



*"A Minister and a Witness"*

## **Show Notes & Transcripts**

### **Podcast General Description:**

Follow Him: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Wednesday.

### **Podcast Episode Descriptions:**

#### **Part 1:**

How do we continue to share the gospel with "good cheer" amidst opposition? Dr. Scott Woodward explores the opposition facing Paul as he takes the gospel to the known world.

#### **Part 2:**

Dr. Scott Woodward explores Paul being the Lord's messenger as the people become members of the new covenant and how the new congregations breach the various cultural and personal differences to become one people.

# Timecodes:

## Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Scott Woodward
- 01:11 Introduction of Dr. Scott Woodward
- 02:52 Background to Acts 22-28
- 05:17 Cutting a covenant–old and new
- 07:20 The blood of the new covenant
- 08:45 Paul working with the Gentiles and the Jews
- 11:09 God is God of the whole earth
- 13:29 Temple veil was torn
- 14:28 Paul’s separate journeys
- 16:49 Acts 20:22 Paul returns to Jerusalem
- 18:16 Paul gives report in Jerusalem
- 20:51 The Law of Moses has been as a school master
- 21:48 Becoming a servant and messenger for Christ
- 24:30 Paul was completely misunderstood
- 29:34 Paul’s work at the temple was also misunderstood
- 31:42 Violence and mob mentality
- 32:32 Making choices
- 34:42 Paul addresses rumors
- 37:46 Paul reminds the crowd he had authority to persecute Jews but met Jesus
- 39:50 They desire to scourging of Paul
- 41:39 The fruits of the Spirit
- 42:42 Paul rebukes them
- 44:47 Paul is sent to Felix and Caesarea
- 48:58 “Be of good cheer”
- 50:58 Paul speaks for himself in front of Felix
- 53:10 Paul is under house arrest and Festus replaces Felix
- 56:40 Paul appeals his case to Caesar
- 58:52 Paul speaks to Herod Agrippa
- 1:07:14 Paul’s testimony is effective to many
- 1:09:29 Translation differences in Agrippa’s response
- 1:13:15 End of Part 1–Dr. Scott Woodward

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Scott Woodward
- 00:07 Bearing testimony in front of non-believers
- 02:30 Oklahoma Women’s softball bears testimony of Jesus Christ
- 03:14 Elder Ballard addresses Paul’s testimony
- 06:12 Dr. Woodward shares a personal story of testimony and conversion
- 09:43 Paul is turned over to Julius via ship
- 11:25 How do we respond to prophetic warnings?

- 16:21 Paul reminds those in a storm that hope is not lost
- 17:43 Paul's advice is heeded and lives onboard are saved
- 18:47 A message of hope
- 20:08 The island of Melita and Paul is bitten by a viper
- 21:45 Assumptions of an Apostle
- 24:19 Parallels drawn between Paul and Jesus
- 29:35 Jesus's suffering and Paul's trials point us to Jesus
- 31:47 The final wrestle of Acts
- 33:41 Paul is preaching under house arrest in Rome
- 34:29 The cliffhanger conclusion
- 37:04 Why does he quote Isaiah?
- 39:59 The purpose of Luke's record
- 41:52 The conversion of Karl G. Maeser
- 44:03 What tradition tells us of the death of Paul
- 46:20 Dr. Woodward's takeaways from Paul and the Acts of the Apostles
- 53:29 End of Part II—Dr. Scott Woodward

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## Biographical Information:



Scott Woodward loves helping people learn ancient and modern Church history and doctrine and to have an enjoyable time doing so. He has been teaching professionally in the Church Education System for nearly two decades—including in Seminary & Institutes, the BYU Religion Department, and currently as a member of the BYU-Idaho Religion Faculty. Scott is a speaker at Education Week and Church symposia, and is also a managing director of and content producer for Doctrine and Covenants Central (an affiliate of Book of Mormon Central). Scott graduated with his PhD in Instructional Psychology and Technology from Brigham Young University. He lives with his family in the beautiful Rexburg, Idaho, and peach cobbler is his dessert of choice.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:00	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith, and I'm here with the legendary John, Bytheway. Hello, John.
John Bytheway:	00:00:11	Hi, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:00:12	The last few weeks we've been studying the Apostle Paul. I have personally benefited so much from this study, John. How have the last couple of weeks been for you?
John Bytheway:	00:00:21	Yeah, I love that too. I mentioned this before, but we talk about the desire to be an instrument in the Lord's hands and Paul is like a Swiss Army knife. He could go anywhere, talk to anybody. He could talk differently with different groups. He's awesome, and it's fun to watch what he does and what he says.
Hank Smith:	00:00:36	Yep. Absolutely right. Joining us today is Dr. Scott Woodward. Scott, how can the church benefit from studying the life of the Apostle Paul?
Dr. Scott Woodward:	00:00:45	Paul is, I think, the epitome of a disciple of Jesus Christ, intrepid, undaunted, knows the Lord's will and is willing to do it at all costs. I think his example, it's actually kind of intimidating to me, but inspiring at the same time, if that makes sense.
Hank Smith:	00:01:03	Scott, we're so happy to have you back on the program. It's been a couple of years. John, can you introduce Scott again to everyone?
John Bytheway:	00:01:11	Yes. We had Scott with us when we were doing the Doctrine and Covenants, and we had some really great episodes with Scott. Scott Woodward graduated with his PhD in instructional psychology and technology from BYU. He's been teaching professionally in the church educational system for nearly two decades, including seminaries and institutes, BYU religious education, and he is currently a member of the BYU-Idaho Religion faculty. He is currently a managing director of Scripture Central. I hope everybody has looked and explored, and you could spend hours on that site. So helpful.



00:01:46 And also, I want to mention that Scott Woodward and Casey Griffiths have a podcast they do together called Church History Matters. It's awesome. They attempt to answer the hardest questions in church history, and you can trust these guys. They're faithful Latter-day Saints. You'll be edified and enriched and informed by looking at that. So we're really glad to have you back, Scott. Thanks for joining us.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:02:09 Thanks, John. It's good to be here with you and Hank. This is a blast for me.

Hank Smith: 00:02:13 I got to just tell everyone, if you weren't with us in our Doctrine and Covenants year, if you don't know how to go find this, you can find it on our website, followhim.co, followhim.C-O. And look at Doctrine and Covenants 18 and 19, go look at those two episodes, those two, part one and part two. They were life changing for me. They really were. Okay, Scott, we are in the last chapters of Acts today, Acts 22 through 28. I think we're going to spend our time talking about Paul, aren't we?

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:02:41 I think so. I think that's what Luke wants us to do. That's how he's written the book, so I think we need to do that today.

Hank Smith: 00:02:48 Is Paul the only one mentioned in most of this story?

00:02:52 Let me read something from the manual, and I'll turn it over to you. The Come, Follow Me manual says this, "'When we are on the Lord's errand,' President Thomas S. Monson promised, 'We are entitled to the Lord's help.' We are not entitled however to a smooth road and an endless stream of success. For proof of this, we need to look no further than Paul the Apostle. His errand from the Savior was 'to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and children of Israel.' In these chapters we see Paul fulfilling this errand, but facing great opposition: chains, imprisonment, physical abuse, shipwreck, and even a snake attack. But we also see that Jesus stood by him and said, 'Be of good cheer.'"

00:03:29 With that, let's turn it over to you, Scott. Do you want to give us a little background before we jump in?

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:03:33 The section that we're looking at today, chapters 22 through 28 fit in the third part of a three-part kind of division of the Book of Acts. And this division is actually right in the very first chapter of Acts. If you kind of think about Acts as a three-part structure outlined in verse eight of chapter one, this is Jesus, right before he ascends. He says to his apostles the following, he says, I'm

quoting now Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me" one, "both in Jerusalem," two, "in all Judaea, and in Samaria," three, "unto the uttermost part of the Earth."

00:04:14 So it's a nice way to think about the Book of Acts, because if you look at this first part where he says, "in Jerusalem," that's Acts chapter one through seven. Then he says, "in all Judea and Samaria," that's Acts chapter eight and nine. And then he says, "unto all the world," that's chapters 10 through 28, all the way to the end.

00:04:33 So really what Luke is trying to show us here, Luke is the author here of both Acts and the book of Luke, traditionally, and so Luke is actually doing a two part thing here, and he wants to show us eventually how the gospel's going to go out to all the world. That's the big announcement, right? This is not just an Old Testament people thing anymore. This isn't just for the bloodlines of Israel anymore. This is for everybody. And the Apostle Paul is going to play the major role in that third part to take this to all the world.

Hank Smith: 00:05:07 I've heard it said before that Jesus is the message and Paul is the messenger. It's almost how that Luke set it up. Here's the message, here's the messenger. He's going to take it to all the world.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:05:17 I like that. That's a fantastic way of saying it. There's so many growing pains that are happening during the Book of Acts that Luke is showing us. And the Apostle Paul's letters are just dripping with these growing... It's the growing pains of transitioning from the old covenant to the new covenant. And the old covenant, maybe it needs a little clarification. This is what happens with Israel, in Exodus 24, when the House of Israel were emancipated and redeemed from Egypt, we come down to Mount Sinai. And at Mount Sinai the Lord says, "I brought you here, because I want you to become my covenant people, and here would be the terms and conditions." And he lays out the 10 Commandments along with some other judgments, and he says, "What do you think?"

00:05:59 And Moses actually approaches the people and says, "Are you willing to do this?" And they say, "Yes." And he says, "Well, let's show it through the blood of the covenant." That's what he calls it, the blood of the covenant. They cut some oxen, they drain the blood, half the blood goes on the altar representing God. Half the blood goes on the people, representing themselves. And the blood kind of binds them to God, and through the

blood of the covenant, they are now God's covenant people. And that's referred to from the New Testament perspective as the old covenants. The old covenant God made with his people.

- Hank Smith: 00:06:30 It wasn't the old covenant then. They weren't like, "Oh, I'm glad we-"
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:06:33 No, it was just the covenant. Exactly. No, it was just, "We are God's covenant people." Who was God's covenant people? It was the house of Israel. It was the seed of Abraham, who had been promised, Abraham had been promised that God would raise up a nation from his seed, and through that nation he would bless all the nations of the Earth. It's a very slow centuries, millennia long process for God to eventually fulfill that promise. And the whole message kind of gets murky in the middle about, exactly what are we supposed to do? How are we supposed to bless all the nations?
- 00:07:02 But then along comes this Israelite named Jesus, who embodies all of Israel. Who is actually the son of David, the Davidic King, fulfilling part of the Davidic covenant. The Messiah, the anointed one would come through David's line, and that he would rule over the house of Israel. And somehow he would rule over the whole world.
- 00:07:20 In the middle of all of that, when Jesus comes, the New Testament authors are trying to show us this transition from old covenant people to new covenant people. That's where we get the names, Old Testament, New Testament. And in Luke 22, for instance, when Jesus introduces what we call the sacrament, during the Passover, he says, "Behold the blood of the new covenant," in some translations. In the KJV, I think he says, "the blood of the New Testament," or, "This is the New Testament in my blood."
- 00:07:48 The only two times that phrase "blood of the covenant" shows up is Exodus 24, and when Jesus is introducing the new covenant at the Passover. Essentially saying, "At my death there's going to be a new arrangement. At my death, what it means to be my people is going to shift and to change. At my death..." And he doesn't explain all this all at once, we have to pick this up over time and Paul's going to help us out a lot. But essentially, "At my death, there's a new blood that's been shed that's now going to open the way for all mankind, all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people to come into the family of Israel."
- 00:08:23 So the growing pains in the Book of Acts and the letters of Paul that he's trying to work out is what does that look like for a

people who've always been God's people, the house of Israel, who are now supposed to open the doors to Gentiles, other nations to come in? And the Book of Acts is showing us these growing pains. For instance, in Acts 10, we see the president of the church wrestling with this. Peter, as he has that groundbreaking impression in Acts 10 where he says, "I finally realized that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, those who work righteousness are accepted of him."

Hank Smith: 00:08:59

That's with Cornelius.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:09:00

Yeah. Cornelius becomes the very first Gentile to become part of the house of Israel without having to first become a Jew. Basically, the season of the new covenant is the season of radical inclusion. And this is such a difficult mental shift for many Jewish Christians to make, to invite the Gentiles into the family of Israel, to become heirs of all the promises made to the ancient covenant fathers. For some Jewish Christians, that inclusion of Gentiles into their promises felt like an intrusion into a place that they should not be. At the Temple precinct, there's like this wall, the Gentile wall, no Gentile shall pass this spot. Gentiles could hang out in the outer court, but they could not... There's a literal barrier. And Paul and others, Paul's the best, but others are trying to say, "That barrier has been broken and Jesus is inviting all in, because of the shedding of his blood."

00:09:50

Many Jewish Christians were trying to get on board with this and others were struggling pretty bad. Acts 15 dealt with the troubling question of what ought to be expected of a baptized Gentile? Okay, let's say that Gentiles can come into the family of Israel. So now what? Does that mean they need to take on all the obligations of the law of Moses? Do they need to be circumcised? Do they need to start-

Hank Smith: 00:10:09

Eat kosher.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:10:12

... living kosher laws, celebrate all the holidays, Yom Kippur and Passover and everything? Exactly how Jewish does a Gentile convert need to be? And that's what they wrestled with back and forth. And if you are a Gentile convert, does that mean you're kind of a second class citizen in the house of Israel? Or are you an equal heir with all?

00:10:30

Woo, I don't think we can fully fathom how difficult this time period was. We don't have anything quite like this today. I mean, Christian unity has always been a challenge, but Christian unity was the greatest challenge the early church faced. How can two very different groups of people become one?

