

# Empowered

The Amazing Church of Jesus Christ

Week 11

*Kept in Custody in Caesarea*

**Acts 24:1 – 26:32**

*Teacher Notes*

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*Bible versions used throughout the Empowered teacher notes are  
NASB, ESV, NLT, and CEB.*

## ✧ Introduction to Week Eleven

- As we study this week, consider the word ‘trust.’
- In these chapters, we will see Paul push aside worry, anxiety, fear, and stress and, instead, chooses to trust in the Almighty who he knew was sovereign in every situation.
- Even when Paul’s enemies surrounded him like lions hungry for prey, he trusted.

**ILLUSTRATION:** In 1812, Adoniram Judson and his wife Ann were called by God to be missionaries. God had called this couple to preach the gospel to people who had never heard it before—the people in Burma, India. Burma was a country that was hostile to foreigners, and it was against the law to worship any other god than Buddha. In fact, all missionaries who had been there before them, had either died or left. But this news did not stop the Judsons, they made their way to Burma, and while they were there, Adoniram worked on an English-Burmese dictionary as well as translating the books of the Bible into Burmese. The language was difficult to translate, and the work was slow, but he was faithful to continue.

After six years of ministry work the Judson’s saw their first Burmese baptism. God was moving in their small church of ten. Some years later however, during a time of war, the Burmese became suspicious of all foreigners, so it became too dangerous to do missionary work out in the public. Adoniram, Ann and their two foster daughters stayed quietly in their bamboo hut all day, until one evening the door flung open and several men came rushing inside. They accused Adoniram of being an English spy and drug him away to the dreaded Death Prison.

Adoniram Judson was falsely accused, just as we will see Paul was.

### Study One:

#### **Acts 24:1-27      Paul Before Felix**

- Paul had just arrived in Caesarea, the center of the Roman government in Judea.
- Five days later the high priest Ananias, together with some important elders and a lawyer name Tertullus also headed there.
  - ~ Five days was a very short time for the Jewish leaders to put a case together, hire a lawyer, and travel sixty miles to Caesarea—they worked quickly and traveled fast.
  - ~ Perhaps they feared that Felix would dismiss the case against Paul if they did not get there quickly, pursue the issue, and give their evidence.

#### **TEACHING TIP:**

Tertullus was a Gentile lawyer. The workbook refers to him as the original “spin doctor.” The religious leaders hoped he would be more persuasive in presenting their case.

- Tertullus began his presentation flattering Felix before giving an account of all Paul’s wrongdoings. (Acts 24:2-4)
  - ~ The goal—to convince the powers in charge to end Paul’s life and essentially end the spread of Christianity.
  - ~ The accusations against Paul— (1) a violation of Roman law; (2) a violation of Jewish law; and (3) a violation of God’s law.

- Let’s examine Tertullus’ case—remembering he was building a case that was not based in truth:

† Acts 24:5-6 *“For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. And he even tried to desecrate the temple; and then we arrested him. (We wanted to judge him according to our own Law.)”*

**TEACHING TIP:** Citing Paul as being a pest could not be considered a specific charge; it did, however, reflect the Sanhedrin’s hatred of the apostle and their hatred for Christianity.

1. Paul was a real pest—*inferred* was Paul’s participation in the spread of Christianity was like the spreading of a plague.
2. Paul created dissension among all Jews and *throughout the world*—this was the most serious charge because it violated Roman law.
  - \* He was accusing Paul of stirring up rebellion among the Jews knowing the Romans did not tolerate any sort of civil disorder.
  - \* He knew this effective charge was a lie because Christians, believers of the Way, had a reputation for being full of love, grace, and peace.

**TEACHING TIP:** Tertullus was careful not to cite any specific cases of Paul’s ‘rebellion’ to avoid the case being transferred to the governor in whose jurisdiction the incident took place. Tertullus and the powerful men he worked for wanted Paul tried before a governor they believed they had some influence over. They needed Paul to stay in Caesarea under the judgment of Felix.

3. Paul was a ringleader of the Nazarene sect—*inferring* that Paul was the ringleader of heresy, violating Jewish law.
  - \* The intent behind labeling Christianity a sect was to portray Paul also as a leader of a group that would be dangerous to Rome.
4. Paul tried to desecrate (defile) the temple—this was sacrilege, blasphemy against God, and a violation of God’s law.

