

I. Introduction

A. Courage

1. The idea of courage lives somewhere in everyone, although consistency of where it comes from and what it looks like varies from person to person.
2. Seven-year-old Matt

- B. Paul went to Jerusalem, submitted to the Jerusalem church leadership, was attacked by an angry mob of his own people, and put in chains by Roman officials. And then, with great courage and boldness, Paul makes a defense of the Gospel he preaches.

II. Paul's courageous defense

A. Paul and the Tribune

As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, "May I say something to you?" And he said, "Do you know Greek? Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?" Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people." (Acts 21:37-39)

1. Greek language; background on Egyptian
2. Clarification: Jew from Tarsus

B. Paul's testimony

1. Paul's defense: I am a good Jew and as such, when confronted with visions and words from the Lord, I can do nothing less than obey.
2. "Hebrew language"

And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying: "Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you." And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said: (Acts 21:40-22:2)

- a. Aramaic: not all Jews from the diaspora throughout the Empire knew Hebrew, so what happened over time, they adopted Aramaic as a common language among them, also known as a Hebrew dialect.
- b. Paul demonstrated that he was a Jew, made sure that as many possible would understand, and it was a dialect not native but understood and required listening and concentration.

3. Testimony

- a. *I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. As I was on my way and*

drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And I answered, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said to me, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom you are persecuting." Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the One Who was speaking to me. And I said, "What shall I do, Lord?" And the Lord said to me, "Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do." And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing by me said to me, "Brother Saul, receive your sight." And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. And he said, "The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from His mouth; for you will be a witness for Him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name." When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw Him saying to me, "Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me" And I said, "Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in You. And when the blood of Stephen Your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him." And He said to me, "Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles." Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the Earth! For he should not be allowed to live." (Acts 21:3-21)

b. Some new information we didn't have from the earlier account in Acts

C. Paul's revelation

1. "Gentiles" as a trigger. It was a threat to their way of life, the faith of their Fathers, their standing as special over all other peoples.

Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the Earth! For he should not be allowed to live." (Acts 21:22)

2. Paul and the Tribune and citizenship

And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this. But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?" When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen." So the tribune came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" And he said, "Yes." The tribune answered, "I bought this citizenship for a large sum." Paul said, "But I am a citizen by birth." So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him

immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him. (Acts 21:23-29)

- a. Quality of Paul's citizenship
- b. Paul's use of citizenship - only in cases where he can advance the Gospel, his heavenly citizenship always casts a powerful shadow over his earthly citizenship.
- c. *When it is hard for others to see the clear distinction between my citizenship in the Kingdom of God there is something dangerously off. When my citizenship in any earthly ideology or nation influences my reading and obedience to Scripture, there is a problem - and it's really hard for me to see that.

III. Where does Paul's courage come from? Where does our courage come from?

A. The foundation of the Gospel

I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. (Acts 22:3)

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name. (Acts 22:16)

1. The Gospel: you are lost and in need of salvation
2. You are no better than anyone else, everyone needs Jesus - everyone, there is no other way
3. Look not to yourself, your ideology, your education, your zeal, your "fill-in-the-blank", but only to Jesus
4. *Courage begins when we look away from ourselves and humbly look toward Jesus. Humility will always precede true courage.

B. Jesus' source of courage demonstrated

1. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then He said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with Me." And going a little farther He fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And He said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done." And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, He went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. (Matthew 26:36-44)
2. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bow, in Heaven and on Earth and under the Earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)

3. *Although God exalts the humble, it might be a mistake to consider exaltation to be a prize or reward for humility. We do not become last in order to be first. The last is first in reality. Thus, to be humble is to be exalted. Jesus said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the Earth, will draw all people to Myself." (John 12:32)
- C. Humility and hope result in the courage to obey
1. Look away from self – humility.
 2. Look toward Jesus – hope.
 3. The combination of humility and hope placed in Jesus gives us the courage to obey.