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Acts 21:27-36

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It’s incredible, as we said at the outset of our study in Acts, the awesome idea that the book doesn’t really end. It’s left open-ended and we’ve joked about the ministry of Acts 29 because the chapter isn’t in the canon, but it’s continuing on. We just got that, right. It was a picture of Acts 29 and it’s beautiful and awesome[[1]](#footnote-1).

The time of worship in song and the responsive reading were great; that passage of the Triumphal Entry and the disciples who had been following Jesus since He raised Lazarus from the dead and who were coming toward Jerusalem. In the Gospel story, everything is building to that moment of Jesus getting to Jerusalem. He had set His face like flint and He was going to Jerusalem. So, He comes into the city and they are all crying out, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.” If you remember, “Hosanna” means “save us” or “deliver us.” Get that picture in your mind that happened 2000+ years ago that we are celebrating as we go into this week, this Passion Week, this Holy Week. This event is huge. Get that picture in your mind of the palm branches waving in the air and the cloaks on the ground. Zachariah would say that Jesus comes humbly as the Messianic King, riding on a donkey. The people are shouting out, “Save us! Save us! Save us—Deliver us!” The Pharisees are so angry and say, “Don’t let them say this!” and Jesus says, “Oh, if they don’t say it the stones will cry out.” Why? Because all of creation is shouting, “Save us! Deliver us!” because all of creation is under the weight of the curse. Now, the King, the Messiah, the Savior, the Deliverer, is riding into Jerusalem. It’s an awesome picture because they don’t get it. They don’t quite get it, right? In John’s telling of the Triumphal Entry—John is always so good to do this—he says, “We didn’t realize what was happening until after the resurrection and then we remembered.” Then, it all came together. Even John and Peter were, no doubt, waving palm branches and running cloak-less and yelling, “Save us!” and in that moment they don’t get it. They’re saying, “Deliver us from Rome” but Jesus knows, as those words are echoing in His ears, He knows that He has come to save us, He has come to deliver us, but that deliverance, that salvation, will not happen without suffering.

This week—I hope you take advantage of this week—we are not in the sermon yet so don’t worry. I hope you take advantage of this week as an individual, with your friends, in fellowship with one another, in small group, with family, and take advantage of walking through the events of this week leading up to Good Friday and, ultimately, the resurrection. Some of my favorite teachings in the Bible are John’s account of what happens between the Triumphal Entry and when Jesus is arrested. If you have a red letter Bible, the whole section is red. It’s awesome. Meditate on this. Picture this. Remember that Jesus comes and He is going to suffer. He’s going to suffer. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission, there is no forgiveness, of sin and that is ultimately what Jesus came to save us from; not the oppression of Rome but the oppression of sin, and death, and Satan, and the eternity of Hell and damnation. Jesus is riding in and they are crying out, “Save us!” and that’s exactly what He’s come to do.

But Jesus in His sufferings didn’t just suffer, He didn’t only suffer just to rescue us from our sin. Obviously, that is huge, that is everything, that is why we can stand redeemed and reconciled with our Creator, but He didn’t just come to suffer for that. Did you know this? Jesus also suffered to leave us an example that we should follow. Listen to how Peter talks about this in 1 Peter 2:19-25. It says,

For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

Here it is. Listen.

21 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. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 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. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Jesus suffered on the cross, on the tree—He suffered for our forgiveness, for our redemption, for our reconciliation, so that we could be justified, so that we could die with Jesus, so we could be raised with Jesus, so that, ultimately, we will be exalted with Jesus—but He said that in this life you have been called to this, to suffer with Jesus, to follow in His footsteps.

So, that brings us to where we are in our study of Acts, so turn to Acts 21. If you remember where we left Paul, he’s gone to Jerusalem and he’s met with James and the elders and they have given him this counsel. They’ve said, “Hey, man, listen. It’s awesome what God has been doing among the Gentiles. We’re down with that and praise the Lord. But don’t forget that there are a bunch of believers here. They are passionate about the Law and they’ve been told some stuff about you. They’ve been told that you’re saying that Israel is over with and that the Temple doesn’t mean anything anymore. You can forget about the Law and they don’t have to circumcise their kids and you’re saying to let all that pass away. You are going to have a hard time fellowshipping with Jews here in Israel, in Jerusalem, and you’re going to have a really hard time reaching them with the Gospel because this is what they’ve heard about you.” So, they give him this counsel and they say, “Why don’t you observe some purification rites? Why don’t you take this vow for this season and then they won’t have anything to accuse you of?” I laugh because I’ve read the rest of the story, which is appropriate since I’m about to preach it. So, Paul is like, “Okay. To the Romans I became like the Romans and to the Jews I became a Jew.” Paul is down with whatever it takes to reach people with the Gospel so he is doing what they suggest.