- 00:10:45 So that's part, I think, what Paul meant in 1 Corinthians when he says that "Christ's gospel is a stumbling block to Jews and its foolishness to Gentiles, and how are we going to get that message in both hearts and help bring those people together?" So Saul was called to be the Lord's apostle to the Gentiles, specifically to try to help bridge this gap and heal that breach.
- Hank Smith: 00:11:09 Awesome. What a great summary. John, what do you got?
- John Bytheway: 00:11:12 What dawned on me reading this, just I know that in the ancient world, everybody had kind of their own gods in their country, in their community, in their region. And how interesting it would be for Paul to say, "Well, actually, the God of Israel is the God of the whole Earth," and trying to send that message out. I know you've got all your gods. I mean, going into Greece and seeing the pantheon of gods they have there, and for Paul to have to go and, "Actually, Israel's God is God." It reminds me of the closing line in the 10 Commandments when Rameses sits down with Nefretiri and says, "Moses' God is God." It's this bum, bum, bah moment. And here's Paul saying, "God of Israel is the God of the whole Earth." And now like you said, beautifully, it has to go to the Gentiles, to the whole world now.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:12:03 This is the beginning of missionary work as we know it. There was no such thing as going out and trying to convert people. That wasn't even a thing until the season of the new covenant. You think about like Matthew 10, Jesus calls his 12 apostles, and then he commissions them to go out to the house of Israel. He says, "Go out to the last sheep of the house of Israel, but unto the Gentiles, do not go. Do not go there." Now, what happens after his resurrection? Matthew 28, he says, "Now go to the whole world."
- 00:12:32 What has changed? What has changed between Matthew 10 and Matthew 28? The shedding of Jesus' blood. That's what changed. There's a new blood of a new covenant. That's it. And now he's wanting to invite everybody in. And Paul's going to deal with this over and over again in his letters, Galatians, Ephesians. Ephesians, he talks about Jesus "through his death, breaking the barrier, the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and so we can all become fellow citizens in the family of God, not strangers and foreigners."
- 00:12:57 God's trying to help us become one family. And this is the way, the surprising, shocking way that God had always planned all along that through Abraham's seed, especially Jesus, all the nations of the Earth will be blessed. And so Paul is trying to help everybody see that, both Jews and Gentiles. That this is what

God meant all along, and it's up to us to now participate in that and work out the details.

- Hank Smith: 00:13:19 That's the greatest part is, "Here's what you're going to do. You work out the details." And that's where we get a lot of these letters working out the details.
- John Bytheway: 00:13:29 Can we add to that the symbol of the veil of the temple being rent? You talked about that, this is also a symbol of, okay, now everyone.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:13:38 Yeah. It's not just one high priest, once a year who can come into the Holy of Holies. Now, anybody can approach the throne of God, "boldly," as the author of Hebrews will say, "You can now boldly approach the throne of God." Men and women, Jews and Gentiles, this is so radically inclusive. This is not like it's ever been done before. Nobody saw it coming quite this way. Isaiah prophesied about the light of God going out to the Gentiles. Israel, their light blessing the Gentiles. But nobody thought that it was going to happen quite like this. And so that's what they're navigating in the first century, these apostles. Paul at the forefront.
- John Bytheway: 00:14:16 Love that phrase, radical inclusion. That is a great phrase. Keep going.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:20 From what I've read, Paul is going through the known world. He is covering some serious ground.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:14:28 That's right. Between Acts 13 and Acts 21, through those chapters, Paul goes on three separate journeys. You can go into your scripture maps. You can see they're color coded, so there's some pictures. And you can see he goes on three different journeys with various companions, on land and sea, spanning several years. I think he travels over 10,000 miles, when you add those all up. And this isn't air miles. This is walking and-
- Hank Smith: 00:14:56 Foot miles.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:14:57 Yeah, foot miles and ship miles. And he establishes at least 14 different Christian communities by preaching what he sometimes called the kingdom of God. That's what he called his message, the kingdom of God. That's what he's announcing. His typical pattern was always to go into a city, first, into the Jewish synagogue to announce to his fellow Jews, the good news that, "The messianic king that was promised in the Hebrew Bible was

Jesus of Nazareth." And he could always back it up with powerful, historical, theological, and scriptural arguments.

00:15:27 He said, "He didn't come to supplant the Jewish hopes, this Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled them." He fulfilled the promises. And then once he had either converted or offended as many Jews as possible, he would then switch his audience to the Gentiles. And he would proclaim to them the good news that, "The one true God," like you were talking about John, "the one true God, who happens to be the God of Israel, had invited them to repent and join the kingdom of God and join his people."

00:15:54 Now, this message was always, inevitably, by some people misunderstood. Either Jews seeing it as like scandalous blasphemy, on the one hand, or a social threat to Gentiles, on the other hand. Because the very social stability of those people, I'm talking about the Roman culture, was built on the worship of various Roman gods. To say there's only one true God and that their gods were not that true God, was socially destabilizing.

Hank Smith: 00:16:23 Yeah, it could be bad for business.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:16:25 This is bad for business. Not to mention that claiming that a crucified man was risen from the dead and is now king of the world. That didn't always go over very well in Caesar's empire. Sometimes they beat him. Sometimes they stoned him. Sometimes they imprisoned him. Sometimes they just ran him out of town. Different strokes for different folks, but that's how they reacted to Paul. Either they loved him or they hated him.

Hank Smith: 00:16:49 Is that where we pick up then Scott in Acts 22? Is he towards the end of his life here?

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:16:56 Yeah, so now we're at the end of the third journey. So in Acts 20, at the end of his third journey, he has this almost out of the blue insight in verse 22, where he just starts to announce, he says, "I now go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that should befall me there." And it doesn't sound good, it doesn't bode well, but he says, the spirit is urging him to go there.

00:17:20 He had actually been collecting money from the various branches of the Gentiles to help meet the needs of some of their Jewish brothers and sisters back in Jerusalem. By the way, that's another angle. He's trying to foster unity between these two groups. He's raising money among the Gentiles to help

some of the poor or afflicted in Jerusalem. So maybe his original plan was to let somebody else carry the money and go back to Jerusalem. Because when he starts to announce that he's going to take the money, his friends start to flip out. They're shocked and they say, "You can't do that. You can't go."

00:17:51 They even say in verse four of chapter 21, Luke writes that, "They said to Paul through the Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem." So he's saying, "The Spirit's telling me to go to Jerusalem." They're saying, "The Spirit's telling me, you shouldn't go to Jerusalem." Interesting conflicting interpretations here. And then-

Hank Smith: 00:18:06 They don't want him to go, because it's dangerous for him?

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:18:09 It's dangerous for him. His reputation has preceded him. And we'll see actually when he ends up showing up in Jerusalem, let's go over to chapter 21. This is kind of setting up today's block. In chapter 21, when he shows up to Jerusalem. Let's go over to verse 17, maybe I'll read a little bit here. This is Luke recording, he says, "And when we," we think we means Luke was with him, "were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present." James seems to be kind of the presiding authority in Jerusalem. "And when he," Paul, "had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry," kind of his mission report. His ministry report here.

Hank Smith: 00:18:54 That might take a while.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:18:55 This is going to take a while. "And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto Him, 'Wow, thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.'" Meaning that's awesome what's been happening among the Gentiles. You probably noticed as you've come back to Jerusalem, there are a ton of Jews. There are a lot of Jews that believe, Jewish Christians. But that last line is actually a warning shot to Paul. He says, "They are all zealous of the law." Zealous of the law, this idea means that they have righteous indignation for God's honor for the unbreakable law of Moses. And there's been rumors, verse 21 says, "They are informed of thee."

00:19:39 This is why it was dangerous for Paul to come back to Jerusalem. "They are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk



after the customs." Dah, dah. So this, Paul's in the dog house. There's been rumors about him they've been spreading about him by fellow believers. So we got to just try to capture this. These are Jewish Christians. These are people who have accepted Jesus as their Messiah, and they've got it out for Paul. Because apparently, according to the rumor mill, he's been teaching people to forsake Moses.

00:20:16 When he is out there teaching Jews in the synagogues among the Gentiles out in Ephesus or out in Corinth or whatever, he's basically telling them, "You don't have to take Moses seriously." Now, is that accurate? No, that's not accurate. That's not what he's been teaching them. But that's the scuttlebutt. That's what's made it back to Jerusalem. And they're ticked. If they find him, they want to do him harm.

Hank Smith: 00:20:39 Now, is there a kernel of truth here that he is saying, "The law of Moses is not as important as the new law now"? That does seem to be a little bit of his message, or has that not been in anything he's taught?

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:20:51 Well, he's saying something like this, if I could encapsulate, he's saying that the law was useful as a school master, like he says in the Galatians letter, "It was a school master to prepare us for Messiah to come. The Davidic son has come, the true seed of Abraham has come, and so we ought to rejoice. He's not destroying the law of Moses. He fulfilled it. He is the hope of Israel. He is everything we've been wanting and everything that has come before has been good. Everything that's come before has been right. It's been true. It's been from God. And now that Messiah has come, there is a new covenant. There is a new covenant with his people and it looks different."

00:21:31 That was a hard pill to swallow, and you can see how misunderstanding crept in right away. And it basically gets to the point where people are saying, "He wants to destroy the Jewish way of life." Paul is the enemy.

Hank Smith: 00:21:43 And he's successful. He's a successful missionary. He's having an impact.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:21:48 Incredibly. I'd like to maybe just pause here for a sec to kind of think about this. What does it mean to be a servant of Christ and a messenger of Christ? And as we see with Paul, he was a victim of false assumptions. He's a victim of false assumptions. As Jesus's disciples, I think we can expect that to some degree or another. When some people learn that your convictions about Jesus and His teachings disagree with something that

they hold dear or conflicts with a lifestyle that they're committed to, as we see here, the Jewish way of living, that's when the defensive false assumptions come rushing in. It's a human tendency. We all do it. It's a psychological self-defense tactic to tell ourselves horrible stories about people we disagree with and who threaten our status quo, and to ascribe to them the worst possible motives.

00:22:36 This is what the Jewish believers are doing in Jerusalem. We would call them church members. It wasn't quite the way it's set up today, but these are church members who have it out for an apostle who's teaching stuff they disagree with. Can we just let that sink in for a second? It's actually dangerous for him. They almost kill him. We're about to get to those verses. But they were angry with him.

00:22:55 What do you guys want to say about that? This idea that as Jesus' disciples misunderstanding about our motives, about our where we're coming from, it's almost bound to happen. Have you experienced that? Is that something you feel is an accurate way of talking about followers of Christ?

John Bytheway: 00:23:11 This kind of reminds me of the Book of Mormon. When Jesus comes and tells them that the law of Moses is fulfilled, it says, "They were astonished." Now, the Sermon on the Mount, they were astonished because of His doctrine. He taught with authority from God, not from the scribes. But in the Book of Mormon, they're astonished because, "What's he doing with the law of Moses?" And it's kind of that same shift of, "Whoa, so everything we've thought before... This is a whole new system. How do we do that?" And he had to keep telling them, "I am He who delivered the law. I'm fulfilling the law. I'm not destroying it. And the prophets, those that haven't happened will yet happen." And it's interesting to see the same kind of thing, I think, in the new world. Do you see that?

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:23:53 Exactly. Yeah. Even Jesus was misunderstood, in I think, is it 35:15? He says, "I perceive that you're still wondering what I meant when I said-

John Bytheway: 00:24:01 About... yeah.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:24:02 ... all old things have been fulfilled and all things have become new." This is his reference to the new covenant. "I perceive that you didn't understand when I said that back in chapter 12, but let me expound a little bit on that." It's hard as a messenger of God, as a servant, anyone who's ever tried, it's hard to not be misunderstood. To try to teach the truth so clearly that you're

not misunderstood, but also compassionately, so people know you're not trying to wreck things that they hold dear.

- John Bytheway: 00:24:28 Well said.
- Hank Smith: 00:24:30 Reminds me of the prophet Joseph Smith. All right, if you study his life, you know he's a great, good man. But still, today, completely misunderstood by the world, and sometimes purposely misunderstood, "I know what you're saying, but I'm going to twist your words into something else."
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:24:50 "Paul's trying to destroy our whole Jewish way of life," that's kind of how it comes out. "He is the worst." I think, maybe to brooch a sensitive topic, we see this pretty commonly today surrounding LGBT issues. Modern apostles and Jesus' followers today often just take it right in the teeth, when it comes to LGBT issues. You hold up man/woman marriage as the only God ordained way of marriage, however humbly you approach it, however thoughtfully and gently and sincerely, and watch out. Some are not going to be able to resist hurling terms like, "Homophobic," or, "Hateful bigot," or, "Anti-love," or whatever. Even if you're an apostle, nobody's exempt from the hate machine here. Assumptions will be made and accusations will be leveled.
- 00:25:37 On the other hand, though, I also noticed it the other way, that as efforts are made by Christ's followers, including His apostles today, sometimes accusations come from the other direction within the church about caving under pressure, stuff like that. We've just got to learn to slow down and challenge our initial assumptions about each other. Listen to each other in love.
- 00:25:57 The point I'm making here though is just as a follower of Jesus, prepare to be misunderstood, prepare to be misrepresented. It's bound to happen, so prepare to forgive a lot. You're going to have a lot of opportunity to forgive. Paul knew that firsthand. Jesus will say, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for my name's sake." Like, "It's going to happen." It's part of the beatitudes. And not even eloquent, powerful Paul, who's such a good speaker and writer and explainer, not even he could avoid being misunderstood with his words. So...
- Hank Smith: 00:26:29 I like what you've taught us here, Scott, and I noticed my thoughts directly going to, "Yes, I am misunderstood sometimes. Yes, my words are deliberately twisted." But then as I stopped for a second, you said, "Stop," and probably the better lesson is when do I do that to others? When do I deliberately misunderstand? Or when do I jump to a conclusion

and fall victim to, what do they say? "They are informed of thee?" Like, "Who is informing? Where did I get the message? Maybe then the message is wrong, maybe what I've heard isn't the real story."

