

Resistance and Refinement

Acts 22:30-23:11

Resistance and Refinement: We ought to see resistance to the gospel by others as the Spirit's refinement in us for the future mission that God has prepared.

"Through his arrest, bondage, and multiple trials, and perilous journeys, a higher purpose is at work – the very purpose of God – driving Paul to testify before Caesar in Rome. Nothing can deter the fulfillment of the sovereign will..." F. Scott Spencer

Opposition is an opportunity for building godly responses and the resilience needed for taking the gospel into hard to reach places.

1. Foster Credibility Through Conflict. Acts 22:30-23:5

Two Ways to Foster Integrity: Forgiveness and Repentance

- **Learn to Extend Genuine Forgiveness**

"So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune was also afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him."

Acts 22:29

"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation." 1 Peter 2:11-12

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all." Romans 12:14-17

"When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'" Matthew 27:54

- **Learn to Practice Rapid Repentance**

“Then Paul said to him, ‘God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?’ Those who stood by said, ‘Would you revile God’s high priest?’ And Paul said, ‘I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of the people.’” Acts 23:3-5

“But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either.” Luke 6:27-29

"For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly." 1 Peter 2:21-23

2. Develop Gospel Simplicity and Clarity. Acts 23:6-10

At the heart of the gospel is the truth that Christ truly was raised from the dead, having triumphed over sin, Satan and death. Through union with him in his resurrection, we have been raised from sin into newness of life. In Him, we have life eternal.

“But on the next day, desiring to know **the real reason** why he was being accused by the Jews, he unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.” Acts 22:30

“Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, ‘Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.’” Acts 23:6

“Though one might be tempted to think Paul merely saw an avenue to play party politics, the larger narrative proves this is not merely a clever ploy. Paul continually comes back to the hope of the resurrection in his defenses. The resurrection is central to the vision that sent him to the Gentiles.” P. Schreiner

"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Corinthians 15:17-22

"And you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses." Acts 3:15

We believe that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the greatest and gravest news ever.

3. Pray For Missional Tenacity. Acts 23:11

"The following night the Lord stood by him and said, 'Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.'" Acts 23:11

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be dismayed for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-19

Courage is a gift of the resurrected Christ who stands with us as we stand for Him.

Bible Study Questions

1. Understanding Opposition

- 1. In Acts 22:30–23:11, what kinds of opposition does Paul face? What do these events reveal about the cost of faithful gospel witness?**
- 2. The lesson states that "opposition is an opportunity for building godly responses and resilience." How have you seen hardship or resistance strengthen someone's faith or witness?**

2. Fostering Credibility Through Conflict

- 3. According to Romans 12:14–17 and 1 Peter 2:11–12, how should Christians respond when they are mistreated or falsely accused?**
- 4. Why is forgiveness such an important part of maintaining a credible Christian witness, especially during conflict?**
- 5. In Acts 23:3–5, Paul quickly acknowledges his mistake and corrects himself. What does Paul’s rapid repentance teach us about humility and spiritual maturity?**
- 6. Why do you think repentance can actually strengthen, rather than weaken, our credibility as Christians?**

3. Developing Gospel Simplicity and Clarity

- 7. In Acts 23:6, Paul centers his defense on the resurrection of the dead. Why is the resurrection the essential core of the gospel message?**
- 8. How can we learn to communicate the gospel with the same clarity and focus that Paul demonstrates?**

4. Missional Courage and Perseverance

- 9. In Acts 23:11, the Lord personally encourages Paul. What does this moment reveal about God’s presence with believers in difficult seasons?**
- 10. What are some practical ways we can pray for and cultivate missional courage when sharing our faith in challenging environments?**