**QUOTE:** Pastor Rod Hembree— *“In this scene, we see how the systems of the world can be manipulated against God’s people ...They were trying to prove truth without God, and their claims were falling short.”*

- The Jews were playing games in this courtroom. God does not play games.
- The workbook states, *“these were blameless accusations which led to unreasonable imprisonment.”*
  - ~ But God is God. He was still in control even in what seemed like a hopeless situation.
- Tertullus ended his presentation by urging Felix to examine Paul himself and, in that, he would be able to learn the truth about all the charges brought against the man. (Acts 24:8)
- In Acts 24: 10 Felix nodded to Paul—it was now his turn to speak.

**TEACHING TIP:** Have you ever been falsely accused of something? Perhaps, misunderstood, but falsely accused?

Put yourself in Paul’s shoes and visit this scene for a moment. It’s now your turn to speak. Imagine standing before men who have insulted you and made false claims about you. Would you become emotional, even angry?

Paul understood his audience. Having experienced much persecution, he recognized this trial as an opportunity to witness for Christ as he defended himself. We will quickly see that Paul did not become defensive or angry; instead, he defended himself with strength and dignity without a hint of self-pity. He stood firm on what he knew was true.

3 John 1:4 states, *“I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.”* This verse illustrates who Paul was.

⇒ **Truth and faith are what propelled Paul, not emotions and feelings. He had an unwavering hope in God and knew that his sovereign Lord was in control of his situation.**

- Beginning in Acts 24:10, Paul faced the governor and began his defense.
  - ~ Unlike Tertullus he did not flatter Felix, instead Paul reminded Felix of who he was as a judge and his acquaintance with Jewish laws, customs, and beliefs.
- Paul then turned to the factual events. (Acts 24:11-13). Beginning in verse 11— *“...since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.”*
  - ~ In other words, time constraints alone dictated that he had had no time to start a riot or a rebellion.
  - ~ During that time, no one had found him arguing with anyone in the temple or stirring up a riot in the city.
  - ~ His accusers could not prove their accusations because they didn’t happen.

**TEACHING TIP:**

Paul’s approach would hopefully convict Felix to give a just verdict.

- Paul then turned his defense into a testimony of his faith in God. (Acts 24:14-16)
  - ~ He stated that he worshiped the God of his fathers.
  - ~ He shared that he was a follower of the Way—in this he explained that he believed everything that was in accordance with the Law and written by the prophets.
  - ~ He declared that he strived to keep his conscience clear before God and man.

**TEACHING TIP:** Paul viewed the entire Old Testament as the inspired Word of God and believed everything it taught.

✚ Acts 24:16 *“In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.”*

**TEACHING TIP:** Paul did not say “before man, then God.” He put God first.

**APPLICATION:** Are you more interested in what your family and friends say than in what God says? Deuteronomy 32:47a says, *“For it [meaning God’s Word] is not a trivial matter for you; indeed it is your life.”* We should live our lives and make decisions based on this truth.

**QUOTE:** Garrett Kell— *“We need more scripture and less social media, more Bible and less books, more prayers and less posts.”*

There are thousands of voices and so much noise surrounding us today. What are you giving your attention to? Do you listen to the world first, or are you like Paul who strived to keep a clear conscience and listen to God first?

⇒ **We have God’s Word to teach us and guide us. We are not perfect and are not expected to be perfect, but we are expected to listen and obey God’s commands.**

- Paul explained that, after being gone for several years, he had just come back to Jerusalem to bring offerings and gifts to his nation. In fact, his accusers had found him in the temple with no crowd, no uproar. (Acts 24:17-18)
- He confronted the fact that the original accusers, the supposed eye-witnesses, were not even present in the room for the trial—where were they? (Acts 24:19)
- He concluded his defense with what he believed was the real issue—

**TEACHING TIP:** Paul had been collecting for the poor. He was doing the very opposite of causing strife and rioting.

✚ Acts 24:20-21 *“Or else let these men themselves tell what misdeed they found when I stood before the Council, other than for this one statement which I shouted out while standing among them, ‘For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today.’”*

- ~ Since these religious leaders’ witnesses had not shown up, let them speak to what they found Paul guilty of.
- ~ The answer was clear—his belief in resurrection.

**TEACHING TIP:** Belief in resurrection was not a crime, even under Jewish law, much less Roman law!

- It seemed that Paul had successfully given a just account of the situation, clearing himself of the crimes of which he had been accused.
- But Felix found himself in a hard position between these Jewish leaders and Paul.
- ✚ Acts 24:22 *“But Felix, having a more exact knowledge about the Way, put them off, saying, ‘When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case.’”*
  - ~ He was well acquainted with the Way.
  - ~ Paul’s words had obviously struck a chord with him, but he could not make a decision.
  - ~ Paul’s defense had made it clear that he was not guilty, but as governor, his job was to maintain the peace among the people.
  - ~ He knew freeing Paul would cause much anger among the Jews, so Felix decided to procrastinate rather than get anything done.
  - ~ He decided that no decision was the best decision.
- In Felix’s indecisiveness, God being all sovereign provided for Paul.
  - ~ Felix ordered the centurion to keep Paul in custody, yet with freedom to have his friends care for his needs.
- A few days later, Felix, along with his wife Drusilla (a Jewess), sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Jesus Christ, as he discussed righteousness, self-control, and the judgement to come. (Acts 24:24-25)
  - ~ Felix listened, knowing he had stolen his wife Drusilla from another man and persuaded her to marry him.
  - ~ Paul’s words regarding self-control and the judgment to come frightened him, so he sent Paul away.