00:27:03 One of my good friends, Lynn Bowler, who served in lots of church leadership, I've asked him what has he learned? And he said, "I've learned there's always two sides to every story. You'll hear one piece of it and then you'll make a judgment on it, "This is what's happening." And then you'll find out that the situation is a lot more complicated and nuanced than what you thought.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:27:25 Yeah, instead of attacking Paul, maybe the thing is to go talk to Paul. Like, "Paul, here's what I've heard. Help me brother. Now, help clarify. Is this accurate? Are you trying to destroy the Jewish way of life?" I heard it recently with President Oaks, just gave a talk about dating and gave some tips about dating, kind of a pretty innocuous bit of counsel he's given before, and people attacked him online.

00:27:50 He was trying to encourage, I don't know, 1950s type marriage and dating type of standards or something. "He's so old-fashioned," and just kind of went after him, but I thought, "I don't know if you actually heard the talk. Maybe go back and listen to the talk." I just see it happening with the apostles today, and of course it hurts, but it also at the same time, it's like, well, that's par for the course. That's what happens.

Hank Smith: 00:28:13 Wasn't it Jesus himself, the community discourse, Matthew 18, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." So often when someone offends us, we talk to everyone except that person. We talk to every other person there is. But the Lord's saying, "Go talk to them. And He says, "And if he will hear thee," meaning, I think, if you come to an understanding, "you've gained a brother."

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:28:42 In this story, that's not what they do. That's what you should do, but that's not what they did. They're followers of Jesus, sort of. And that's how we all kind of are, we're followers of Jesus, sort of. We sometimes mess this up. We don't always do what Jesus just said there to "go to the person between them and us alone." And in this case, the Jerusalem apostles saw the writing on the wall. They knew it was going to happen. They were trying to stop this from happening.

00:29:05 So they actually give them really good advice. They say, "How about this? Go to the temple. What's more Jewish than the temple? Shave your head, as a vow, like the vow they would

take in Numbers 6, a very law of Moses vow. Take these four Jews with you. Pay for their passage into the temple and pay all the things that need to be paid to do that. Go in there, pray, meditate, do the most Jewish stuff. That's so law of Mosesy. And let's see, cross our fingers. If that works."

00:29:34 Well, let's turn the page, and that doesn't work. Seven days of that were going on, of this days of purification. It's kind of a way you could dedicate and devote yourself to God, a more deep, kind of a temporary form of purification. And when the seven days were almost ended, verse 27 says, "The Jews, which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people and laid hands on him, crying out, 'Men of Israel. Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place, the temple.' He's in the temple worshiping. They're like, "Here's the guy that's against the temple. Here's the guy. Look at, he also brought four Greeks also into the temple, and it polluted His holy place."

00:30:15 He didn't bring four Greeks. Those were all straight-up Jewish guys, but here they go, twisting, distorting to fit their message. "All the city," verse 30, "was moved, and the people ran together: they took Paul, they drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him-"

John Bytheway: 00:30:32 Goodness.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:30:33 ... then the chief captain of the Romans come out and they break it up, and they get soldiers to surround him, and they start taking him up the stairs and bind him in chains to see what he had done. But holy smokes, how about that reaction?

Hank Smith: 00:30:46 That is intense from believers.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:30:49 Believers who fomented this about, and that seems like other Jews are getting involved too, that maybe aren't believers, Jews which were of Asia, and kind of everyone in the area, like, "This guy, he's defiling the temple. He's defiling our way of life." It's just not accurate. They don't have their facts right. So it's really unfortunate. Anyway, human tendency, we've got to fight against that.

Hank Smith: 00:31:09 And the mob mentality there is real. Where was Paul when it said, "They all came together," and most of them didn't even know why they were?

John Bytheway: 00:31:18 Oh, in Ephesus. "Some said this and some said that, and some didn't even know why they were there." Just said, "Yeah, let's go chant something. This will be awesome."

Hank Smith: 00:31:28 Yeah. "Grab him." "Get him." "What did he do?" "I don't know, but he must be a bad guy."

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:31:32 If he wasn't a bad guy, why'd people be saying mean things about him?

John Bytheway: 00:31:36 Therefore...

Hank Smith: 00:31:37 I'm seeing this chapter in a new light here, Scott, with this, they've got their story wrong.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:31:42 Usually, we act angrily or violently against people when we believe the false stories that we tell ourselves about them. Usually, the truth is much softer. Usually, the truth will bring about compassion, not this kind of reaction. It's just a human thing. We've got to work on that. All of us do. I feel it in myself. I got to check myself, be like, "Okay, is that the real story though? I got to go deeper into this. What's your source?" Sometimes that's a good question. "What's your source on that? Help me know where you're getting this information. From what I've heard of Paul, he doesn't seem like the kind of guy that wants to destroy the Jewish way of life, but tell me more about where are you getting that information??"

Hank Smith: 00:32:17 Reminds me of the Book of Mormon, the Book of Mormon's one of the only books you can have a very strong opinion about without having read it.

John Bytheway: 00:32:23 Without reading it.

Hank Smith: 00:32:25 You can hate that book and never have read it. Never have looked into it, actually, to see what it says.

John Bytheway: 00:32:31 There was an article in the Church News about the new For the Strength of Youth: A Guide for Making Choices. I love that it's the only one of all that have ever been published of For the Strength of Youth pamphlets that has a subtitle, A Guide for Making Choices. It's like, you're going to make this choice. You're going to hear Him and you're going to let God prevail. But there was an article in the Church News about one kid that was like, "Hey, dad, it now says tattoos are okay." And dad's like, "Who said that?" "President Uchtdorf." He said, "Did you

actually read that talk?" And he said, "I knew he hadn't because that was a Saturday session. We weren't there or something."

00:33:05 "But did you read the talk? No, you're taking a false assumption and going way too far. What did he actually say?" The idea was, "Now go read the whole thing." Boy, I just love the emphasis of President Nelson. We all have to learn to hear Him and then let God prevail." And that takes, like you said, Scott, there's a little bit of patience and stepping back and saying, "Wait a minute. Let me make sure I understand what's really happening here from the best sources, and then let me get on my knees." And usually there's a softening that happens when we do that.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:33:41 Yeah, almost always, for me, that happens. There's that softening, yes.

Hank Smith: 00:33:44 I don't know if you guys have ever heard of anyone stereotyping and labeling people who don't believe what they believe politically. It used to happen.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:33:53 No, I've never heard that. Yeah, I've never heard that.

Hank Smith: 00:33:55 It used to happen.

John Bytheway: 00:33:56 Elder Oaks talked about that too, right?

Hank Smith: 00:33:59 Yeah, and the church over and over and over. President Hinckley said, "We must work harder to build a mutual respect and attitude of forbearance with tolerance, one for another regardless of the doctrines and philosophies which we may espouse. Concerning these, you and I may disagree, but we can do so with respect and civility." That would've been a softening there if that would've happened in Acts 21. Oh, yeah, which isn't even part of our block yet.

John Bytheway: 00:34:29 I'm sorry.

Hank Smith: 00:34:30 We haven't got to the block yet.

John Bytheway: 00:34:31 Yeah. Imagine if they would've said, "Hey, Paul, we heard this. Can you clarify?" Just imagine how different that is. "Hey, Paul, we heard this, this, this. What did you actually say?" And how different that would be.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:34:42 Exactly. All of this is backstory to where we want to go today. Sorry, this is a really long backstory, but Acts 22 through 28 is our block. But what's interesting is Acts 22 starts out with a

speech, starts out, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense, which I now make unto you." You need chapter 21 to even know what's going on. If you just go back a few verses there. In the end of chapter 21, Paul actually asks permission of the Roman guard. He says, "Could I speak to these people?" The Roman guard's surprised that he can speak perfect, intelligent Greek. And he is like, "Oh, you speak Greek? Sure."

00:35:13 And then, by the way, verse 38, just for fun, he's like, "Aren't you that Egyptian guy that led an uproar and led 4,000 men who were murderers out of..." The Roman guards got a weird story about Paul. He's like, "Are you that guy?" And he is like, "No, I'm not that guy." Verse 39, he's like, "No, I'm a Jew of Tarsus from Cilicia." What the heck? What are people saying about Paul? He's so misunderstood, so maligned.

00:35:37 Joseph Smith is probably a good equivalent to this or close, the stories people say about Joseph. But the guard says, "Okay, go ahead. Yeah, you can talk to these people." So he turns and he speaks to them in perfect Aramaic, and the people are stunned that he can speak Aramaic. "Quiet down, let's listen to this guy," that's verse two of chapter 22. "When they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence." And then he tries to do what we've been talking about. He is trying to help them understand his perspective, trying to understand where he's coming from. There's clearly misunderstanding.

00:36:08 I'll go kind of quickly, I'll jump through some of these verses, but verse three introduces his background. I'm a Jew, guys. I'm a Jew. I was actually brought up here. I'm from Tarsus, but I came to this city and I learned at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the greatest scripture teachers of the law that there is. And then he says at the end of verse three, he says, "I was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day." That word zealous again, that's a loaded word. That means he was willing to defend to the death. I don't know if you remember his backstory, but that's what he brings up. Verse four, he is like, "I persecuted this way," that's what they call Christianity during this time, this way.

John Bytheway: 00:36:46 I prefer the NIV, the Way. And it capitalizes it, too. That before it was called Christianity, it was called the Way. In Acts 24, they're going to call it the Way, again, instead of that way or this way, but...

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:36:59 That's it. He reviews his story of how he persecuted it unto the death, binding and delivering people to prison, men and women. He says, "There's high priests right here and this crowd



that can bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom I also received letters unto the brethren, I went to Damascus to bring them bound to Jerusalem to be punished." All these weirdos, all these people, I don't know if we could use the word Jesus freaks, that's come up before, but this idea that, All these Jesus freaks, they're just twisting the law, twisting the way, twisting the true meaning of the law of Moses. Going after this executed criminal, such weirdos. And this has to stop because they are polluting the purity of our way of life, of the Jewish way of life.

- Hank Smith: 00:37:42 Yeah. It's almost like he's saying, "I was just like you. In fact, I was really good at this."
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:37:46 Yeah, "I probably was better at this than you guys." Because he is dropping names in verse five, he is like, "High priest, the elders, I had official letters to do this. You guys are kind of this mob that's just formed, but I did this almost professionally. I was legit at this." And then he said, "The only thing that changed, the thing that changed for me was I actually met Jesus." And this is one of the accounts where... so, yes, three times in the Book of Acts that the story of Paul's conversion is told. The first is told by Luke in Acts 9. The next two are told by Paul personally. We get it straight from his mouth here in 22. He talks in verse seven about falling to the ground.
- 00:38:28 The question, the piercing question, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "Who art thou Lord?" He says, "I'm Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Like, you're deliberately trying to persecute my way. "And they that were with me, saw the light. They were afraid. They didn't hear the voice. But I asked, 'What should I do?' He said, 'Get up. Go to Damascus and you'll know what to do when you get there.'" He talks about Ananias. Anyway, the whole story, he tells the story again and he says, "That's what changed for me." And the people are still listening. They're not yelling anything at him during this time.
- 00:39:00 He said, "I persecuted this way, because I didn't understand. I misunderstood. I had some false assumptions about the Jesus way. And when I met Jesus, personally, that changed everything for me." But then, here's the problem, go down to verse 21, "And He," Jesus, "said unto me, 'Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.'" As soon as he says the G word, look at the next verse. "And they gave him audience unto this word." They were listening to that word. Once he said Gentiles, "They then lifted up their voices and said, 'Away with such a fellow from the Earth: for it is not fit that he should live.'" I mean, come on, we could disagree with each other, but we really have to...

Hank Smith: 00:39:42 And he doesn't even say anything about it. It's just, "The Lord told me to go among the Gentiles." That's it. "So all the stories are true. So everything we've heard about just true."

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:39:50 They just upload all those assumptions and, "Away with this fellow." They even cry out, verse 23, they start ripping their clothes, throw dust into the air, getting all these Jewish forms of mourning or exasperation, and the guard's like, "Okay, we're done here." Takes him into the castle. They say, "Let's find out the truth about this guy by scourging him, we're going to..." That's what they would do back in the day, beat the truth out of people. They felt like it wasn't authentic unless you were bleeding. That's as odd to us as it was normal to them.

Hank Smith: 00:40:17 We had Dr. Jack Welch with us, and he said, "That's how they knew if someone was telling the truth. If they tell them something, then they beat them, and they held to their story, okay."

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:40:25 That's the worst, anyways.

John Bytheway: 00:40:28 Tough days to live in, man.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:40:32 So as they tie him up, they're ready to flagellate him, he just asks a little question. This is one of the Aces he had up his sleeve. He says, "Oh, by the way, is it lawful for you to scourge a man that's a Roman-

John Bytheway: 00:40:46 I love this.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:40:46 ... and uncondemned?" And they're like, "Oh, shoot. He dropped the Roman citizen card."

John Bytheway: 00:40:51 The centurion, wait a minute.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:40:52 And then he goes and consults with the centurion. He's like, "Hey, did you know this guy's a Roman?" He's like, "No, what?" They come back and the guy says, "Is that true?" He says, "It is." And they had ways of knowing back then. They had this thing called, I think it was called a diploma, actually, a little brass thing that showed that you were a citizen of Rome. I don't know if he had that on his person somewhere, or if he just kind of pulled it out from underneath his tunic or whatever, but they believed him. To the point where they said, "Well, we're going to do this a different way then. Tomorrow we're going to assemble the council and the leaders of the Jews, the

Sanhedrin, and we'll let them examine you concerning this matter." And so he avoided the flogging right there.

