

C.P.R

ACTS 23:11

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BACKGROUND

A riot ensued among the Jews in Jerusalem when they found Paul in the Temple area.

The crowd was silenced, and Paul tells them the story of his own spiritual journey: *from persecuting Christians to his encounter with Jesus and his baptism by Ananias in Damascus.*

When Paul concludes by telling the crowd that Jesus had commissioned him to spread the faith to the Gentiles, the crowd erupts in violence and attempts to kill Paul.

The Roman soldiers bind Paul and bring him in and threaten to question him under scourging. Paul explains that he is a Roman citizen, which ends the plan to scourge him. However, the next day he is to be brought before the council of Jewish leaders, the Sanhedrin.

Paul is brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin (high priest, priests, elders, religious leaders in Jerusalem). He begins by defending himself, stating that he has a clear conscience right up to the present day.

Ananias, the high priest, orders that he be struck on the mouth by those standing by Paul.

Paul curses Ananias, calling him a “*whitewashed wall*” who is attempting to judge Paul on the basis of the Law, yet who is himself violating the Law of Moses (by ordering that Paul be struck before he has presented his case and found guilty).

Those near Paul rebuke him for reviling the high priest. Paul says he did not know that the man speaking was the high priest (Paul had been away from Jerusalem for a long time, and apparently the high priest was not wearing any of his special clothing).

Paul notices that the group he is addressing has both Pharisees and Sadducees in it. He wisely splits his opponents with his next statement: *“I am a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged.”*

The tactic works, the group is split, and the two parties start arguing between one another. Things get violent.

The Roman soldiers pull Paul out and take him to the barracks. The next night Jesus appears, encouraging Paul that just as he had testified in Jerusalem, he will bear witness in Rome.

C-CHEER

Paul had such an intense desire to see the Jews saved that if it could help, he would even be willing to be accursed from God (*Romans 9:1-4*).

His life-long ambition to preach the gospel to the Jews has ended in utter chaos. He probably felt that his ministry was all washed up, he had failed miserably in his greatest goal for the ministry and that was to bring his fellow Jews to the saving knowledge of Jesus. Paul felt he was a failure. He was indeed depressed.

So, Christ performed a unique resuscitation on Paul. He gave him a CPR that can serve for all times.

- Christ told him "Be of good cheer."
- Jesus knew where Paul was; He had not lost sight of Paul because he was in jail
- God knows where you are today; even if you are hiding it from everyone else, God knows where you are. He knows your condition.
- Paul was alone, but he wasn't alone; if everyone else forsook him, Jesus was enough.
- Paul had been miraculously delivered from jail cells before; but this time, the Lord met him right in the jail cell.
- We often demand that Jesus deliver us out of our circumstances, when He

wants to meet us right in them.

- We sometimes think we are surrendering to Jesus when we are really only demanding an escape.
- God wants to meet us in whatever we face at the moment.
- Yes! Even Ministry men can get depressed; because of factors such as:
 - ❖ Failure from years/months of hard work and dedication
 - ❖ Wrong methods leading to bad results
 - ❖ Lack of commitment from followers
- Be vigilant of the night. Our fears and regrets tend to hit more when night comes. No wonder Morgan said "Bold, courageous, fearless during the day, the night of loneliness finds the strength spent, and the enemy is never slow to take advantage of that fact."
- We must tell men who drive the affairs of the kingdom to be of good cheer.
- It should be evident in our actions; not mere talk.

Key into their visions and methods

P – PURPOSE REDEFINED

"For as you have testified of Me in Jerusalem".

Jesus acknowledged that Paul had testified of Him in Jerusalem. He let him know that success must not be defined by positive results all the time.

- The response the people gave to his testimony had nothing to do with the Lord's acknowledgement of Paul's testimony.
- Sometimes we are discouraged because our testimony for Jesus only brings mocking and derision, we thus feel like a total failure.
- They had responded to Paul's testimony in a very negative way, yet the Lord is acknowledging his witness.
- Surely, "Your labor for the Lord is not in vain."
- We need to remember that we are not as commissioned salesmen.
- We get paid for presenting the merchandise, not for how many units we sell.
- I am not responsible to bring men to Jesus Christ, just to bring Jesus Christ to men.

R – REASSIGNMENT

"So Must You Also Bear Witness At Rome."

In effect Jesus is saying your ministry is not over, you still have to take the gospel to Rome.

Earlier Paul had expressed a desire to go to Rome. Before he had ever begun this ill-fated trip to Jerusalem he had announced his

intentions to visit the churches in Macedonia and Achaia. then he said, *"And I must also see Rome."* It will yet be more than two years before Paul will get to Rome.

- The Lord often begins to plant his will upon our hearts long before His perfect timing to bring it about.
- Your ministry is not over. There is more for you to do!
- There is more for you to do - More people to bring to Christ, more ways for you to glorify Him, more people to pray with, more humble ways to serve His people, more hungry to feed, more naked to clothe, more weary saints for you to encourage.
- If you can understand the timing of God, you'd cruise in your shipwreck.
- Recovery is not merely about resting and taking a break. In ministry, it's about being recommissioned.

CONCLUSION

Even Paul was down and he needed resuscitation. He did fall into the snare of the night and her woes.

He thought hard about his failures and must have lost faith. And Christ did show up when it mattered most. He was in the situation with him. That night must have been epic for Paul.

He must have known a new dimension of Christ – The one who Cheers!

Christ conducted a CPR on Paul and his life never remained the same.

God will always find us where we are, because he knows where we are.

He'll conduct a CPR on us if we are losing breath. And we too can do the same for others.

May God help us to be cheerful, purpose driven and divinely commissioned in Jesus' name. Amen.