**TEACHING TIP:** It is interesting to note that the commander had already written a report concerning Paul and in it stated that Paul was not guilty. There is also no evidence that Felix ever summoned Lysias to come.

**APPLICATION:** How do you respond when someone confronts sin in your life? Are you able to see sin for sin? Do you welcome the correction? Or do you get angry with those who hold you accountable or see a different side of your situation?

⇒ **How do you handle situations when “iron sharpens iron?”**

- Felix had the opportunity to turn toward Christ as Paul spoke about Jesus and laid out God’s beautiful redemptive story. But Paul’s words fell flat and went unheeded by Felix.

**TEACHING TIP:** Titus 3:3-5 beautifully illustrates the story of Felix— *“For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit ...”*

How tragic—Felix walked away from this encounter with God’s Word and chose to remain enslaved in his sin.

- Two years passed. Felix was succeeded by Festus.
- Wishing to do the Jews a favor, Felix imprisoned Paul but the Jews remained focused on finding a way to kill Paul.

## Study Two:

### **Acts 25:1-12 Paul’s Defense Before Festus**

- After getting acquainted with the situation in his new territory, Festus, the new governor, immediately ordered that Paul’s trial continue.
- The chief priest and Jewish leadership urged Festus to move Paul to Jerusalem as a favor to them, when, in reality, they were preparing to kill him. (Acts 25:2-3)
- Festus responded to their plea—  
✠ Acts 25:4-5 *“Festus then answered that Paul was being kept in custody at Caesarea and that he himself was about to leave shortly. ‘Therefore,’ he said, ‘let the influential men among you go there with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them prosecute him.’”*
- After ten days, Festus went down to Caesarea and commanded Paul to be brought to him. (Acts 25:6-7)
  - ~ This was an official Roman trial.
  - ~ As Paul stood before him as the Jews brought their many serious charges against Paul before Festus—charges they could not prove.
- Paul responded with succinct clarity— *“... I have committed no offense either against the Law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar ...”* (Acts 25:8)

**TEACHING TIP:** Again, Caesarea, was the headquarters of the Roman government in Judea. It was the right place for Paul to be tried as a Roman citizen.

**TEACHING TIP:** This scene brings to mind David’s words in Psalm 2:1-2, *“Why do the nations rant? Why do the peoples rave uselessly? The earth’s rulers take their stand; the leaders scheme together against the Lord and against His anointed one.”* (CEB)

- Trying to please the Jews, Festus asked Paul if he would be willing to return to Jerusalem and be tried and judged there. (Acts 25:9)
  - ~ This was not a decision a prisoner should be asked to make—it was the decision of the governor to make.
- However, Paul answered and declared his right to be tried in Rome as a Roman citizen.
  - ~ Every Roman citizen had the right to take their case to a higher court.
  - ~ Paul knew the law and Festus granted his request.
  - ~ In doing this, Festus removed himself from the case and transferred it to the emperor, who, at this time, was Nero, and was considered admirable.

**TEACHING TIP:**

Festus was unsure in how to proceed with the case. Being a pagan and new to his post, he did not understand the difference between Christians and Jews.

## Study Three:

### Acts 25:13-26:3 Pomp and Sovereign Circumstances

**TEACHING TIP:** As we begin this next study, we can almost imagine Paul asking Psalm 10:1—*“Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?”* His circumstances were so dire. As David penned this verse, he felt almost abandoned by God, that He was somewhere far off. Rather than being far off, we will see that God was near to Paul—that it was God’s sovereign hand upon Paul as he stayed in custody, instead of being killed. And Paul did not ask this question.

Paul realized, as the author of Romans, that knowing God and being fully used by Him was by far the only way to live when he wrote, *“Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!”* (Romans 11:33a) Paul did not fear death and he had made that known. In Philippians 1:21 he wrote, *“for to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”* He was awake to what eternity meant for him; he knew believers were not earthbound forever. He was rich, and his joy, mature composure, and confidence came from knowing Christ personally. He rested and trusted in He who is able, not in himself. He did not fear or get lost in the details and the accusations. He fully entrusted himself to God’s plan and willingly devoted himself to his Savior.

