

Summary

- Paul's arrest and addressing the mob - on being misunderstood and misrepresented, on speaking up for Jesus under pressure. About sharing our testimony. About not pulling our punches (v.21)

Introduction

- "Under arrest" title image
- Journeying with Paul

Context:

- Journey back to Jerusalem, warnings of coming trouble, but sense of God's leading...
 - tensions between Jewish and Gentile Christians, pressure of show keeping the law - so supporting some believers who have taken a vow...

Misunderstood and Misinterpreted

- *Man holding head image*
- But then things start to unravel!
 - essentially some folk see him in the Temple and **assume** he has brought Gentiles with him, thus desecrating the Temple
 - Paul hasn't - he's been with Trophimus during the week, but hasn't brought him to the Temple - he's no fool!! (v.29)
- Paul is **misunderstood and misinterpreted**
 - and it gets him into a whole heap of trouble!
- There is no sense that Paul has done anything wrong, unwise or foolish
 - others have made the mistakes
 - this misunderstanding and misunderstanding, rather, is just part of the territory for those who follow Jesus Christ
- I suspect that many of us will identify with this!
 - perhaps only rarely are the consequences so extreme as this!
 - but many of us will have been misunderstood and misinterpreted
 - one of funnier ones for me was when beginning training for the ministry, boss Dr (now Professor) Arthur Trew, asked me what the promotion prospects were like in the ministry!!
 - it can, though, be much more serious - schools misinterpreting the reason why a Christian chaplain might want to come and take assemblies, and deny access...
- Its part of the territory:
 - expect it, learn to be gracious when it happens...
 - our audience is God, not the watching world!

Speaking up under pressure

- *Start with egg/clamp image*
- So we have Paul under pressure, under attack...
 - what does he do?
- He speaks up (21:37; 22:1ff)
 - it would have been easy to seek the safety of the Roman jail, where he could (as he does later) be protected as a Roman citizen
 - but here is an opportunity for many people to hear about **what** and **why** this has happened
 - to defend the good name of Jesus, which is being slandered with the accusation that this **Christian** defiled the Temple
- So he, very courageously, speaks up...
- *Move onto 3 girls talking image*
- Now for us we too need to be ready to speak up
 - and our **times of pressure** are more likely to be situations like this (**image**) than riots as Paul's was

- will we speak up when the opportunity arises?
- will we be alert to the opportunities?
- will we ask God to give us the words - both at the time and beforehand?
- will we be ready to say "I'm a Christian - and here is something of why" when the conversation turns to what we believe?

Sharing your Story

- *Woman chatting on phone image*
- Power of testimony
 - Paul tells the story of his own conversion - and we'll see he does that several times in these later stages of Acts
 - to tell the story of how God has worked in my life

Not pulling our punches (22:21)

- *Fist image*
- The sting in the tail!
 - up to this point Paul's experience has been relatively inoffensive;
 - something that happened to **him** that does not necessarily affect **them**
- But Paul knows they need to confront the changes that faith in Jesus Christ actually calls them to:
 - that he is Lord of **all**, not just Jews
 - that the Jewish Law is not **required** for faith
 - that they commandments are **results** of God at work in us, not **requirements** for us to know God
- And so Paul makes sure he doesn't pull his punch:
 - (22:21) Paul makes clear that the gospel message is for Gentiles too, so that there can be no misunderstanding of the implications of what he has explained already
- We too need to be ready to make the implications clear:
 - having spoken up, having told our story, to ask the question: **What do you think? What are you going to do about what you have heard?**
 - I've known of people who've been chatting to their non-Christian friend about faith, perhaps over a period of time; that friend is living with or sleeping with their partner, and is beginning to see that becoming a Christian will change their life - the friend asks the Christian about this issue - will I need to stop sleeping with....?

Conclusion

- Summarise all four points...