- John Bytheway: 00:41:29 How many times has he kind of repeated this story of this is what happened to me?
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:41:34 Three times in the book of Acts, one's by Luke, and then the other two, there by Paul himself.
- John Bytheway: 00:41:39 I love it, because it's kind of, "This is how I got to where I am." And I love verse 15, "Thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast," I love these words, it's not just what thou has felt, "what thou hast seen and heard." I was just over here looking at all the Book of Mormon references for the missionaries talking about, it's not what they feel, but what they have seen and heard in offering kind of evidences of the gospel. So I like that. It is not just our feelings, we have seen and heard things. We've seen the fruits of the gospel in our lives and in the lives of others, and that's all part of our testimony along with our feelings.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:21 Scott, so far what I'm hearing is that Paul comes back to Jerusalem. People didn't want him to go back to Jerusalem, because they thought it was dangerous for him. Turns out, they were right, it is dangerous for him. And this mob takes him, and then the Romans grab him. They find out he's a Roman citizen. So they're like, "All right, we'll set up a meeting for tomorrow with you and the leaders of the Jews." Did I get the story right?
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:42:41 That's right.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:42 And that's where chapter 23 comes.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:42:44 23 picks up. Paul stands before them, and he announces this, verse one, he says, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." And he gets punched in the mouth right after saying that like, bam, verse two, right in the mouth. And he's like, "Whoa." And then Paul, he does react a little on this one, verse three-
- John Bytheway: 00:43:07 Yeah, love this.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:43:08 ... he's like, whoa, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" You hypocrite. So the guy's like, hey, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" Because God's high priest, Ananias, he's the one that told the guy to hit him in the

mouth. And he's like, oh, shoot, "I wist not brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." I apologize.

- Hank Smith: 00:43:33 Wow.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:43:34 Blood trickling down his lips. He's like, "Sorry about that." He only says one more thing. He kind of reads his audience, notices part are Pharisees, part are Sadducees-
- John Bytheway: 00:43:42 Brilliant, what he does here.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:43:44 ... he says, "Men and brethren," verse six, "I am a Pharisee," which is totally true, "the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." And because the Sadducees, don't believe in the resurrection, Luke explains in verse eight, they don't believe in angels or spirits or that your spirit becomes like something after you die, but the Pharisees did, he now wins a good part of the room. We're not sure what the breakup is, what percentages are Pharisee and what's Sadducees. But immediately, all the Pharisees come to his side and they're like, "You know what? He's not so bad. We find no evil in this man," verse nine.
- 00:44:20 And so Paul knew how to work a room. He knew a little bit about party politics here a little bit. But that's actually going to be a consistent defense he's going to put up. He's going, "Listen, I haven't said anything against the law. I'm only here because I believe in the hope of the resurrection, because I met Jesus, and I know that that's real. I know the resurrection's true, and that's the only thing people have against me." He's going to bring that up over and over again at each of his defenses. This is the first time. He's going to have four defenses. This is his first. And it goes bad that day.
- 00:44:47 The Romans that are watching that go on, they're going to tear him in pieces, they say. The Sadducees are going to grab him. The Pharisees is going to grab him. They're going to rip him in half, and so the Romans intercede again. They're like, "All right, get back here. Let's just put you in solitary confinement."
- 00:45:00 So he is forced away, verse 11, that night, the Lord stands by him and says, this is a really important verse, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." So this is a major promise, because this is a key point that Luke wants to tell in this story is how does the gospel go to the whole world? And Rome is at the

center of the world. It's not the uttermost edge, it's the centerpiece. And if you go to Rome and from Rome, let the message go out from there, you could reach the whole known world. I mean, Spain is about as far west as they understand the known world to be.

00:45:37 The Lord's calling him here and promising, "You're going to go to Rome." It wasn't frightening when he learned the next day from his little nephew that there was a plot by many Jews who'd sworn they would never eat or drink again until they had killed Paul. He wasn't really bothered by that. He just told his nephew to go tell the Roman captain, who then is able to avert that tragedy. He actually decides to send him to Caesarea, where he is going to be out of the hotbed of Jewish hostility. Go to Caesarea. Caesarea is kind of the headquarters of Roman rule in that part of the world.

Hank Smith: 00:46:10 Right on the coast there.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:46:12 Right on the coast. It was a strategic location for that, right?

John Bytheway: 00:46:15 Why don't you take a second and differentiate Caesarea from Caesarea Philippi, because before I actually went there, that's what my mind got confused. Because if your name is Caesar, you can name a bunch of cities after yourself.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:46:28 That's right. And so there's a few Caesareas. There's Caesarea that's here just north of Jerusalem. And then there's a Caesarea way up north, the Caesarea Philippi. They're naming a lot of places after Caesar, kind of like we did in America with Washington. We have Washington the state, we have Washington, DC. You can do it in multiple ways.

John Bytheway: 00:46:46 Hank's from Washington County, right Hank?

Hank Smith: 00:46:49 Yeah.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:46:49 Washington County, that's right. This is just that. So this Caesarea is the Caesarea right by the coast, just north, what? 30 something miles or so from Jerusalem. It's a great strategic location, because from there they can receive and dispatch emissaries from the Roman Empire. And they can kind of send news to Rome and they can receive news and that kind of thing. And so Caesarea is just a nice port city that makes sense. And so that's where the Roman governor at that time is, and his name is Felix. Paul is sent off to Felix.

Hank Smith: 00:47:20 So the Romans are trying to protect Paul, it sounds like.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:47:23 That's right. Maybe, Luke's doing that in a fun little twist of irony here. That God's people, ancient Israel, now, with all that history behind them, now, when the good news comes to them fully about Jesus Christ, and not just that some of them haven't received Jesus, because they have, but to see the full effect of where this has all been, meaning to go the whole time, that God actually wants to take this to the whole world, that becomes such a stumbling block, to use Paul's word to the Jews.

00:47:51 And so what's God going to do? He is going to use Gentiles. He's going to use Gentiles. He's going to share with the Gentiles more fully. But in this story, Luke's highlighting some of the positive traits of some of the Gentiles, right? Sometimes Luke gets accused of overdoing it. I don't think that's true. I think he shows plenty of flaws in the Gentiles, but he doesn't back away. If they do a positive thing, he'll let you know. This is one of those things, they are protecting Paul from his own people.

00:48:17 Paul keeps saying over and over again, "I'm a Jew. I was like you. I understand where you're coming from, but listen." But they won't listen. And so yeah, the Romans are protecting him. It's probably because he's a Roman citizen. Once he said that, once he used that card, they have been especially careful to protect him. He gets to go to a place where Roman citizens would be judged, which is the seat of government in that area, off to Caesarea.

00:48:39 And so that's why he goes there and meets Felix. So when he gets to Felix, Felix doesn't quite know what to do with him. He wants to listen to Paul, and he does. And Paul explains himself to Felix. Felix doesn't see anything worthy of death. That's what he says, "You've done nothing worthy of death."

Hank Smith: 00:48:58 Scott, before we go any further, I don't want to miss just a little opportunity. In verse 11, "The Lord stood by him and said, 'Be of good cheer.'" I think Paul might look at the Lord and go, "Have you been watching the last few days here? Be of good cheer? You want me to be happy about this?"

00:49:15 This is Elder Neal A. Maxwell. He talks about the Savior telling the apostles the night before He dies, "Be of good cheer." And he says, "Because Christ had overcome the world, the Atonement was about to be accomplished. Death was irrevocably defeated. Satan failed to stop the unfolding plan of salvation. All mankind would be given through the grace of God immortality. These were among the resplendent realities and

the fundamental facts, which justified the twelves being of good cheer, not their grim temporary circumstances. The precious perspectives of the gospel give to us this gospel gladness.

00:49:55 It was the same, on another occasion, the resurrected Jesus stood by the imprisoned Paul, instructing Paul to, 'Be of good cheer.' Once again, the circumstances of the moment included Paul's having been struck publicly on the mouth, 40 individuals plotting his death, and a trial for sedition. Why therefore should he be of good cheer? 'Because,' Jesus announced, 'though in bad circumstances, Paul would soon take the good news of the gospel to Rome.'"

00:50:23 He then talks about how this happened in 3 Nephi 1, how it happened to the prophet Joseph Smith, and then he says, "What precious perspective we obtain from the gospel of Jesus Christ concerning things that really matter, against which we measure the disappointments of the day." I think what Elder Maxwell is getting to, he said it a lot more eloquently than I can, that these great big truths of the Atonement and the Resurrection can really put bad days, bad times in their proper perspective.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:50:56 Wow, great insight.

Hank Smith: 00:50:58 Scott, take us to what happens next in Caesarea.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:51:01 Great. Yeah, so they go to Caesarea, where Paul meets Felix, the governor, who's there. This is the place where Roman citizens ought to be tried. And plenty of Jews follow from Jerusalem to come up and accuse Paul in front of the Roman governor. And they go on waxing eloquent about what they felt like was the problems. In fact, they even hire a certain orator, verse one says of chapter 24, named Tertullus. Basically, he's a lawyer who informs the governor against Paul. Basically, summarizes the case of the Jews against Paul. Paul is then allowed to dispute them. And he says in verse 10, "to cheerfully answer for myself."

00:51:39 And he tells his story, basically, refuting each of the points that were brought up. Then in verse 14 and 15, he says, "But this I do confess unto thee, here's what I'm guilty of, that after the Way," there it is again, John, "which they call heresy, so worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." I am guilty of worshiping in the Way, which was spoken of in the law and the prophets, which has come in fulfillment in Jesus. He goes on in verse 15 to say, "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that

there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men."

00:52:27 As Felix listens to him, long story short, he says, "Listen, I don't see any problem with this guy. I don't see anything worthy of death." But he doesn't dare to let him go because he fears the Jews. He basically just keeps Paul there. Sometimes he brings his wife with him, who is Jewish. Verse 24 tells us, her name's Drusilla. And so he's like, "Hey, you want to listen to this guy?" So Paul would come and teach them about faith in Christ and righteousness and temperance and judgment. And sometimes Felix didn't like what he was hearing. Verse 25 says, "He would tremble," and he is like, "Well, go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I call for thee, again." He doesn't know what he's... Felix is trapped. Felix is kind of an unprincipled opportunist. He's waiting, we see in verse 26, for Paul to try to bribe him.

00:53:10 He wants Paul to bribe him. He says, "If he gives me some money, I'll let him go." But he can't tell Paul that, because that would be illegal. But Paul knows. There's the wink, wink, wink, nod, nod, hint, hint. And so Paul stays there, verse 27 says, for two years, after two years of being in Felix's palace, area, he basically, his term is over and this new guy comes. A new governor is put in place called Festus, Porcius Festus.

00:53:35 Let me just stop for a second, just, I want you to think about that, that Paul was told back in Jerusalem, by Jesus, "Be of good cheer. I need you to go bear witness of me in Rome." He's like, "Awesome." Then he goes to Caesarea and nothing happens.

Hank Smith: 00:53:47 Two years.

John Bytheway: 00:53:47 Two years.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:53:47 He waits there. Two years. So what's Paul to do? What's Paul to do? I guess wait, trust. He doesn't see any opportunities yet. But Festus is going to offer him one. Festus, this new governor, the new provincial governor over that area. When Festus comes into power, his first act is to go to Jerusalem, because that's kind of the main group that he's ruling over. He goes there to kind of see how things are with the Jews. What's the very first thing the Jews bring up to him? They're bitter still about Paul.

Hank Smith: 00:54:19 Man, it's been two years. They're still upset.



Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:54:22 Yeah, they've got a little bee in their bonnet, a little burr under their saddle, and it's named Paul. And they're concerned that Paul's up in Caesarea, where they can't really get at him. So they're there asking Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem. I think Festus saw the writing on the wall, that they probably just wanted to waylay him and be done with him. And so he says, "How about this? How about, why don't you guys come up to Caesarea? I want to hear the case."

00:54:46 And so now here's Paul, his third defense. He's going to now have the accusation of the Jews against him. And now Festus wants to hear. He goes ahead and defends himself, again. The Jews come up, he defends himself, and Festus responds... And by the way, Luke is obviously summarizing a ton of material. Look in chapter 25, verse eight, he says, "While he answered for himself, 'Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended anything at all.'" That's all Luke tells us that he said. Of course, Paul said way more than that. But Luke's just saying, "Listen, he defended himself, kind of in typical fashion. But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, he said to Paul, 'Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?'"

00:55:31 And Paul said, "Listen, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat," he's a Roman citizen, he knows his rights, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

Hank Smith: 00:55:41 Festus.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:55:43 For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. You know my rights as a Roman citizen." So he says, he drops his ultimate trump card, "I appeal unto Caesar." Ah, shoot. That's kind of like in Pirates of the Caribbean, when you say, "Parlay. Parlay." It's like, Ah, dang it. Now we got to take him to the captain, Captain Barbosa. This is that moment where he says, "I appeal to Caesar."

00:56:11 So any Roman citizen, apparently, according to the judicial system at the time, could appeal to Caesar. Now, no one was gutsy enough or rarely were people gutsy enough to do that. You don't want to waste the emperor's time. You don't do that lightly. But Paul saw the writing on the wall, Festus is flirting with the idea of sending him back to Jerusalem. Paul says, "You know my rights as a Roman citizen, so let me just drop that card, to Caesar, I appeal." And so Festus says, "Hast thou

appealed unto Caesar? Well, then unto Caesar shalt thou go."  
So things are getting interesting.

00:56:40 Now, here's what's cool is that Paul was promised by the Lord that he would go to Rome. Nothing's been happening for two years. So Paul invokes parlay, and that ensures that he's going to go where? Rome, the seat of Roman power. So I sometimes want to stop and think about that, when I've been given a promise by God, that doesn't seem like it's coming to pass. There's a few different approaches. Sometimes the Lord will say in scripture, "Stand still and see the salvation of God." Other times He'll say, "Why don't you cheerfully do all things that lie in your power to bring about my promises to you, and then stand still."

00:57:24 And so I see that's an interesting thing that Paul seems to be doing here, is he's like, "Well, maybe this is that latter kind of a thing. So I'm going to appeal to Caesar and that's going to get me to Rome." And we've got to pray to be wise enough to discern the difference when it's a, I need to do this myself, or I need to act in a way that's going to help bring about the Lord's promises versus I need to trust God. I can't force this. So we've got to be very wise and discerning. In this case, Paul took some initiative. And sure enough, that's going to lead him to Rome.

