

Study Guide for November 12th, 2006: Speak Up for Justice. Acts 22:23-29

Introduction: Tell of a person who you observed taking a stand for justice. What was the reaction among those who heard? What impact did the experience have on you?

Background: Paul has been rescued from the Jewish mob calling for his death. But now he faces the prospect of being flogged by the Roman authorities. From this brief account, we not only want to learn from Paul's example, but also to see God's work and ways.

I. Rescued from Torture:

- A. Why would the Roman commander, after rescuing Paul from the crowd, order that Paul be flogged and questioned? What was entailed in flogging?
- B. What was Paul's response to being stretched out in preparation of being flogged?
- C. How was Paul treated when the soldiers discovered he was a Roman citizen?
- D. Give a modern example of justice extended on the basis of some current citizenship
- E. How do you think Paul would have explained God's action that day to a friend?

II. Refined by Opposition:

- A. According to Matt. 10:22-23, what should Jesus' followers expect?
- B. Jesus warns his followers that he is sending them out like **sheep among wolves**. (See Matt. 10:16) What does this image anticipate?
- C. Jesus then instructs his followers to be **shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves**. What does this image teach us about how we should act in hostile situations?
- D. How does a concern for justice fit into the balance of **innocent and shrewd**?

III. Reflections on strategies for ongoing witness:

- A. Read the following passages and reflect on how Paul chose to carry out his witness.
 - 1) Acts 16:22-39: Note especially how Paul reacts differently in Philippi.
 - 2) Acts 17:10: Note why and when Paul left Thessalonica.
 - 3) Acts 20:31: Note why Paul's friends kept him from entering the arena.
 - 4) II Tim. 4:14: Note what warning Paul gives to Timothy.
- B. What situations will require **innocence and shrewdness** for effective witness?