  - 2.7.3. [3] Possible Ananias wasn’t wearing his priestly garments. It’s also probable Paul did not know Ananias personally because he had not had contact with the Sanhedrin for 20 years.
  - 2.7.4. [4] Paul completely lost his cool? (failure in self-control)
- 2.8. At any rate Paul’s acknowledgment of error was prompt & recognized **the position** of the high priest, even if he did not respect **the priest** as a person.

<sup>1</sup> Because of Ananias’s pro-Roman sentiments, he was assassinated by anti-Roman Jewish revolutionaries at the outbreak of the 1<sup>st</sup> great Jewish revolt against Rome in 66ad. (Shepherd’s Notes)

- 2.9. (5b) Upon learning it is the high priest, Paul apologizes w/**Ex.22:28** as his basis.  
 2.9.1. Also Eccl.10:20, **Do not curse the king, even in your thought.**
- 2.10. In a heated moment Paul said the **wrong thing** to the **wrong person**, lost his opportunity to receive a **fair trial**, and, most importantly, blown his chance to **explain the gospel**.  
 2.10.1. **Result?** The situation turns ugly, & Paul now has to think fast just to get out alive.
- 2.11. **FLASHPOINT!** (6-10)
- 2.12. **Flashpoint** = The critical stage in some process, event, or situation at which action, change, or violence occurs.
- 2.13. This strategic statement polarizes the Council, & for a moment, takes the heat off Paul!
- 2.14. (8) They disagreed over 3 main areas {resurrection, angels, & existence of spirits}.  
 2.14.1. **Pharisees**, radical conservatives; **Sadducees**, *theological liberals*.
- 2.15. Paul seems to be sitting in his cell in **guilt's ashes** (explosive anger). Then at just the right moment the Lord comes to him...
- 2.16. **GRIEF TO GRACE!** (11)
- 2.17. (11) With a **cool breeze of grace**, Jesus blew away the **stagnant memories** of Paul's failure. (Swindoll)  
 2.17.1. Only the **Grace of God** can carve a **roadway of peace** through a person's **wilderness of guilt**, & a **course river** through a **desert of despair!** (Swindoll)  
 2.17.2. **Is.43:2** When you pass through the **waters**, I will be with you; and when you pass through the **rivers**, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the **fire**, you will not be burned; the **flames** will not set you ablaze.  
 2.17.3. **Is.43:19b** See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a **way in the desert** and **streams in the wasteland**.
- 2.18. Paul had the best lawyer available!  
 2.18.1. Paul knew better than all **If Christ is for you, who can be against you?**  
 2.18.2. After 2 days of great strain: physical, mental, emotional, & spiritual, this vision came as a beautiful provision.
- 2.19. **The following night** – Christ comes in our darkest hour.
- 2.20. **The Lord stood by him** – With **no rebuke**, simply a word of **encouragement**.
- 2.21. **Be of good cheer** – (pres. Imp.) Suggests he began to despond (give up hope).
- 2.22. **You have testified of Me in Jerusalem** - The Lord endorses Paul's work & his decision to go to Jerusalem.

