

Who is in Charge?

- Expecting to be a little shorter tonight...
 - but perhaps wondering whether there might naturally be discussion after the service...
- Who is in charge?
 - or who is influencing events?
- Is it the Roman commander, with his troops?
 - or the Governor, Felix, down in Caesarea? (or the Emperor, ultimately, in Rome)
 - is it the Jewish authorities, with their plots and plans?
 - is it the little Christian community, Paul and his nephew?

God is in Charge!

- The obvious answer!
 - implicit in the text we have here before us
 - but the prevailing attitude and context throughout these last chapters of Acts
 - God is bringing about his purposes
 - *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)
 - God has in mind for Paul to be heading for Rome... and here he takes the first step, out of Jerusalem, on the long road to Rome
 - and the first days on what will be a multi-year journey (Acts 24:27)

Passive Response

- Too often, however, our response to God being in charge is to live and act more or less **passively**
 - to just let things plod along the way they are...
 - to accept things as if **fated** - it was meant to be...
- Paul had a choice when he heard news of the plot against him
 - he probably wasn't really surprised....
 - but he had a choice - to tell or not to tell!

Man in flood

- Infamous preacher's story!
 - number 156, on p.92, of "Rolling in the Aisles"
- God is indeed in charge, but he doesn't simply want us to lie back and switch off!!
 - rather he wants us to be active participants, looking to see what God is about, what he is doing, an engaging in that

Concluding Questions

- How do we respond to situations that feel beyond our control?
 - are we tempted to respond passively?
 - when is a measure of acceptance of our circumstances a healthy sign?