1. **Intro:**
   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 1st deposed, then assassinated.¹
   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.

¹ Because of Ananias’s pro-Roman sentiments, he was assassinated by anti-Roman Jewish revolutionaries at the outbreak of the 1st 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. 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, blew 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

2.29.2. He somehow entered the heavily guarded barracks to tell Paul.

2.29.3. A centurion was willing to take him to the commander.

2.29.4. The busy commander listened to him right away & believed him.

2.29.5. 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.