John Bytheway: 00:57:56 Could have been a prompting too. Would we characterize it as being in prison for two years or just being in Caesarea? Was he in-

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:58:05 House arrest? He's in house arrest. People can come and go. He can kind of walk about. He's not behind bars. Verse 23, "'Let him have liberty,' Festus said, 'that he should forbid none of his acquaintances to minister or come unto him.'" So it's kind of a loose kind of house arrest. He's not allowed to leave, but he's not behind bars in the way you'd think of imprisonment, not during this time.

Hank Smith: 00:58:31 Scott, it does sound like Jesus said you're going to go to Rome. He sits there for two years, kind of waiting. Then this opportunity comes up. This could be the chance to go to Rome. So maybe he sees Jesus not only that as a prophecy, but also as an instruction. When you get the chance-

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:58:49 You need to go to Rome.

Hank Smith: 00:58:49 ... to go to Rome-

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:58:49 Take it.

Hank Smith: 00:58:50 ... take it.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:58:53 Yeah. In fact, it's funny, because the very next story, this is where King Agrippa comes to visit the new governor, Festus. And he's intrigued by Festus' prisoner. Agrippa is a Jew. His actual name is Herod Agrippa. From the Herodian Dynasty, these Jews. And so Paul could speak insider speak to Agrippa. And by the way, this is Herod Agrippa II. This would be great-grandson of Herod the Great, the great temple builder.

Hank Smith: 00:59:21 The guy, he built Caesarea, the very place where he is going.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 00:59:25 Yeah, an incredible builder. Obviously, a controversial character as well. Also, the one who in Matthew commands the slaughter of the innocents. And I think Agrippa's uncle would've been the Herod that Jesus went to during his trial. And so they're all connected in the Herodian Dynasty. So Agrippa wants to hear Paul, and they come in great pomp and circumstance. He comes with his sister. His sister is named Bernice, in verse 13.

Hank Smith: 00:59:53 Bernice. And I love that Festus says in 14, "There's a guy left that Felix left me." Almost like, "I got this huge problem that Felix just walked away from."

Dr. Scott Woodward: 01:00:06 Yeah, that's it. That's it. "And the chief priest and the Jews, they hate this guy. They want me to bring judgment against him, but I don't really have much to judge. I'd actually love if you could listen to him with me. And he's appealed to Caesar, and I don't know what to tell Caesar when I send him to him. What are the charges? What are the charges against this guy? There's some Jews that don't like him. What do we say?" And so he says, "All right, let me hear this guy on the morrow." And so on the morrow... Well, by the way, it's kind of funny, in verse 19, from a Gentile non-believing perspective, if you ask Festus, what does Paul believe? It's kind of funny to hear non-believers explain what you believe. Here's how he says it. He says, "Well, the Jews have certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive."

Hank Smith: 01:00:57 That's summing it up right there.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 01:00:58 That's Festus' version of Paul's testimony, right there.

Hank Smith: 01:01:04 They had some disagreements and it's pretty much over this guy.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 01:01:08 A dead guy who-

Hank Smith: 01:01:09 A dead guy.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 01:01:09 ... he says is still alive. "But because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, he appealed to Caesar, so let's talk." And so he is, "All right, let's talk. Let's hear him tomorrow." So tomorrow under great pomp, verse 23 says, "With great pomp, Agrippa and Bernice enter into the Palace of Hearing, with all the chief captains and principal men of the city at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth." Out he comes, the stage is set. Paul comes out all eyes on him, and Festus says, "King Agrippa, and all men here present with us, you see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and here; crying that he ought not to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death and that he himself had appealed to Augustus," that's Caesar, "I have determined to send him. But I don't know what to say."

01:02:00 So King Agrippa, after some examination, could you help me out here so I know what to say when I send him to Caesar? So Agrippa says to Paul, chapter 26, "You may speak." This whole chapter is worth going slowly through. I don't know that we have the time today to do that, but it's a great speech.

Hank Smith: 01:02:15 Great speech.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 01:02:16 We'll hit on some highlights. Paul's just cheerful. Talk about be of good cheer. Look at verse two, "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: especially because I know thee to be an expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently."

01:02:37 Agrippa is a Jew. And so Paul's like, "Finally, I get to explain this to a Jew, not to a Felix, not to Festus. They're Romans. You'll understand me Agrippa, when I say what I'm about to tell you." And then he tells his life story, again. This is similar back to chapter 22, "but I'm from my own nation, Jerusalem, I'm known of all the Jews. Those who know me would testify that I came from the straightest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." Notice that Paul's still calling Judaism as we would say today,

he's calling that his religion. "This is still my religion. This is just a certain sect of Judaism that a lot of people were having problems with." But he still considers himself a Jew. And he says, "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God, unto our fathers: unto which promise our 12 tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I'm accused of the Jews."

01:03:29 What hope's he talking about? He says in verse eight, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" So Agrippa is a Jew, and apparently, the more popular Jewish opinion is that resurrection's a reality. Sadducees don't believe it, but they're a small group compared to the group that believes in resurrection. And so he's appealing to that within Agrippa. And he tells about persecution in verse 9, 10, 11, that he was punishing this group of people following Jesus. It was this disruptor, this disturber, this dead man that...

01:04:04 But then, verse 13, "At midday, oh king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in Hebrew, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It's hard for thee to kick against the pricks." This idea of oxes, they had these little sharp shards that were sticking out down by the wheels. And if the oxes kicked to try to buck, those goads would prick them in the... In other words, "Paul, you're going the wrong direction. You're going the wrong way, man. You think you're doing the right thing, you're going the wrong way. You're kicking against the pricks and it's only going to hurt."

01:04:48 And I said, "Who art thou, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus who thou persecutest. Rise and stand upon thy feet: I have appeared unto thee for this purpose." This is actually the best explanation of what Jesus said to him. He gives a little more here. I like to compare Paul's different accounts to Joseph Smith's different accounts of the first vision, whereas there's little details that he gives that are different depending on his audience, depending on the context.

01:05:10 In this context, he's got a Jew who is listening and is giving him full audience. "Tell me everything, Paul." He does. And here's what Jesus said to me, verse 16, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee."

- 01:05:37 Why? Why would he send them to the Gentiles? Here's the best answer, verse 18, "To open their eyes." Jesus wants the Gentiles to have their eyes open. "And to turn them from darkness to light," that's second reason. Third reason, "and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins." Forgiveness of sins is possible for Gentiles. And you know what that would do for them if they receive forgiveness of sins? Fourth reason, "and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith, that is in me." Whoa, inheritance, inheriting the promises made to Israel. "Paul, I want you to go out and declare repentance to the Gentiles. Turn them from darkness to light, from Satan to God, so they could be forgiven of their sins and become heirs of all the promises, all the promises made to those who are sanctified by faith that is in me."
- 01:06:26 "Wherefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but I showed first unto them of Damascus, at Jerusalem, throughout all the coasts of Judea, then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and they went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue under this day, witnessing both the small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: which is that Christ would suffer, that he would be the first that should rise from the dead, and that he would show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."
- 01:07:03 He's summarizing a great deal of Old Testament content there, right? Again, his audience, Paul judges his audience worthy of these details, that he will get it. Agrippa will understand what I'm saying.
- Hank Smith: 01:07:14 This is quite a testimony he's bearing here and he's giving a lot of details. It sounds like maybe he sees in the face of the audience, at least some people in the audience, that this is clicking with them.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 01:07:26 I think so. But it's funny though, in verse 23, after he explains exactly what the Old Testament prophecy said, he's like waxing really eloquent. You can kind of see people are kind of spellbound, spellbound by what he's saying. You know those moments when someone's just given a great talk, you just kind of lean in and you're like, "Ooh." And then all of a sudden, Festus breaks the spell in verse 24, and he yells as loud as he can. The Greek here says, "As loud as he can, he says, 'Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.'" Have you lost your mind? You're crazy. Your education has...

you've taken one too many hits in the head with a book." I love how he reacts. He's like, "I'm not crazy." That's Paul defense. "I'm not crazy, most noble Festus, I speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

01:08:13 And he looks at the king and he says, "King, you know of these things, you know what I'm talking about. I'm persuaded that none of these things are hidden from you; for this thing was not done in a corner." Then he puts the king on the spot. Maybe not the smartest move, but he just went for it. This is Paul. He's bold. He says, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" Do you believe the Old Testament prophecies? Then he answers his question, maybe Agrippa was squirming, and so he says, "I know thou believest."

01:08:41 And then Agrippa is like, "Ah, maybe I can speak for myself." He says, "Paul," verse 28, "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Almost thou persuadest me. Now, I love that verse, but unfortunately, that's not a good translation. I found out. I was a little crestfallen when I found out that's not a good translation. Let me pull up a good translation. So here's a cool little trick that you can do, that listeners might find interesting, is if you just type in, you just Google, I'm doing it right now, if you just google a verse, just actually type in the literal verse, so Acts 26:28, and just click enter. And you're just going to scroll down just a little bit to something called Bible Hub. It's always like in the top four or so references. And then it will show you, instantly, all the different Bible translations, not all of them, but all the most common or popular translations of that verse.

01:09:29 And you'll find that, in this case, the King James version is pretty lonely in terms of saying that he was saying, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." The Greek just doesn't bear it out. Here's maybe a better translation. So for instance, if you go, you can see the NIV, New Living Translation, right there, boo, boo, boom. Here's a few just samples, "Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?'" that's maybe a little more accurate. You look through, you'll find, you just kind of start getting a sense. You can kind of cluster the meaning after you read 20 of these quick translations, where you can kind of see, okay... And, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian, Paul." With such a thin case, you think you can make me a Christian? Or do you think I would believe so quickly? Or can you persuade me in such a short time to become a Christian?

01:10:19 That's a little closer to the vibe that the Greek gives off as he's not saying, "Man, almost man, I was almost there until Festus had to break the spell." That's how I always read it. But when I got into the Greek, I was like, "Ah, dang it. The translation in King James is not following that."

Hank Smith: 01:10:36 Not perfectly accurate.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 01:10:39 And maybe there's a little hint of, "Maybe in another life, Paul, maybe under different circumstances, but not today, brother, not today." And then Paul answers with humor, verse 29, Paul says, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am." Then he looks down at his chains.

John Bytheway: 01:11:00 Except for this.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 01:11:01 "Except these bonds."

Hank Smith: 01:11:03 Except for the chains.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 01:11:03 "Except for this." I love he's still got that vibrant sense of humor in such a high pressure situation. He's still cracking jokes.

Hank Smith: 01:11:12 Except these bonds.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 01:11:14 "Except these bonds, I wouldn't recommend that aspect." And then Agrippa, he concludes like everyone else has concluded, that "he's done nothing worthy of death or even bonds," he says in verse 31, to Festus as they're walking away. He says, "Were it not that he had appealed unto Caesar, he could have been set at liberty." So now we start to see the wisdom of Paul in appealing to Caesar. If he was now set at liberty, he could have found his way to Rome, but in this case, he's going to get a Roman guard escorting him to Rome. And he's going to get actual audience with the big man himself, the ruler, the emperor, Caesar. And that's even a better way. Appeal to Caesar. So Agrippa would have let him go at this point, but he does not, because of the appeal to Caesar. So super interesting.

John Bytheway: 01:12:05 Please join us for part two of this podcast.





- Hank Smith: 00:07 I am inspired by how bold Paul is in front of these people. I don't know if I've ever shared a testimony like that outside of a congregation of members. We're very comfortable bearing our testimony, I think, in front of other believers. When it comes to someone who doesn't believe, that can be scary. It says in the manual, when Paul delivered the powerful testimonies recorded in Acts 22 and 26, he was being held prisoner by Roman soldiers. The people he spoke to had the power to condemn him to death. Yet, he chose to boldly bear witness of Jesus Christ and the heavenly vision he had received.
- 00:45 Then a couple of questions, what inspires you about his words? Consider the opportunities you have to share your testimony. For example, do your friends know how you feel about Jesus Christ or when was the last time you told your family how you gained your testimony of the gospel? It goes to Joseph Smith in Joseph Smith History talking about his own vision. "It was a fact that I had beheld a vision. I have thought since that I felt much like Paul when he made his defense before King Agrippa and related the account of the vision he had when he saw the light and heard the voice." Still, there were but few who believed him. Some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad and he was ridiculed and reviled.
- 01:24 All this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision. He knew he had. All the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise. Though they should persecute him to death, yet he knew and would know to his last breath that he had both seen a light and heard a voice speaking unto him and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise. Then he goes on, Joseph goes on to give his famous statement. "I had seen a vision, I knew it. I knew that God knew it and I could not deny it." Let's talk about this just for a second. How can we be more bold in our testimonies?
- John Bytheway: 02:03 I'm glad you brought this up. I love that Elder Uchtdorf has brought up this idea of normal and natural ways. Just say what you think. I like the Clayton Christensen, The Power of Everyday Missionaries, when someone says, how was your weekend?

Don't think of Saturday, think of Sunday and say, "We had the best time at church. We had this really interesting lesson of just normal and natural." Just tell people about it. I know this is a good time to bring up the Oklahoma Women's Softball team.

Hank Smith: 02:28

Okay.

John Bytheway: 02:30

I don't know if you guys have seen this, just a post-game interview with three members of the Oklahoma Women's Softball and NCAA softball team. Someone was, "How important is this win and this win that you just got and everything?" These women were so natural and bold. It really isn't that important to me. I can't remember exactly, so I'm paraphrasing. Apologies to Oklahoma Women's Softball if I get this wrong. They were just, "Really, what's important to me is Jesus. What's important to me is the life that I've built and the understanding that I have of life and what's really important because of Jesus."

03:06

One after another, these three women just very matter-of-factly, but very boldly said, "Winning is great. Winning is awesome. Love being here. The thing I build my life on is Jesus Christ and his gospel." I was just like, wow, listen to that. It was, they taught me, just tell them. We all feel this way. Like you said, Hank, sometimes it's a little harder just to come out that way, but they did. It went viral, maybe at least in some circles about, listen to these women, just matter of fact, that winning is awesome, it's great, but Jesus Christ is the most important thing.

