

Faith is Spiritual Reality (Acts 23:1-11)

When Apostle Paul arrived in Jerusalem, angry crowd tried to kill him. He was taken out by the commander of the Roman troops. He testified how he met Jesus. But crowd did not listen and shouted to kill him. The commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews. So the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the members of the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them. **“My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day. At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck! (Acts 23:1-3)** Apostle Paul was not afraid of them. He opposed them when the high priest ordered to strike him on the mouth. **“How dare you insult God’s high priest! Paul replied, “Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: ‘Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people. (Acts 23:4-5)**

Obedience to Authority Paul obeyed authority. Sometimes we are against authority but not Jesus. **“Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you? Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” (John 19:10-11)** Most of us denied authority itself if we don’t like it but Paul changed his attitude right away to obey authority like Jesus did. We should not disregard and break down though it is wrong authority - also not to misuse it.

Proclamation of Gospel/ Truth Paul proclaimed truth of Gospel instead of against the authority of laws. **“Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead.” When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees believe all these things.) (Acts 23:6-8)** When Paul said the truth of Faith instead of defending himself, dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. God works when we do His way: Truth. Paul said about resurrection because it is the essence of Gospel for salvation. **“There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. “We find nothing wrong with this man,” they said. “What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” (Acts 23:9)** God will be with us, help us when we proclaim truth and faith instead of right or wrong. When Paul was kept in barracks God told him in his vision. **“The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, “Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.” (Acts 23:11)**

Spiritual Reality of Faith Faith is not an idea but spiritual reality, not vague - but factual. We could not know Jesus with our own common sense, reason or knowledge. **“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.(Hebrews 11:1-3)** There is spiritual battle against of the ruler of the kingdom of the air - invisible who fallen from heaven(Satan) and his followers(Isaiah 14:12-15) Bibles shows that Adam and Eve failed in spiritual battle though God ordered them.**“ The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it(Genesis 2:15)**

Abilities / Strength / Courage God's people have great abilities that worldly people do not have.

- 1) Power of Words. God gives us words to defeat all test and difficulty which is the bread of spirit. Bible makes us to be wise, keeps from sins and wondering. God's word is wisdom itself.
- 2) Power of Prayer. Experience unexpected miracle in suffering when we pray together with holding God's word.
- 3) Power of Praise. Sing praise always in good or bad situation then we will have courage instead of fear even in suffering.

Holy Spirit said to Paul to take courage. Jesus said: be strong to anxious disciples, God told to Joshua after death of Moses too. **"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."** (John 16:33) **"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. (Joshua 1:6)** How, when we could be strong and courageous?

1. When we know God exactly. **"the people who know their God will firmly resist him. (Daniel 11:32)**
2. When we please God in our life. **"Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. (1 John 3:21-22)**
3. When we know God's plan. **"The next morning some Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. More than forty men were involved in this plot. (Acts 23:12-13)** Paul was safe from plot to be killed because God made centurion protect him and transferred to Governor Felix, in Caesarea.

Boldness/ Confidence We should be bold if we have missions in God and have confidence in God. We could be bold when we believe God who always guide us for good. **"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)** **"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery Instead, be filled with the Spirit, (Ephesians 5:18)** How Paul was bold? because he was filled by Holy Spirit. We will have no worries, no stress and be bold, could forgive everything. We should strive to be fulfilled by Holy Spirit.