- 2.23. So must you also bear witness at Rome - Whatever the **past**, now came experience of his Lord's **presence**; acknowledgement of his testimony at Jerusalem; & assurance of fulfillment of his long-cherished hope about Rome.
- 2.23.1. **Note:** the pressure was **not relieved**, but the worker was **supported & strengthened!** {Not, Lord take my load, but help me to carry my load!}
- 2.23.2. The Master was **leading His servant on**, & thus **reassured**,...Paul could take fresh courage!
- 2.24. **Illustration** - Just after WWII, American soldiers found a little cellar where Jews had hid out. Written on the wall one had written, "**I believe in the sun, even when it does not shine. - I believe in love, even when it is not shown. - And I believe in God even when I cannot see Him work.**"
- 2.24.1. **Trust this:** God is present, and at work thru all your circumstances, just when you need Him the most!
- 2.25. Where has he used you to testify in the **past**, & most importantly where is He saying to go **now**? (don't bask in yesterdays glory!)
- 2.26. **CONSPIRACY!** (12-22)
- 2.27. (12-14) 40 angry radical Jews on a hunger strike.
- 2.28. Only the Lord could have worked this out.
- 2.28.1. The defeat was a combo of **supernatural grace** & **natural means**:
- 2.28.2. Paul's nephew lived in the city & by the providence of God, he discovered the Jewish plot.
- 2.28.3. We never know what **friend**, **relative**, or even **enemy** God will use to help us. Even an unlikely **eavesdropper!** {God causing both Jews & Romans to carry out His divine purpose concerning Paul}
- 2.29. **Amazing**, watch how God pulled this all off:
- 2.29.1. **[1]** The otherwise unknown nephew just happened to overhear the plot  
**[2]** He somehow entered the heavily guarded barracks to tell Paul.  
**[3]** A centurion was willing to take him to the commander.  
**[4]** The busy commander listened to him right away & believed him.  
**[5]** Then the commander ordered a small army to escort Paul out of town under cover of darkness.
- 2.30. **When God makes a promise, He keeps it with remarkable style!**
- 2.31. We learn 2 important truths: **The Grace of God** can overshadow any guilt within us & **the Power of God** can overcome any plot against us!
- 2.31.1. Are you wandering in a **wilderness** of guilt?
- 2.31.2. Are you lost in a **desert** of despair?
- 2.31.2.1. Find the *cool springs* of Gods **Grace & Power!**

- 2.32. **THE GREAT ESCAPE!** (23-35)
- 2.33. (23,24) A detachment of 470 soldiers prepares to transport Paul from *Jerusalem to Caesarea* at **9pm** (65 mile journey).
- 2.33.1. Paul's **escort** went to **extraordinary lengths** to ensure his safety for the trip.
- 2.34. **Story:** On Friday I was able to be apart of an **escort** of **incredible proportions!** I was invited (by Randon Lane) to be **a driver** in **John McCain's motorcade**, to get him form the John Wayne airport to the Weston hotel in Costa Mesa. It was hilarious...this "whole day event"...then it happened so quickly!
- 2.34.1. After bomb sniffing dogs searched each of our vans, we we're out on the tarmac. Secret service up front(3 black suburban's) then our 5 vans, secret service behind us, police exhort all around. I was in last van, so when we pulled up I don't have an angle of anyone getting out of the plane. Everyone quickly jumps in w/in 1 minute, being in the last van 1 secret service guy comes up to me & says they didn't bring as many as we thought so no one will be in your van. **How anticlimactic!** **Well**, it was fun with police escort, blocking off all the streets in front of us. Watching the #2 & #3 suburban's do constant circle patterns mixing it up so you couldn't keep track which one **McCain** was in. It was interesting hanging out with secret service guys & just being apart of all that has to take place.
- 2.35. I understand why a **presidential nominee** would receive this kind of VIP treatment **but** why would **Paul**?
- 2.35.1. Prov.16:7 **When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.**
- 2.35.2. **God was behind the scenes all along!**
- 2.36. (31) **Antipatris** – Where the land is flat & open & the danger of ambush left behind. [The 70 horseman go back to Jerusalem]
- 2.37. (35) In Caesarea Paul is kept in the prison at **Herod's Praetorium** (Headquarters, palace)
- 2.37.1. **Comfortable quarters** because of Paul's rank as a citizen & his reputation as a religious leader.
- 2.38. **Would you say you relate to God more as a servant to his Master, or a child to his/her Father?** {David Seamands, in *Healing Grace*, wrote...}
- 2.38.1. **The servant** is accepted & appreciated on the basis of what he does,  
**The child** on the basis of who he is.  
**The servant** starts the day anxious & worried, wondering if his work will really please his master.  
**The child** rests in the secure love of his family.  
**The servant** is accepted because of his workmanship,  
**The son or daughter** because of a relationship.  
**The servant** is accepted because of productivity & performance.  
**The child** belongs because of his position as a person.
- 2.39. **Read Gal.4:4-7.**