Hank Smith: 03:41

This discussion reminds me of Elder Ballard's talks. You guys were old enough to remember this. Way back in 2004, which I can't believe is almost 20 years ago. He talked about bearing pure testimony. Here's what he says, "The Apostle Paul bore fervent testimony of Christ and converted many through his missionary labors. He did not shrink in bearing his testimony before King Agrippa." He says, "The lesson I believe is clear. Having a testimony alone is not enough. In fact, when we are truly converted, we cannot be restrained from testifying, and so it was with apostles and faithful members of old. It is our privilege, our duty, our obligation to declare the things which we know to be true." He continues, "Miraculous things happen when members join with missionaries and share pure testimony with those who are not members of the church. As we stand together, the Lord will help us find many more of his sheep who will know his voice as we unitedly share our testimonies with them."

04:46 He talks about the night that Parley P. Pratt visits Hyrum Smith. If you study the history of the church, you know how crucial both of those men are to the restoration. Parley becomes quite a missionary. He says, "Because Hyrum testified fearlessly of the divine truth that has been revealed to his brother, Joseph." Then he tells this story, President Ballard, "Joseph Kimber, a humble new convert in Thatcham, England, bore a simple testimony to a fellow farmhand. I believe Brother Kimber's witness of Joseph Smith in the restoration is what ignited the fire of belief in 17-year-old Henry Ballard's heart and caused him to ask to be baptized. Generations of the Ballard family are the beneficiaries of that humble testimony. Just one farmhand telling another farmhand what he believed turns into the Ballard family who have a legacy in the church.

John Bytheway: 05:49 That reminds me, Hank, of 1 Peter 3:15. "Be ready always to give an answer to anyone that asketh the reason for the hope that is in you" to kind of even prepare for that. What if someone were to ask me what would I say? Just that idea in a normal, natural way, this is what gives me such hope and happiness and helps me be of good cheer in life, like that softball team.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 06:12 I think we can all probably say or trace in our family history to a place where either we or our ancestors came into the church because of someone who was willing to be bold and testify in natural normal ways, in ways that they didn't apologize for. Just a quick story of a 17-year-old girl I admire with my whole heart. Her name's Nancy. Missionaries came to her door, she was interested. Her family listened to the first lesson or so, and then afterwards they're like, "This is ridiculous." She said, "No, I'm very interested." She continued to listen. It got so bad that her family got some, they called them anti-Mormon back then, some anti-Mormon people to come over to the house and to tell Nancy why this was a delusion, why she was an idiot to join this church. Her boyfriend told her that you've either got to choose between this church or me.

07:02 She stood up after hearing everybody and she said, "Thank you for all of your concern. Thank you all for caring about me." Then she just bore her simple beautiful testimony and she said, "I'm going to join this church and I'm going to leave soon. I'm probably never going to see any of you all again." She does. She leaves her home, she goes to Nauvoo where she meets the prophet, Joseph. She meets a guy named James Woodward. That's how I come into the church because Nancy, this beautiful, courageous, 17-year-old girl is willing to listen to humble testimony and then she's willing to stand to her family and say, "I feel this deeply in my soul and I got to follow this

wherever it leads." That's been a blessing to generations. I will always praise Nancy McCurdy's name.

- Hank Smith: 07:48 Scott, thank you so much for that. That was really powerful. I have the same feeling towards the two girls. I don't know their names, but two girls who invited my mom to seminary. The one time she had gone to church in her whole life was to be baptized. She'd gone to church once before, she was 17 and 16 I think. These two girls said, "Why don't you come to seminary with us?" She said, "They won't want me in there." She said that she smelled like cigarettes. Her parents both smoked heavily and she said, "They won't want me in there." They said, "Oh, come on over. You'll like seminary. It's like church but fun."
- 08:23 She went with them and she kept going. Finally, the teacher said, "You can't keep sluffing whatever class you're missing to come to this class, so you better sign up." She signed up and from that ended up becoming active in the church and going to BYU meeting my dad. Two girls who said, "Do you want to come to seminary? Cindy, do you want to come to seminary?" Changed my world. I think those are names we praise, people we praise for being bold. I don't even think they knew they were being bold. I think they just were thinking, "Hey, she should come with us."
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 08:52 They're not all success stories. Paul didn't move Agrippa. They're not always success stories, but Paul understood that you preach.
- Hank Smith: 09:02 You throw the seed out there.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 09:04 You throw the seed and let God do what God does. Let the spirit do what the spirit does. Well, shall we go to Rome?
- Hank Smith: 09:12 Let's do it. We're on chapter 27 now, right?
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 09:16 Yes. 27.
- John Bytheway: 09:17 How did the ancient Romans cut their pizza?
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 09:23 What's the answer, John? I don't know.
- John Bytheway: 09:24 With little Caesars. It's a dad joke.
- Hank Smith: 09:29 It's a beautiful joke. For anyone who's still listening to the podcast after that, thank you for staying with us. Little Caesars.

- John Bytheway: 09:41 Little Caesars.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 09:43 Here's what happens, chapter 27, it's determined verse one, that they should go to Italy and they turn Paul over to a centurion named Julius. To get in the boat, there's like 266 people in the boat. Many of those are prisoners and they're on their way to Rome. They go island hopping, verse four, to Cyprus. Then down slowly, verse seven says, they come to this place in verse eight called Fair Havens. This isn't the best time of year to go. This is probably October. In fact, some people, some scholars have said this is October 5th. They say that because of verse nine. Now, when much time was spent and the sailing was now dangerous because the fast was now already passed, Paul admonished them. There's that little clue right there that they think this is about Yom Kippur and the year they think, it's 58 AD.
- 10:32 That would've been right about that first part of October. Dangerous time to sail, especially when you get into November and December and January. Those are like, no, don't sail. No sail zones. This is flirting with, okay, we're getting there. Paul says, verse 10, "Sirs." This is the prisoner speaking up. A prisoner raising his hand, "Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives." Nevertheless, the centurion, Julius, he believed the master of the ship and the owner of the ship more than those things which were spoken by Paul. I think it's cool that Luke is kind of slowing down here. I think there's a little lesson he wants us to gather here. In verse 12 he says, Because the haven was not commodious to winter in, there's some discomfort if they stayed there. The more part advised to depart thence."
- 11:25 Let's just pause for a second. Let me throw out a scenario. Suppose an apostle says that a particular choice might be dangerous and will lead to hurt and much damage. What should we do? We have a choice. Then you've got an expert, the master of the ship, and you've got a majority that Paul calls verse 11, the more part, so I just throw this question out, it could be a fun discussion to have as a family or a Sunday school class. What's the danger of believing experts and the majority more than a prophet of God? Here you go. This is a perfect setup. This story sets this up. It was not commodious, verse 12 says, to winter there. What the apostle is suggesting is something that's inconvenient. There's an inconvenient thing he said, I think we should stay here, though it'll be inconvenient because I perceive with both prophetic insight and some seafaring experience himself that there is going to be hurt and much damage.

12:18 The more part go against that, so let's watch how this plays out. Verse 13, "when the south wind blew softly supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete." See, no problem. Paul was paranoid, everything's fine. Verse 14, "But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon." One of those, we'd call it a Nor'easter today. Northeastern wind coming down. "When the ship was caught and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive." Now what's driving the ship? They've lost control. They've lost control of the ship. You can moralize all through this. What's the moral of the story so far? They didn't listen to the prophet. They thought everything's going to be fine. They went into a place where you lose some control. Once you get into the ship, you lose some of your control. Don't get into ships that apostles warned you not to get into is one of the things I'm thinking of.

13:15 Sometimes those could even be relationships. How's that one, John? Was that okay? Is that a good one? Are we banging on what exactly what Luke was hoping we get out of this? No, probably not. I think there's just some interesting insights here. Then verse 16, running under a certain island, which is called Clauda. We had much work to come by the boat. They're trying to get this thing under control. You start throwing stuff overboard here. Verse 18, and we being exceedingly tossed with the tempest, the next day they lightened the ship and now they're throwing more over. It's just an interesting moment in verse 21, Paul, I don't know if he had his arms folded across his chest or not when he said this but, after long abstinence, I think Paul was biting his tongue, biting his tongue, but then he couldn't hold it anymore and he said, "Sirs, you should have hearkened unto me and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss." You should have listened to me.

14:04 I think it's just interesting, this idea. Sometimes we gamble with apostles' words and warnings and sometimes we lose. We could upload all kinds of stories here of people that we know. We could probably talk for hours about people who've gambled with the words of apostles. They have met with much hurt and much damage. Thinking about such advice as just simple, like in my teens. Avoid serious dating in your early teenage years. Don't get into that ship. Pornography is harmless fun for couples. That can help strengthen your marriage. Some experts say. Some experts are saying that the prophets don't know what they're talking about and there's groups of people that are needing to choose and they're getting into this ship of the no-heteronormative value ship, the redefinition of the family ship.

- 14:51 What modern prophets are calling the disintegration of the family. Marriages are on the decline. Divorces are on the rise. Almost 50% of children today are born out of wedlock. We have prophets, like Paul is saying, "We warn that the disintegration of family is going to bring upon individuals, communities and nations. The calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets." There's gambling that's happening with the words of prophets about some serious issues. Some ships that experts and maybe our own majority, at least the groups that we associate with, some of our majority might say, "Let's go with the experts, not prophets on these things." That's a gamble that too many have taken and they've met with much hurt and harm.
- Hank Smith: 15:33 Great application there. Absolutely. That's really good. They go from being really confident to verse 20, all hope that we should be saved was taken away. That you seem going step by step, it's getting worse, it's getting worse, it's getting worse. He says, "You should've listened to me." Many people in those situations are looking back going, "I should have listened. I should have taken that counsel more seriously."
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 15:59 There was neither sun nor stars. The light starts to go and the hope is lost. Again, I don't know if Luke was writing this with some metaphor in mind, but he is slowing down enough with this story to help us see these details where I wonder what he was hoping we'd get out of this. That's one application that comes to mind for me.
- Hank Smith: 16:19 Absolutely.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 16:21 Then there's a twist in the story. Not all hope is lost, at least so Paul says in verse 22, now I exhort you to be of good cheer. I think he learned that from Jesus, didn't he? Everything's going wrong. We've made dumb choices. We've got into ships we shouldn't have got into. Followed people we shouldn't have followed. Paul still says, "Be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you but of the ship." The ship's a goner. "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve." Here's what the angel said, "Fear not, Paul. Thou must be brought before Caesar and lo God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer, says a second time, for I believe God. That's where Paul is drawing his strength. I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me, we are going to be cast upon a certain island somewhere. I saw that too, so here we go.
- Hank Smith: 17:13 They're separate. They held on.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 17:15 They hold on. They continue to drive. They're being driven. They're starting to drop anchors to try to slow the ship down so it doesn't violently smash into rocks on the shore. That's something they would do. They would drop an anchor, it'd slow and then it would get to the tension point where it would break the ship. Then they'd cut the anchor, drop another anchor. They start doing that, in verse 28, 29. Then some people started to try to escape. Paul warns in verse 31, "If you get out of this ship, you cannot be saved."

Hank Smith: 17:41 It's not going to happen.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 17:43 Do not leave this ship now, we got to take this the full way. They cut the escape ships off, they fall into the water. Now they're in it for good. Paul then says, "Wherefore I pray you, I know you've been fasting for a while." There must be a lot of Jews on this ship. "Take some meat for this is for your health." Then he says, look at verse 35. Does this look familiar? "When he had thus spoken, he took bread and gave thanks to God in presence of them all. When he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer and they also took some meat." That's when he gives us the number. There's 266 souls.

Hank Smith: 18:20 Sounds like there's been a bit of a mutiny on this ship and Paul's in charge now.

John Bytheway: 18:24 You know what I love about that is right after that, you should have hearkened unto me and they're all going, "Yeah, you're right." Right after that be of good cheer. Because now I think they are listening. If I was right then listen to me now. Be of good cheer, there shall not any loss of life of men, "Oh, okay. I'm going to believe him this time."

Hank Smith: 18:47 When all hope is taken away, then all of a sudden, your ears are pricked. Ready for some message of hope.

John Bytheway: 18:54 I love verse 25, my goodness. I believe God. That's a sermon in a sentence. Be of good cheer for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me. I'd like to encourage young adults with their patriarchal blessing. Do you believe him? Do you believe what he said? What more can he say then to you he hath said like the hymn says? I believe God. It was as he told me. That's a great verse.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 19:21 Then they do shipwreck. They shipwreck in verse 41, falling into a place where the two seas met. They ran the ship aground and the four parts stuck fast and the rest was broken with the



violence of the waves. The soldiers say, "Let's kill all the prisoners." Then this centurion, Julius, is like, "No. No, no, no." Because he wanted to save one of them, Paul. He says, "No." Willing to save Paul, he kept them from their purpose and commanded that they which could swim, should cast themselves into the sea and get to land and the rest grab onto some boards. They come, all of them, everyone lives, 266 escape safely. They make it to this island. Today we know that island as Malta, or Melita, as it says in our Bible maps. That's just now south of Italy.

20:08 They're close, but they're not quite there yet. We have one chapter left. They get to this island called Melita, verse one says. There's a barbarous people there that showed us no little kindness. Meaning, they did show us kindness. They showed us a lot of kindness. They kindled a fire, they received us everyone, a bunch of prisoners. That's a nice show of faith by those people. The people of the island of Melita. They received us everyone because of the present rain, because of the cold. Paul goes out to gather some firewood. This is a fun story. He lays them on the fire and there was a snake he didn't know about. There was a viper out of the heat that came and just struck him right on the hand, fastened on his hand. The people of the island knew that snake as a venomous snake.

