

FAITH UNDER FIRE:

"Prepare Now. Stand Later"

Acts 22:30-23:10 (ESV)

St. John
Episcopal Church
Love God • Love People • Make Disciples



Dr. Derrick E. Reaves, D.Min
Senior Pastor/Teacher
May 3rd | 10:45 AM CDT
www.stjohnbc.org

Sermon Notes

Acts 22:30–23:10 (ESV)

³⁰ But on the next day, desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them. ¹ **And looking intently at the council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.”** ² **And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.** ³ **Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?”** ⁴ **Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God’s high priest?”** ⁵ **And Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”** ⁶ Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.” ⁷ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. ⁹ Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ party stood up and contended sharply, “We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?” ¹⁰ And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks.

May 3, 2026

(Answer key located on the last page)

INTRODUCTION

Before Paul ever faced the Sanhedrin, God had already been shaping and forming him for that moment.

Philippians 1:6 reminds us: “He who _____ a good work in you will bring it to _____.”

The question this passage asks is not “Are you strong enough?” — it is:

“Are you _____ enough with the God who is _____ enough?”

I. THE PRACTICE OF PREPARATION — Acts 22:30

Paul was not shaken because he had been _____ for this moment for years.

Preparation is knowing God’s Word well enough to _____ it when everything goes sideways.

THE PRINCIPLE:

Courageous gospel witness begins long before the _____ moment arrives — it begins in the daily practice of _____.

APPLICATION — This Week:

Pick one place where you feel most unprepared to stand and share your faith. Spend 10 minutes a day reading one Scripture that speaks to that situation. Write it down. Memorize it. Be ready.

II. THE PRACTICE OF PURITY — Acts 23:1–5

The Greek word for “conscience” means “_____ -knowledge” — a witnessing alongside oneself before _____.

A clean conscience does not mean you have never _____. It means you are not living a _____.

THE PRINCIPLE:

A clear conscience before _____ is the most powerful _____ a believer can stand on before people. You cannot control what people _____ about you. But you can control the _____ you live.

APPLICATION — This Week:

Get alone and sit quietly before God. Ask yourself honestly: Is there a gap between how I present myself in public and how I actually live in private?

Where is there a gap? What one honest step will you take to close it this week?

III. THE PRACTICE OF PRUDENCE — Acts 23:6–10

Paul read the _____, found the common _____, and used it as a bridge for the gospel.

Jesus said in Matthew 10:16: “Be as _____ as serpents and _____ as doves.”

THE PRINCIPLE:

Strategic wisdom in gospel witness is not _____ — it is the practiced discernment to know your _____, find the common ground, and open every available door for the _____ to be shared.

Know your audience. Find the right approach, but never change the GOSPEL MESSAGE.

APPLICATION — This Week:

Think of one person in your life who doesn't know Jesus yet. Ask: What do they already care about that I can use as a bridge to share the gospel?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Of the three practices — Preparation, Purity, and Prudence — which one does God seem to be speaking to you about most today, and why?

Answer Key

INTRODUCTION

Began | completion
walking closely | strong

I. THE PRACTICE OF PREPARATION

preparing | trust
hostile | preparation

II. THE PRACTICE OF PURITY

Co | God
Sinned | lie
God | platform
Say | life

III. THE PRACTICE OF PRUDENCE

room | ground
wise | innocent
compromise | audience | Gospel

The Good News

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Romans 5:1)

The Bad News

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
(Romans 3:23)

The Ugly News

For the wages of sin is death, ... (Romans 6:23a)

The Great News

... but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 6:23a)

Guess What?

You can become a Christian right now and experience salvation and the gift of eternal life through God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ! Simply Pray this Prayer Right Now! **"God thank you for Jesus Christ who died on the cross for my sins.**

Thank you for receiving what Jesus did for me on the cross as payment for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins. Right now I accept Jesus into my heart and ask that he become my Savior and Lord! Amen!"

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. (Romans 10:9–10)

Connect With Pastor Reaves!

Like his page on Facebook Derrick Reaves

Follow him on  @DerrickReaves