So, that’s where we pick up in verse 27,

When the seven days were almost completed…

(of his purification, of his vows)

…the Jews from Asia…

If you remember, Paul spent so much time in Ephesus and the surrounding cities. So, these Jews from Asia who are now in Jerusalem are probably, most likely, from Ephesus. So, they recognized Paul.

When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people, and against the law, and against this place, the Temple. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” 29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. 30 Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. 31 And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort…

A tribune would have been somebody who was in charge of a cohort, which would have been about a thousand soldiers. Under him would have been centurions over hundreds. So, he gets word. He’s not far away and he gets word that there is a riot starting.

…He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. 33 Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains.

Remember Agabus’s prophecy that Paul would be bound if he went to Jerusalem?

He inquired who he was and what he had done. 34 Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. 35 And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, 36 for the mob of the people followed, crying out, “Away with him!”

It’s an intense scene, right? Remember that Paul’s whole point for being there that day was that he was trying to build a bridge between himself and these people for the Gospel so that there would be no offense between him and the people other than just the pure, undefiled Gospel of Jesus Christ. He wants to give no room for accusations and no way of them to speak evil of him so he’s jumping through their religious hoops that he is, in all reality, free from. He doesn’t have to do this but he’s making this concession and the irony is that they are going to step outside the law to murder him, to kill him, as soon as they seen him. These Jews from Ephesus, most likely, have worked this up in their minds. They saw Paul and they saw Trophimus and in their hatred—because they have already determined that Paul hates Jews, Paul hates the Temple, and Paul hates the Law, and he’s a heretic so, therefore, everything he does must be wrong and evil—they think, “That’s it. I bet he brought that Greek into the Temple,” and in their minds they know that if they make that accusation it will be the end. The people will riot and they will be ready to kill Paul. It’s an intense scene.

Accusations are powerful, aren’t they? Once you make an accusation, somebody is going to believe it, no matter the evidence to the contrary, right? Somebody is going to believe it and there is no getting that back. Scripture talks so much about this and how we should handle false accusations. I personally was recently accused of something that I did not do. It was last Sunday and we had finished a retreat here at Snowbird Wilderness Outfitters. I had my nephew up for the weekend and I was taking him back. My dad was going to meet me in Ellijay and he was going to take him the rest of the way so I could make it back in time for church. So, I drove him to Ellijay and met my dad at Starbucks because it was Sunday and Chick-fil-A was closed. The next best thing was an Americano with extra shots of espresso. I won’t tell you how many, just extra. So, I got back in the car, said goodbye, and was driving home, and I looked over and there was an officer of the law pulled up next to me. I thought, “That’s nice. I’m glad he’s there. I respect the law and the blue line.” I saw the car and I thought, “I’m glad I’m not speeding and I’m not on my phone because I’m in Georgia. Everything is shipshape.” Then, he slowed down and got behind me. I know that move. I’ve seen that move before. I thought, “He’s going to pull me over,” and I started racking my brain, thinking, “What did I do?”

So, he pulls me over and I get over with plenty of room for him to walk on the side. I roll down my window, cut off the engine, and put my hands where he can see them. As soon as he walks up, I tell him what I have in the car with me and say “sir.” I’m curious as to why we are having this conversation and he says, “I pulled you over because of your failure to maintain lane.” I had missed that all together and I thought, “Did I fall asleep?” Then, he did this. He got his head really close to the window and began to sniff the air. Sniff..sniff..sniff. I’d also seen that move before, decades ago by my mother. Then, he asked the same question my mother used to ask, “Have you been smokin’ the pot?” That’s how my mom said it. The officer said, “Have you been smoking marijuana?” To which, unfortunately, it caught me so off guard that I laughed, which is not a good way to prove that you haven’t been smoking marijuana. I said, “No, bro. Just eatin’ some chips.” No, I said, “No, sir, I have not,” and he said, “I smell marijuana. I smell fresh marijuana; not stale but just smoked marijuana.” I said, “Sir, I do not smoke the marijuana,” and I tried to sound as nerdy as possible, like, “I know that teenagers like the pot but I am off the pot.” He said, “So, you wouldn’t mind if we searched your vehicle?” and I said, “No. Whatever you need to do.” He said, “I smell marijuana. Now, if you have a dime bag on you give it to me now and I won’t arrest you but you can’t have that in the car.” I’m thinking, “Do people fall for that?” but I said, “No. Search the car. Whatever you have to do, sir. I respect what you’re doing. I truly do not have marijuana in the car.” But he was adamant that he smelled marijuana, to which I said, again—not the wisest move but I could just hear the last time I let Zach borrow my truck—and I said, “Sometimes people tell me my truck smells like an old man, which apparently smells like marijuana. I don’t know.” So, he kept me there for a while and he never searched the truck. Eventually, he let me go and it was great. It’s a good story. But, you know, while he was gone and left me waiting there while I was contemplating if the truck was fast enough to get me out of this, and it’s not, I was thinking, “How do I prove this? He’s not going to find anything but is he going to run tests? He’s so adamant that I have marijuana I might fail the test just because I’m getting nervous.” You know? The weight of that accusation was heavy but I thought, “I really have nothing to worry about here. It’s just me and him.” But most of us have experienced a false accusation. Maybe it’s not even said to you but you find out that it’s been said about you.