20:54 When the barbarian saw the venomous snake hanging on his hand, they said among themselves, here you go. You see something, now you have to tell yourself a story to make sense of it. Let's see what story they say. They say, "Oh, no doubt this man is a murderer. Otherwise, why would bad things happen to somebody? It has to be something bad that they did." "No doubt this man is a murderer whom though he had escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." He thought he could escape his judgment, but it has come. Paul shakes the beast off into the fire. He felt no harm. How be it? They all looked when he should have swollen or fallen down dead suddenly. After they had looked a great while and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and they said he was a God.

Hank Smith: 21:39 He's gone from murderer to God in just a couple of verses.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 21:45 The stories we tell ourselves about people. In this case, again, another story about an apostle. Assumptions about an apostle. Paul is going to become very popular on this island because he actually is going to heal the chief's father, the chief of the island named Publius. Heals him in the name of God, lays hands on him, verse eight, heals him. Then others, when they found out that Paul could do that, they bring their sick to him. He heals

them right after the manner and image of Jesus Christ. They stay there for three months on that island, verse 11 says. Then they head off, finally going up to Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, is where they land. Then they go over to Three Taverns, Forum of Appius, in Rome. You can see this on the Bible map really clearly. They eventually get to Rome.

22:35 Now, I want to point something out before we talk about Rome that I find absolutely fascinating. I want to know your guys' thoughts on this. We know that Luke is the author of both the book of Luke, the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. Some scholars have noticed that there are many parallels between the book of Luke and the Book of Acts that seem deliberate on Luke's part. I guess my question for you to consider as I go through a few of these is, why is Luke doing this? For instance, he's going to compare Paul and Jesus, but he doesn't do it overtly. You just catch it. If I do this right side by side, this will be easy. For instance, Jesus's traveling ministry in Luke chapters five through nine where he is in Galilee for a long while and then his long travel narrative to Jerusalem is paralleled in the Book of Acts in chapters 13 through 20 by Paul's traveling ministry, his missionary journeys.

23:34 So far, I'm like, "I don't know if I'm convinced. Then these keep adding up. Watch this. Then in Acts chapter 20 verse 22, Paul says, "I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem not knowing the things that shall befall me there." That should echo back to Luke 9:51 when Jesus steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, all of a sudden. No one understood why Jesus has to go to Jerusalem, only suffering awaits him there. He told it to his disciples multiple times. They never understood him. None of Paul's friends see why he needs to go to Jerusalem. Only suffering awaits you there, Paul. From the moment Paul determines to go to Jerusalem, there are seven references to him going to Jerusalem that Luke mentioned seven times. After Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem, seven times, seven references to Jesus going to Jerusalem.

24:19 Jesus is initially received positively in Jerusalem, so is Paul. Jesus had built up a bad reputation in Jerusalem among the leadership, however. Paul had built up a bad reputation in Jerusalem among Jewish Christians. Upon his arrival to Jerusalem, Jesus goes initially right to the temple. Upon his arrival, Paul goes initially to the temple. Paul was seized by a crowd. Then he undergoes four separate trials, the Sanhedrin. The governor, Felix. Festus, the new governor, and then Herod Agrippa. Jesus was seized by a crowd in Gethsemane. Then he undergoes four separate trials. Sanhedrin, Pilate, who was the

governor, which he was in the same position as Felix. Then he goes to Herod and he comes back to Pilate again. Both Pilate and Herod say that Jesus has done "nothing worthy of death and should be released." Both Felix and Herod Agrippa say that Paul has done "nothing worthy of death." Exact same phrase, and should be released were it not that he appealed to Caesar.

25:17

On the boat, Paul takes bread, gives thanks. When he had broken it, he began to eat. Almost exact phrase that Luke used to describe Jesus at Passover. "He took bread and gave thanks and break it." A Roman centurion of all people acknowledged that Paul was a good man and he sought to favor Paul and to save Paul. Remember, Luke highlights that it was a Roman centurion at the cross, of all people, who acknowledges that Jesus surely was a righteous man. In this narrative, as you continue to watch these narratives build, the crucifixion moment that parallels with Paul is the storm of the sea, and then the snake bite on the island. This is interesting. Why does he point out that little detail about the snake bite, and why all that detail about the stormy ocean? There's a stormy ocean. In the Jewish thought, you got to upload Jewish thinking here. The ocean represented the chaos waters where evil things would come.

26:16

There were monsters of the sea when God showed that he had power over the waters. That was a really big deal for the Jews. When he splits the Red Sea, he had power to control the monster. They'll later talk about that as they write about God, how do they say defeating the monster of the sea kind of a thing. The sea was evil, it was suspicious, it was chaotic. The stormy ocean narrative here where Paul and everyone in the ship is being, it's almost as if the ocean was trying to swallow them up. It could not swallow Paul because of the protection of God, nor could the venomous snake bite, which the snake in Jewish thinking, this is the epitome of evil. The snake bite couldn't thwart his mission. That's interesting. Neither the dark powers that were let loose on Jesus in Gethsemane.

27:03

I think about the flood, Orson F. Whitney once called it the flood of hell's dark gloom poured out upon the head of Jesus Christ that Satan did his worst in Gethsemane to try to swallow him up. The dark powers let loose on Jesus in Gethsemane is likened to this ocean moment and then death on the cross. The snake bite moment. The snake bite where, remember the prophecy in Genesis where the Lord said to Adam and Eve that a seed would come from the woman who would receive a bite, would receive a bite from the snake on his heel. He would with that heel then crush the head of that snake. This snake bite motif as a

representation of though Jesus was bitten by the snake, this would be his death. The poison didn't take. Oh, death, where is thy sting? Where's the poison of that bite?

- 27:54 Through his resurrection, Jesus shakes the snake off into the fire. It just seems like Luke is doing this on purpose. One scholar named Charles Talbert who's compiled the longest list of these parallels, he calls this an architectural pattern of correspondences between the career of Jesus and the life of Paul here. Why is Luke doing this? I think what he is not doing is he's not saying Paul is basically equal to Jesus. I don't think Luke's doing that. I don't think he would do that. I don't think anyone, Paul included, would feel comfortable with that. If that's not what he is doing, why is he doing that? Luke never answers that question and so we get to kind of speculate. Any thoughts on that?
- John Bytheway: 28:33 Sometimes we notice patterns and it's evidence of design. Evidence of design in the way he wrote it is that he's trying to show us something. This is a pattern of Christ. That somebody would notice that is awesome. It makes me think, I got to notice things more.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 28:51 There are some very careful readers of scripture that inspire them.
- John Bytheway: 28:54 That these were carefully written testimonies as well. I think that impresses me, but why not show a pattern of a follower of Christ that's in the shadow of Christ? Like you said at first, "Nah." Then it just keeps going. You think? "Yeah, look at that. Yeah, look at that."
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 29:11 I read 12 to you guys. There's more than 12. After 12 you start to think, "I think Luke was doing something on purpose here."
- Hank Smith: 29:17 I wonder if this is Luke's way of saying, if you're going to be a disciple of Christ, you will, like Paul, you got to follow the footsteps of Christ. You have to endure like Christ. You have to suffer in some ways like Christ, as his disciple.
- John Bytheway: 29:35 Jesus said that to Peter that you're going to go through some of the same things I did. Jesus said that to Peter at the end and here's Paul going through it. It's got to be pointing us to something.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 29:47 Luke is tantalizing that way. We'll talk about how he ends his book too. He does it again a second time on the ending here in

just a moment. I think this is just worth thinking about, worth savoring, hoping we make some connections between Paul and Jesus.

- John Bytheway: 30:00 What was that name again, Charles?
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 30:02 This is Charles Talbert.
- Hank Smith: 30:05 Maybe Luke is saying disciples model their lives after Christ, especially in trials. They submit to God, they abandon themselves to God.
- John Bytheway: 30:19 Look at Paul saying be of good cheer as Jesus in John, be of good cheer. I've overcome the world. Paul said, "Well, we're going to make it through all this."
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 30:29 I like what you're saying there. Hank, you mentioned this as disciples of Jesus and that's where my mind goes, is that Luke's probably underlining the idea that when people follow Jesus' way, their stories might begin to look like His story. That this is the cost of discipleship in some ways. The meaning behind the metaphor of taking up your cross to follow Jesus. What Paul called in his letter to the Philippians, he called it the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. This is how the kingdom of God is built, by people who are willing to sacrifice.
- 31:01 It's not through tanks and missiles and grenades or even a constant stream of uninterrupted blessings. That's not what it means to be in the kingdom of God. It means that through patience and diligence and perseverance and long-suffering, like both Jesus and Paul experienced. This is how the kingdom of God is built. Kingdom people are the kind of people that are willing to get in those trenches and to do what Jesus did. I love that. This is a fun wrestle, like Luke, he's asking us to do this very thing, to have this very conversation, I think.
- John Bytheway: 31:34 I'm reminded of the Liberty Jail, Son of Man hath descended below them all. You're going through tough things, Joseph. I did too.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 31:44 You ready for his last thing? The last little wrestle?
- Hank Smith: 31:47 Let's do it.
- John Bytheway: 31:47 Yeah, let's do it.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 31:49

The Book of Acts ends this way. In Acts 28, Paul makes it to Rome. He's delivered in verse 16 over to the captain of the guard there, but he is allowed to dwell by himself with a soldier. He's basically on house arrest again, but Paul has to pay the rent for the house. He doesn't waste any time. In verse 17, he reaches out to all the Jews in Rome. He wants all the leadership of the Jews to come and meet him so that he can explain himself and get ahead of the story. He even asked them, "I don't know what you guys have heard. Some people in Jerusalem have spoken against me saying that I'm going against the law that I'm going against Israel. I'm telling you that that's not true." It's for the hope of Israel, verse 20, that I am bound with this chain and they answer him and say, "We haven't heard anything about this man. We neither receive letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee. We want to hear it straight from you."

32:48

This is good, verse 22, "We desire to hear of thee. What thou thinkest?" Isn't that refreshing, considering where we've been from chapter 21? "We want to hear what thou thinkest, for as concerning this sect." Again, that's a reference to the Christianity sect of Judaism. They're not two separate religions yet. It's just a branch of Judaism. "For this sect, as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against." So, we want to hear it from you. We've heard the bad rumors, we've heard the bad people, nay saying this, we've heard the gossip, but we want to hear it from you. I love the maturity of that, in verse 23. They all came together and he expounded and he testified. What does he testify? The kingdom of God. That's his message. The kingdom of God. Persuading them concerning Jesus, the King of the Kingdom, both out of the law of Moses, out of the prophets from morning until evening.

33:41

He didn't have anything else to do. For him, this is his happy place. People are coming to the house. He was free to teach and speak. There was just a Roman soldier there making sure there's no shenanigans. He preached and people came to listen. When they agreed not among themselves, verse 25 says, "They departed after that Paul had spoken one word. Well, spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias, the prophet unto our father saying." Then he uses a verse that they took as insulting. Some of them did. "Go to this people and say, hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand and seeing you shall see and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross and the ears dull of hearing and their eyes have closed." There's some people that don't believe what Paul's saying and he is like, "You guys remind me

of this Isaiah." That didn't make him friends or influence people there.

34:29 Verse 28, "Be it known therefore unto you." Here's my final word to you, guys. He says, "That the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and that they will hear it." When he had said these words, the Jews departed and had great reasoning among themselves. Now, here's the tantalizing ending to Luke's Book of Acts, verse 30 and 31. "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house paying the rent himself and received all that came in unto him. Preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concerned the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him." We are left on a cliffhanger. Luke has spent more than, ever since chapter 20 building up, Paul is going to go to Jerusalem. Then in Jerusalem he learns he's going to go to Rome. He's going to go to Rome, and the Lord appeared to him. He's going to go to Rome. The gospel's got to go to every nation. That was set up at the very beginning and now he's in Rome. Then no conclusion.

Hank Smith: 35:34 What happens?

Dr. Scott Woodward: 35:34 No conclusion. The camera pans away with Paul preaching in a house that he's renting with a Roman soldier standing by. What? Does he ever talk to Caesar? He appealed to Caesar. Does he ever talk to Nero? Luke, this is the heart of the world. This isn't the whole world. He's gone to Rome. What happens, brother? Given Luke's care as a writer, a lot of scholars are convinced that this open-ended ending is clearly intentional. Again, that's a good wrestle to think about. Luke is doing this on purpose.

36:15 He's not telling us why and we didn't have to just think about it and think, "Okay. Why did he end like that? He's such a careful writer. Why did he leave some of these ends untied, these loose ends? Why is he not tying them all up?" Again, I'll ask you two, what do you guys think? What does this do to your mind and your heart? Some have called this the most odd ending of any book in scripture. Mark doesn't even have an ending, so that doesn't really count. This is a deliberate weird ending on purpose. It's up there with the Book of Jonah that just ends without resolving the story.

Hank Smith: 36:53 Most authors want to tie all the loose ends together. Luke is like, "Bye." Wait, what?

John Bytheway: 37:04 I love that he quotes that Isaiah verse that we first hear it, at least if we're reading the Bible chronologically, we hear it right

after the Parable of the Sower. Why are you teaching in parables? He gives that Isaiah prophecy. Well, some will see, some will not hear. I've noticed that, that call of Isaiah is repeated in every one of the gospels and here. It must've been important to him. It's in Matthew. I wrote in my margin, Matthew 13:15, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10 and Luke 12:40. Then here it is, and I love this. The last part of it just sounds like, this is the lest they, I think means otherwise. They could see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart and should be converted and I should heal them. Who wouldn't want that? That's what the Lord wants. See with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, be converted and be healed. Any thoughts on why that's in every one of the gospels and here? I've just always thought, how interesting. They must have all known the calling of Isaiah in their hearts or something.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 38:13

It's provocative. It's intentionally provocative. It's like, are you guys hearing this? Are you picking up what I'm putting down? This is the most important message in the world and you have so much internal noise, it's getting in the way of you being able to hear it. Humble yourselves. Humble yourselves. Empty your assumptions. Try to hear this as if for the first time without all your baggage. Otherwise, you fit Isaiah's prophecy. You fit his condemnation of those who just insist on not getting the true story. Resisting the true story.

