

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 29TH–30TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

ANOTHER RIOT (ACTS 21:26–32)

TRYING TO CONNECT WITH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE

When Paul was in Jerusalem, he tried to build bridges with the Jews in order to be “all things to all people” so he might “save some” (1 Corinthians 9).

- **Christians should build relationships with all people** by being respectful and even by honoring cultural practices, **as long as they don't contradict biblical teaching.**

SOMETIMES IT CAN GO WRONG

Paul's PR strategy didn't work out well. Some Jews from Ephesus showed up and accused Paul of teaching against everything Jewish and defiling the temple by bringing in Gentiles.

- If we are not careful, trying to please people can greatly backfire. **We must be wise and be God-pleasers, not people-pleasers.**

THE TRUTH WILL OFFEND BOTH EXTREMES

The Greeks viewed what Paul said as very conservative, but the Jews saw Paul as a dangerous liberal. Paul is a great reminder that **we are to focus more on Jesus and the Word than culture or politics.**

- If lived out, **the Bible will often offend the extremes of the right and left.**

ANOTHER RIOT

The riot in Jerusalem would be Paul's sixth one. “The whole city was stirred up,” they grabbed Paul, dragged him from the temple, and savagely beat him with the intent to kill.

- **Opposition to the things of God inevitably leads to hypocritically condoned physical violence.**

SAVED AGAIN BY AN ODD SOURCE

A Roman *chiliarch* (commander of 1,000 men) named Claudius Lysias (23:26) got word of the riot taking place, and he took his men and put a stop to it to preserve the *Pax Romana*.

- Once again, we see Jesus using non-Christians to aid his people and to ensure that His will was being fulfilled.

A DEFENSE (ACTS 21:33–40)

PROPHECY FULFILLED

When Claudius arrived, he arrested Paul, bound him, and questioned him about “what he had done.” Paul's arrest directly fulfilled Agabus's prophecy in v. 11.

- **When one says they have a word from God, we must address it with much wisdom** (Deuteronomy 18:22; Isaiah 8:20; Matthew 7).

PAUL WAS BEING TREATED JUST LIKE HIS SAVIOR

Because the mob was so violent, the Roman soldiers had to carry Paul up the steps—possibly the same steps Jesus was taken to 27 years earlier, when the mob chose Barabbas over Him.

- **Some will suffer and be hated simply for their association with Jesus, and that is an honor** (5:41).

“YOU KNOW HOW TO SPEAK GREEK?”

Polished Greek was the last thing Claudius expected from a beaten man he thought had incited a riot. Not only that, but Claudius thought Paul was an Egyptian terrorist who had caused serious problems three years earlier.

- **Being well-spoken and articulate clarifies confusion and represents Jesus well.**

PREPARING TO GIVE A DEFENSE

This is the first of five times that Paul defends himself in the latter chapters of Acts. Paul shows pride in his homeland of Tarsus, and though he hints at it, he hasn't mentioned his Roman citizenship yet.

- **Christians are called to always be ready to peacefully defend the faith** (1 Peter 3:15).

NOW IN ARAMAIC

The mob was probably as shocked to hear Paul speak articulate Aramaic as Claudius was to hear Greek. They probably **assumed** Paul was an **uneducated, radical** outsider.

- **We cannot afford to isolate or speak insider lingo because non-believers need to know we are relatable people.**

PAUL KNEW ALL OF THIS WAS GOD'S PLAN

In Acts 9, Jesus said Paul would “take My name to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites. I will show him how much he must **suffer for My name.**”

- Though we may not always understand, we must **live in obedience, pursue God's will, and believe it is all for His glory and our betterment.**

WE ARE CALLED TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

- Relationships are risky, but we are called **to love all kinds of people in the hopes that they will come to know God.**
- We must use **wisdom, find common ground, focus on Christ more than culture or politics, and never compromise biblical truths to please people.**

IT DOESN'T ALWAYS GO ACCORDING TO PLAN

- **The Bible is offensive to those unwilling to humble themselves.** If taken in biblical context, the principles of God will, at times, offend both conservative and liberal beliefs.
- Opposition to the teachings of Scripture will often manifest in a hypocritical hatred and even violence.

WE ARE NOT TO ISOLATE

- Though people can be challenging, **Christians are not to live in isolation** (Mark 16; Matthew 28; Acts 1:8) but in **insulation by the Holy Spirit** so we can positively impact people around us (Ephesians 5; Acts 4; Romans 8).
- To be insulated, we must be full. To be full, we must **pray, study, listen, and obey!**

IT IS GOD'S WILL FOR US TO REPRESENT WELL

- People will assume we are uneducated, radical, or bigoted. **How we respond to the misconceptions of our faith is vital.**
- First, we must be **prepared** to talk about our faith from a biblical perspective. Second, we must **be able to connect with all kinds of people where they are.**
- **Christians are representatives of God.** This is a very serious responsibility and honor!
- If we are full of the Spirit, we produce the fruit of the Spirit: **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control** (Galatians 5). If we produce these attributes, we represent Him well.

WE MUST FIND THE EFFORT WORTH IT

- Loving people and representing Jesus well takes time, effort, and sacrifice. We must be **educated and connect, carefully use our words, live what we speak, and know the truth may lead to suffering.**
- We must remember **Jesus commissioned us, and the stakes are huge.**