With Paul, this is a huge accusation, but I think that this is it, right here. This accusation is not made against Paul because he’s such a good Jew; it’s not made against Paul because he’s controversial about social or political issues; this accusation is made against Paul because he’s a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He’s been preaching that Jesus is the only way and not just for Jews but for Gentiles, as well. Because he is identified with Christ he’s going to suffer with Christ. Think back in your mind. It’s Palm Sunday. How does that week progress? As Christ gets closer and closer to His sufferings, what is it that brings His sufferings on? False accusations—the same accusations—that He preaches against the people, He preaches against the Law, and He preaches against the Temple. The same accusations that they made against Paul and the same accusations that were made against Stephen not that long before this.

Thomas, in his commentary, said this,

False accusations are easy to make and difficult to undo. Once made, someone is going to believe them no matter what the evidence to the contrary might be.

So, in a second I’m going to talk about when we are accused of something and how do we handle that biblically. But on this side of it I want to say that we need to be careful of this. As Christians, we need to be careful of this. You know, riots aren’t really big here but they are still in other places in the world. In the Middle East they are like, “It’s Wednesday, do you want to riot?” It’s popular, but here not so much. But, we about do it on social media, don’t we? People don’t lay hands on and physically assault but they do it with their words. Accusations are made. We need to be careful. In the past two years, I’ve heard accusations against godly pastors and against godly Christian artists. Accusations, again, once made are hard to undo. Somebody is going to believe it and then they are going to read into situations, and words, and find supporting evidence, even if it’s not really there. I’ll name one of them—David Platt. David Platt is a Gospel-saturated, faithful preacher. He’s a godly man. And in the past year I’ve heard multiple people say that he’s left the Gospel. I don’t know if anybody preaches the Gospel better than David Platt. But it’s said on social media and people just jump on it and all of a sudden his character and his testimony are under attack, like Paul being beaten to death in the Temple. We need to be careful. When you hear an accusation, you have a biblical responsibility to investigate it, yeah, absolutely, and to shut it down if it’s false, to shut it down if it’s unfounded and there are no witnesses. Shut it down. Shut those accusations down. Shut the gossip and slander down immediately. Have the courage to say to that brother or sister, “You should not be saying that to me right now. You are assaulting that persons’ character. You will ruin their testimony. If it is found out to not be true it is hard to reel back in.” Shut it down; have the courage to do that.

This was a big deal. They said that he brought Trophimus into the Temple and he didn’t. This was a big deal for the Jews and this was a big deal for the Romans. This was one thing that if somebody did this, if a Gentile came into the Temple and went past the court of the Gentiles and actually entered the Temple proper, there were signs everywhere in multiple languages that said that if you are not a Jew and you enter in past this point that you will die. You are taking your life in your own hands and it’s your fault you are executed. The Jews could carry out the execution and the Romans wouldn’t stop it. So, this accusation was made and as soon as the people believed it Paul’s life is forfeited. I don’t know where Trophimus was but hopefully he stayed home sick this morning or picked a different place to pray. He’s not on the scene or he would be right there with them. They are ready to kill Paul but God intervenes. While he is suffering and he’s being beaten, the Romans come in and, ironically, rescue him.

But I want to say this before we go forward with our text—how to handle false accusations. I’ll just say a few things about how to handle false accusations.

First is to follow Jesus’ teachings. Follow Jesus’ teachings. Remember this in Matthew 5:10-11,

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Follow Jesus’ teachings, which means this—view it in that way. When you are accused for the sake of Christ, he says to rejoice. Rejoice that you are being identified with Jesus. Does it feel good? Is it fun? No. Does he says, “Attack back, yell louder, say meaner things, point out their sin, point out what’s wrong with them to everybody, start a mud campaign?” No, he says, “Rejoice, rejoice.” Think of what they did to our Savior and rejoice that you are being identified with Jesus so much that people are treating you in this life like they treated Jesus in this life. Follow Jesus’ teachings.