John Bytheway: 38:50

I think also in Matthew 13, Jesus says, "Who hath ears to hear? Let him hear." It's like some will hear this, some won't. Boy, if you could hear, you could see with your eyes, hear with your ears, understand with your heart, be converted and be healed.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 39:02

It almost seems like Luke then pulls that here. He's saying, he ends verse 30 and 31 with his cliffhanger and he doesn't resolve it. Leaving the reader to have to do something. You and I now have to do some work to bring this book to a conclusion. I think that's interesting, John, that he's pulling a Jesus moment here where sometimes Jesus would tell a story and then not narrate the moral, just let people wrestle with it.

Hank Smith: 39:28

I thought of what you taught us in the very beginning of our interview where Acts is designed to parallel what Jesus said. You'll teach in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, at the uttermost parts of the earth.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 39:43

Here's Paul.



Hank Smith: 39:44 The last verse is he's in the uttermost parts of the earth. Maybe in Luke's mind he's like, "I did tell you the story. It's the story of Jesus. It's not the story of Paul. This is what Jesus said would happen and it happened."

Dr. Scott Woodward: 39:59 That's good. That goes right along with this great quote from a scholar named Ben Witherington, who's written a whole book just on the book of Acts and great thinker. He said, "The ending of the book of Acts makes it clear that Luke's purpose wasn't simply to chronicle the life and death of Paul, but rather the rise and spread of the gospel and of the social and religious movement to which it gave birth. Luke, through both Luke and Acts, has provided a theological history that traces the spread of the good news from Jerusalem to Rome, from the eastern edge of the Roman Empire into its very heart. Then he says, "Rome was not seen in Luke's day as the edge of the known world." That's Spain. The reader would know very well that Jesus' mission to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth, see Acts one, verse eight, was still ongoing in his own day.

40:50 When the reader sits down to read this, they're like, "Well, we haven't got there yet." Luke is like, "Exactly." He says, "For Luke, Paul's story is really about the unstoppable word of God, which no obstacle, no shipwreck, no snake bite, no Roman authorities could hinder from reaching the heart of the empire and the hearts of those who live there." Then from there it would go as the gateway into the ends of the earth. It's almost like Luke is including and challenging the reader to consider your own ending. How are you going to help this story end? What do you want to do about this? The story isn't over, as you can see. We can all participate in it. We can help spread the kingdom of the risen king to the ends of the earth. What are you going to do about it? We made it to the heart.

Hank Smith: 41:37 What are you going to do?

Dr. Scott Woodward: 41:38 Dear reader, the story is not finished. Will you help spread the good news about the risen king, Jesus Christ, to all the world? Because we're not there yet. Something like that. I like that. I like that a lot.

Hank Smith: 41:52 Before we wrap up, I wanted to mention one thing in verse 22 when these people come out to hear Paul and they say, "We don't know anything about you, but we do want to hear about Christianity, because everyone is speaking against it." I think that's fascinating, that one, they have the maturity to go not believe everything they hear that they might be like, "I want to hear it from an actual Christian. I want to hear it from

somebody who actually knows the story." It reminded me of Karl G. Maeser. He talked about his being introduced to the church. He said, "It was a very dark period of my life when I was searching for a foothold among the political, social, philosophical, and religious opinions of the world.

42:37 My attention was called to a pamphlet on the "Mormons" written by a man named Busch. The author wrote in a spirit of opposition to that strange people, but his very illogical deductions and sarcastic invectives aroused my curiosity and an irresistible desire to know more about the subject of the author's animadversion caused me to make persistent inquiries concerning it." He says, "I wrote a friend who lived in Copenhagen because I knew that missionaries in the Mormon church were maintained particularly in the Scandinavian countries." Then he ends up joining the church and if you don't know, he has some impact, Karl G. Maeser, in Provo, Utah. Starts a little school called Brigham Young Academy, which eventually becomes Brigham Young University. Fascinating that the only thing these people in Acts have heard about Christianity has been negative. It ends up leading to them wanting to know more about the message.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 43:39 If we could have that mindset. If we could just have that mindset like, I desire to hear from those that are being maligned. I want to hear your story.

Hank Smith: 43:46 I want to hear your end of it.

Dr. Scott Woodward: 43:48 Basically, from what I understand, what you just said, Hank, is we have Brigham Young University because some anti-Mormon pamphlet that piqued the curiosity of Karl G. Maeser. That's awesome.

Hank Smith: 44:01 We should never fear those things, I guess.

John Bytheway: 44:03 Just one last thing, Scott, why don't we talk to our audience about we all, I think in our minds think, I thought Paul was beheaded in Rome. How do we know that? Is that a scripture or is that a tradition?

Dr. Scott Woodward: 44:14 Luke never tells us how Paul died. There's a tradition that he was killed in Rome. It's an early tradition, but it's not scriptural. Some people think he actually ends up going from Rome to Spain. A lot of people think that second Timothy was written after this, and then he tells Timothy that he had been in the lion's mouth, which some people think, some scholars think

that's him saying he survived his interview with Nero. There's a little bit of, we have to do some deduction there. Does he make it to Spain? Some early Christian fathers say he made it all the way to Spain.

44:53 Luke never tells us that, it's not in scripture. We don't have any of his epistles that confirm that. Paul's memory now starts to get shrouded and a little bit of legend after this. How did he die exactly? We don't know. Is there strong legends about that? Yeah, there are. That he was beheaded. How do we know that? Tradition, hearsay. This is where it starts to get a little murky. Luke doesn't think that's an important part of the story. Luke thinks this is about Jesus and about the spread of his word. As long as Luke was a fit messenger to show how Jesus was using an apostle to do that, awesome. Apparently, his point was made by the end of Acts 28 and he has no more to say about Paul. It's a little tantalizing. Wish we had more.

Hank Smith: 45:39 That's tradition. Scott, before we let you go, I want to read something from the Come, Follow Me manual and then ask you a question. The manual says, "As Paul's ministry clearly shows, difficulties in our lives are not a sign that God disapproves of us or the work we are doing. In fact, sometimes it is during the difficulties that we feel his support most strongly." Then it asks us to review Paul's life and how the Lord stood by him and to ask ourselves how the Lord has stood by us. I like that summary. We've been studying the life of Paul here for the last month. What do you hope our listeners get out of studying the life of Paul in particular maybe these last few chapters?

Dr. Scott Woodward: 46:20 Gosh, there's so many takeaways from Paul. I'd highly recommend any of your listeners, download a copy of N.T. Wright's book on Kindle called, Paul a Biography. That's what I want to say. It's like 900 pages. That's what I want to say. No, my takeaway, we tried to drop a few today, is just how impressive he is as a disciple. Showing us what it means to be a follower of Jesus, and it seems that Luke is intentionally trying to say, no, he's following Jesus. Almost like phrases and words and circumstances. I think Luke wants us to see that, for sure. Let me end with a quote. I know this is a quote that some of your previous guests have mentioned, but it's so good. I just want to highlight it one more time. This is from Elder Holland when he was talking about the Book of Acts, he gave it another title.

47:10 He says, "It's called the Acts of the Apostles and understandably so. It leads us to great respect for Peter and Paul and John and the others. Not surprisingly from the outset, from the first

verse, the declaration is that the church will continue to be divinely-led, not mortally-led." Here's where he gives his title, "Indeed, a more complete title for the Book of Acts could appropriately be something like the Acts of the resurrected Christ working through the Holy Spirit in the lives and ministries of his ordained apostles." He says, "Now you can see why someone voted for the shorter title, but my suggested title is more accurate," he says. I think as we conclude the life of Paul, I think both Paul and Luke would want us to see that point. That what was happening with Paul was bigger than Paul. What was happening through Paul was bigger than Paul.

48:00 It was the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrected Christ, working through the Holy Spirit in the life of Paul to help the gospel go from a little house of Israel, blood lineage, house of Abraham group, to the whole world. To invite all nations, kindreds, tongues and people into the family of God, which is called the House of Israel. Help them partake of all the promises, become heirs of all the promises God has ever made to his people. I think that's the bigger picture. If we walk away saying that Paul is impressive, we would be right. Luke would say, "Good. Now go read it again. You missed my major point that I was trying to make. Go read it again. This is about Jesus." I think the book of Acts for me is like a little microscopic view of how Christ, the resurrected Christ, leads a church. We still today believe this about our church.

48:51 This is the Church of Jesus Christ. You hear apostles testifying all the time that He leads this church, that He's at the head of this church. If we want to ask, what does that look like? What does that actually look like up close? The Book of Acts is showing us a little peek into what does that look like when Jesus works with weak and simple servants, like Peter, Paul. Sometimes they have tempers, sometimes they have problems. They're not perfect servants, but Jesus works with them. He works with them great. Through them this message is going to the whole world. If we come away from the Book of Acts, I'm more impressed with Jesus. I think Luke will say, "My job here is done." We have more insight into that great Book of Mormon phrase in First Nephi, two, "The dealings of God with his people." How does the resurrected Jesus deal with his people?

49:38 That's what the Book of Acts is showing us. At the end of Paul's life, I say he's impressive. He's an incredible disciple of Jesus Christ. He models for us what it looks like to just lean into any suffering that might come from misunderstanding, from being maligned, from being the brunt of other people's misperceptions and false assumptions and still pushing into it

and pushing forward. Because the cause is worth it. The cause matters. This is about Christ's family. This is about God inviting everybody in. If we have to deal with some bumps along the way, so be it, I hear Paul saying, but just never lose sight of the bigger picture. This is about Jesus as the King of the Kingdom of God and he wants everybody to come and participate in it. We can help in some small way.

- Hank Smith: 50:27 Fantastic. I was really touched by Acts 23:11. "The Lord stood by him and said, be of good cheer." I hope our listeners felt that. That, that's part of the overall message of Acts is the Lord saying to his followers, be of good cheer. I'm with you. I'm standing by you. John, what a great day.
- John Bytheway: 50:50 I love it. I got to listen to this one again. There's so many things I want to write down. Thank you, Scott.
- Hank Smith: 50:56 Yes, Scott. As John said, thank you so much for being with us.
- Dr. Scott Woodward: 51:02 It has been an honor. Thank you. Thanks for having me on. You guys are awesome. Love the show. Keep it up.
- Hank Smith: 51:08 We want to thank Dr. Scott Woodward for being with us today. What a treat. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're not done with Paul. We now turn from his story to his letters. To his letters.
- John Bytheway: 51:29 To his letter.
- Hank Smith: 51:29 We're going to start that next week on FollowHIM.

## HOW CAN I BE MORE BOLD LIKE PAUL?



- Hank Smith: 00:02 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another followHIM favorites. My name's Hank Smith. I'm here with the wonderful John Bytheway. Hi, John.
- John Bytheway: 00:09 Hi Hank.
- Hank Smith: 00:10 John, you know the drill. We're going to take one question from this week's lesson in Come, Follow Me. The question this week comes from these stories about Paul. John he is so bold in his testimony, how can we be more bold like Paul in sharing the gospel in testifying?
- John Bytheway: 00:27 That's a good question because I tend to keep that kind of private, but I like how Paul would just say things, and I think one of the examples I love is just when someone says, how's your weekend? Just to say, it was really good. We had the best time at church, and it's just throw it out because you did and you loved it and you were there, and why not, it doesn't have to be about Saturday. You could say, we had a really good lesson Sunday, I loved it. And you can just be matter of fact and just say, people don't get offended at that. I think it's a beautiful way to maybe start that conversation.
- Hank Smith: 01:00 Absolutely. Also, with our families, John, sometimes we're a little bit timid or awkward with our own family, and we've got to come up with ways to get past that. Especially as parents, if parents are not willing to share their testimony, how they got their testimony, their experiences with God, who else is going to, who are we going to look to to say, Hey, tell my children about your testimony, because they need to hear it. So we could work past that in a variety of ways and where it does become a natural thing to talk about the gospel with our children, and to bear testimony, maybe not in formal ways, I think Elder Bednar would say there are times to bear formal testimonies, but at home they can be normal, natural ways of just talking about your life.

John Bytheway: 01:44 Oh, you know what you just said there? You say to your kid that reminds me, what's that parable? It was about this and this, and boy, that's true. That's bearing your testimony right there.

Hank Smith: 01:51 Yeah. My wife will frequently say, something will happen and she'll say, "There's a spiritual lesson in that." My kids will even do something and they'll say, "Let me guess, there's a spiritual lesson in this?" Yes, there actually is a spiritual lesson in this. That's one way of doing it.

John Bytheway: 02:07 And that's an occupational hazard that we have, Hank. We even see a movie that's about something else and have to pause it and go, you know what, that thought right there, that was really good.

Hank Smith: 02:18 Yep. I remember doing that with Endgame. I said, one guy, Iron Man, one guy has to sacrifice himself so everybody else can live and Jesus is the iron rod. And my kids are like, why'd you ruin it for us? But this can be ways that we can be more bold and getting up in testimony meeting, getting up there, and sharing a simple testimony. It can be a very powerful experience for all of our neighbors.

John Bytheway: 02:43 Yeah. Just tell people how you feel. Like Elder Holland said, don't be embarrassed if you only feel you can say, I believe, remember that story Elder Holland said, A boy apologized for saying only, I believe. He said, I hugged him until his eyes bugged out, right?

Hank Smith: 02:58 Yeah. Because belief is the basis of everything. And we don't let fear make decisions for us, right? If I'm sitting in Sacrament meeting and I don't want to go up there and bear my testimony and it's all based on fear, then I can overcome that and I can say, you know what, I'm going to act opposite to fear, and I'm going to go do it anyway. I'm going to feel the fear and do it anyway.

03:19 We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. This week we're joined by Dr. Scott Woodward. We think you're going to love what Scott does with these chapters. Then come back and join us next week for another followHIM Favorites.