



The Lord By Your Side

Introduction: Paul has been falsely accused, falsely arrested, and is now brought before the council to give a defense. Through a series of providential events, Paul is rescued by Roman soldiers and taken to the governor where he is under house arrest in Herod's palace. The resurrected Lord visits Paul and gives him a promise that he will testify about Christ in Rome.

Text: Acts 23

Discussion:

1. Icebreaker: When have you ever been in a desperate situation that you needed the comfort of the Lord?
2. Paul is falsely accused and stands on trial for something that he was not guilty. They claimed that he was preaching against Moses and corrupting the Jews. In reality, he preached the full counsel of God and rightly interpreted the Old Testament. Have you ever been falsely accused? How did you handle it, or how would you handle it? What can we learn from Paul in how he handled people lying and trying to attack his character?
3. Define perception: How does the Lord use our perception to direct our life? What is the gift of discernment and how does that relate to perception . . . or does it? What is the value of wisdom in all circumstances? Do you pray for wisdom?
4. What was the importance of Jesus' visitation to Paul? How does the Lord comfort believers today?
5. What does it mean to you to know that the Lord is by your side?
6. Who did God use to spoil the plot to kill Paul? Do you think this was mere coincidence or was it the providential hand of God? Why or Why not?
7. What is Providence?
8. Reflect on your life and see if you can see the providential hand of God in your life? Who are some of the people that God brought in your life to help get you to where you are today?
9. Paul was promised that he would arrive in Rome. His mode to get there will be as a prisoner of Rome. Sometimes the Lord accomplishes his purpose in our lives in ways that we would never plan. Why is trust so important in the life of the believer?
10. Read James 1:2-5, Romans 5:3-5, Romans 8:28-39 Write/Discuss the power of the truth of these passages of scripture.

Think About it:

When the Lord is by your side it changes everything! Jesus promises that he will present a spotless bride (believers) to his father. Life is a process of Jesus purifying us and making us more into his image. Every trial, hardship, suffering, or heartache is used by God. Every joyful moment, celebration, or blessing is used by God. The Lord never leaves us or forsakes us. He will bring us all the way home to be with him forever!

Moving Forward:

Trust the Lord in every situation of your life and rest in the providential hand of God. Allow the Lord to direct your steps. Pray for wisdom and discernment. Have eyes to see how the Lord is working in your life and listen to his voice and follow his plan.