Next, follow Jesus’ example. We read it from 1 Peter 2 already. His example is that when He was reviled that He did not revile back. He didn’t fight back in that sense. There are times, right—Jesus doesn’t rule out self-defense in defending your family and nation. It’s a separate issue. When it’s on account of the Gospel and you’re accused, and you’re slandered, and you face opposition because you faithfully follow Jesus, and love Jesus, and tell people about Jesus—if you do that, the Bible is clear that you will face opposition. You’ll face suffering to some degree and to some level. Jesus says to rejoice. Don’t fight back. Don’t repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling. Follow Jesus’ example and trust Jesus’ justice. Romans 12:19,

“Vengeance is mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

Trust that. We can trust that. Take that to the bank. Vengeance is too big for us. Revenge is too big for us. That’s above our pay scale. If you try to handle vengeance on your own you will be consumed by it. God can handle it. Trust His justice to Him.

So, we jump back into Paul. Paul knows this is going to happen, remember? It’s been prophesied about. He’s been warned in one sense. Other believers begged him, “Hey, don’t go to Jerusalem. They’re going to kill you. Don’t go to Jerusalem.” And Paul says, “Y’all are breaking my heart. Why are you breaking my heart? I know. I’m willing to die. Why? To get people the Gospel. To suffer for Christ. I’m ready for that.” How was Paul ready for this? How did Paul prepare himself for a moment like this; to know that this is going to happen at some point, at some time? How did he prepare himself for it? He knew it from the beginning. He believed God’s Word. Remember this in Acts 9? The Lord was talking to Ananias and Ananias said, “You want me to go get Paul and minister to Paul? This is the dude that’s killing Christians. This is the one who is persecuting them and having them thrown into prison. He’s leading the charge. You want me to go get him?” And the Lord says,

“Go, for this man is my chosen instrument to take my name to the Gentiles, to kings, to Israelites. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name’s sake.”

Paul believed the Word of God. He trusted God’s Word. “I’m going to suffer for the Gospel.” This is not God being vengeful, “Oh, yeah, Paul, who persecuted Christians, I’ve got something up my sleeve for him.” That’s not what’s happening. That’s not how God deals out justice. Jesus paid for Paul’s sins. For Paul, this is a position of honor. He will show him how much he’s going to suffer so that other people can have the hope of the Gospel. Paul believed God’s Word and he suffered like few others have.

Remember from 2 Corinthians 11, where Paul summarizes his suffering like this. He was thrown in prison multiple times, he was flogged, he was exposed to death repeatedly, five times he received 39 cuts of the whip, three times he was beaten with rods, one time he was pelted with stones, three times shipwrecked, he spent 24 hours drifting at sea, he was persecuted by Jews and Gentiles, and he had opposition and slander from false teachers, he spent sleepless nights and he went without food, without shelter, without basic provisions, he was left alone and abandoned. He suffered for the Gospel. He suffered for the Gospel because he believed God’s Word.

Listen to me, believer, Christian—we are not all called to Paul’s ministry. Only Paul was called to Paul’s ministry. But the same Spirit lives inside of you and the same Bible tells us that for all who desire to live a godly life that we will suffer. Jesus left us this example that all of us should follow in His footsteps. We are going to face opposition. We are going to face suffering if we faithfully live out the Gospel. We will. It will look different for each one of us—different degrees, different times, different places—but it is coming, so we need to trust and believe in God’s Word.

Number two on how Paul was able to face this. Paul was willing to suffer because of the fellowship with Jesus that suffering brings. Paul is willing to suffer because of the fellowship with Jesus that it brings. Philippians 3:8-11—this is Paul talking.

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— 10

Here it is. Listen. Listen to the whole rest of the verse, not just the first part.

that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Paul says, “If I can suffer with Him, if I can know Him through the power of the resurrection that will be on display as I faithfully witness of Jesus, and thereby face suffering, I will know Him better. I will know Him better and I will know Him more intimately.”

The ESV Study Bible has a great note here. It says this,

But this power (the power of the resurrection) is made known as the believer shares the same kind of sufferings Jesus faced, the sufferings that attend faithful witness in a fallen world. The good news is that those who suffer with and for Jesus will attain the resurrection from the dead even as He did.

The third point is that Paul is willing to suffer because of the fruit of the Gospel that it will bring, because he knows it’s going to bring fruit. It’s going to mean eternal souls receive the hope of the Gospel.

In Colossians 1:24 and following, Paul said,

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake.

Talking to the Church and, by extension, he’s talking to us.

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church,…

Pause there. We know, and Paul is the one who taught most clearly in the New Testament—God used Paul to teach this most clearly—that the work of Jesus was complete and finished, right? Christ on the cross, by His suffering and the shedding of His blood, His wrath-absorbing sacrifice was all that was necessary for our forgiveness, for our justification, our being declared righteous and acceptable to God in order for us to be adopted as His sons and daughters and be made one with Jesus. It was all His work. Paul taught that clearly, so what does he mean, what is Paul talking about when he says, “I rejoice in suffering because I’m filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions”? What does he mean? There is this teaching in the Bible, in the New Testament, and very clearly in Paul’s life, that as the Gospel goes forth—the work has been done and Jesus has done everything necessary to rescue everyone who will ever cry out in repentance and faith—that work is perfect, and complete, and done. But as the Gospel goes out, what is lacking is the messengers taking the Gospel to people to hear it, and in their taking the Gospel it is going to face opposition and there is going to be suffering. Paul says, “I rejoice in that. I rejoice.” Why? Because eternal souls are receiving the good news of the Gospel even in the face of persecution.

Personally, in my sanctified imagination or whatever you want to call it, I don’t doubt that there are some people in this mob who were hitting Paul, fighting, clawing, and slobbering just to get close enough to Paul to grab his hair and try to rip it out of his head, that some of those people heard—in a minute Paul is going to preach and they are going to hear the Gospel. As the crowd rages, the Holy Spirit is taking the truth that they hear from this bloody, battered Apostle and they are applying it to their soul. I don’t doubt that for a second. Paul says, “I rejoice. I take joy. I praise God in my suffering.” Why? Because it means that people are getting the Gospel.

Think like this. Steel your mind for this. I’m talking to us; I’m talking to me. We have to steel our minds and our souls for this. Think this way. Because we too often, when trials, and temptation, and suffering, and opposition come against us, we don’t see it as a trigger to rejoice in praise. We don’t see it, “Oh, here’s my platform. Here’s my microphone. It’s my suffering. Here’s my opportunity to tell people the wonderful, glorious news of Jesus.” Instead, we get that opposition and we feel that suffering and we fold and buckle. Instead of rejoicing, we complain and we grumble. We miss our opportunities to grow. We miss our opportunities for intimacy with Jesus. We miss our opportunities to give a clear, pure, Gospel presentation, because instead of seeing the difficult things in my life and the hard things in my life as a platform for the Gospel, I just see them as discomfort, inconvenience, or a difficult person, and I complain. So, think this way—look to our example in Jesus and look to our example in faithful believers who have gone before us.

Paul says,

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, 25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Finally, Paul is able to face suffering not just because it brings intimacy with Jesus, not just because of the fruit of the Gospel that it brings in eternal souls, but because of the hope that he has. Paul is willing to suffer because of the hope that Jesus has already suffered, and through Christ’s sufferings has won final victory for us. That seemed smoother when I was typing it out. He’s able to face sufferings because of the hope of eternal life. Because, for the Christian—for the Christian—suffering, by definition, is temporary. It cannot reach beyond the grave for the Christian. For the Christian, you can only suffer in this life, and Paul says, “Oh, man, that’s temporary. That’s light. That’s easy. That’s deload week.” Listen to this. I’m not fit enough to say that yet; I apologize. I was doing burpees the other week and then I stopped. It was awful. Who wants to do those?

2 Corinthians 4:16-18,

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed…

Although we are suffering, we’re dying—day by day we are dying for the Gospel. We are pressing on, we’re toiling, we’re struggling, we’re facing opposition—our inner self is being renewed, though…

 …day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, (they’re temporary), but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Paul, again, said in Romans 8:18,

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing to the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Red Oak, let’s not miss our opportunities to grow in intimacy with Jesus, to minister the goodness of the Gospel to an eternal soul that needs it, to live out the reality that my hope isn’t here; this is temporary, this is transient, this is passing away. My hope is laid up somewhere where suffering can’t reach me.

I think that as they were carrying Paul and the crowd was pressing in and so violent that they were crowd-surfing him into the barracks, I think that maybe Paul is only thinking “ouch” but I think that inside, Paul is rejoicing. Paul is singing praise in his heart. He’s suffering for the Gospel and I think he’s preparing—while guards have him hoisted over their heads, Paul is doing sermon prep, because as soon as they put him down he says, “Can I say something to them?,” and he goes and he preaches the hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. Rob is referencing a letter that was just read to the church from one of our mission partners in the Himalayas. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)