One commentator said, *“Paul was not afraid of Rome, or Caesar, or death. He made his appeal before Christ years ago, he was acquitted by grace, which gave him freedom to stand in front of Caesar.”*



**APPLICATION:** Paul’s deep roots in his relationship with the Lord gave him the ability to speak truthfully while exhibiting confidence, strength, and stability. C.S Lewis once said, “God works on us in all sorts of ways. But above all, He works on us through each other ... Men are mirrors, or ‘carriers’ of Christ to other men. Usually, it is those who know him that bring Him to others. That is why the Church, the whole body of Christians showing Him to one another is so important.”

Paul was that mirror—with strength, dignity, hope, and trust he reflected Christ to these men who were too preoccupied by their flesh to see it.

⇒ **Does your life reflect Jesus Christ—event in unfair, dire situations?**

- A few days after Festus declared that Paul would make his appeal to Caesar, King Agrippa and his consort who was also his sister Bernice, arrived in Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus.
- During his visit, Festus shared Paul’s case with him, telling him that the accusations brought against Paul were not any crimes he had expected.

(Acts 25:13-21)

- ~ They were about religion and about a certain man Jesus who had died that Paul claimed to be alive.
- ~ Such charges did not belong in the Roman court and Festus did not know what to write in his official report to Nero.

- King Agrippa told Festus that he would like to hear this man for himself. The very next day, with an audience in the room, high ranking officers and leading men there also, Festus brought Paul in to present in front of King Agrippa. (In truth, this was more for show than anything else, but, once more, Paul stood defending himself for crimes he did not commit.)

**TEACHING TIP:** Festus sought help from King Agrippa because he knew that sending a prisoner without a clear charge was foolish, if not dangerous.

**TEACHING TIP:** It would be helpful to better understand who King Agrippa was.

- ~ He was the son of King Herod who killed James and imprisoned Peter (Acts 12).
- ~ He was the last of the Herods who played a major role in the New Testament.
- ~ His great-grandfather, Herod the Great, was the Herod that ruled during the time of Jesus’ birth.
- ~ Although King Agrippa was not the ruler in Judea, he had a long family history with the Jewish people and was well-versed in Jewish affairs. Thus, he had wanted to hear Paul speak for some time.

- In Acts 26:1-3, King Agrippa told Paul to give his account of the situation. Paul, in response, asked the king to listen to him patiently.

## Study Four:

### Acts 26:4-23 Paul's Heavenly Vision, Revisited

**TEACHING TIP:** Consider Jesus' words to His disciples. They set the appropriate image in our mind as we begin Study Four.

✠ **Matthew 10:17-20** *"But beware! For you will be handed over to the courts and will be flogged with whips in the synagogues. You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell the rulers and other unbelievers about me. When you are arrested, don't worry about how to respond or what to say. God will give you the right words at the right time. For it is not you who will be speaking—it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."* (NLT)

- Paul was a prisoner who was prepared to speak before a king.
  - ~ He was not in his finest attire. His accessories were chains instead of jewels.
  - ~ He did not flatter the king by bowing and telling him of his influence.
  - ~ He simply stretched out his arms and began to speak.
  - ~ With no one there to further accuse him or testify against him, Paul spoke freely.
- Paul gave his personal testimony—it was more private than the other recorded accounts in Acts and it was directed specifically at King Agrippa.
  - ~ He shared that all the Jews knew the way he had lived as a Pharisee. (Acts 26:4-5)
  - ~ In Acts 26:6 he stated that he stood trial for believing what had been prophesied to his people, the Jews – *"And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers ..."*

**TEACHING TIP:** In the workbook it is noted that this was the third and last account of Paul's conversion in the Book of Acts. Luke had repeated the story with each account being a little different because it was shared with different listeners each time. Paul shared his testimony in a way that the listener could understand.

**TEACHING TIP:** Paul found it unbelievable that he had been imprisoned, put on trial, and condemned for believing in the resurrection, which was the great hope of the Jewish people.

- ~ He asked the King in verse 8 – *"Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead?"*
- ~ In Acts 26:9-11, Paul shared how he had opposed Jesus of Nazareth—that in his obsession he was enraged at those who followed Christ and went from city to city persecuting them. He had cruelly treated Christians.
- ~ Paul clearly described the hatred held in his heart toward Jesus Christ.

- Paul's story shifted and transitioned from who he had been without Christ to his personal encounter with Him, which had completely changed the course of his life. (Act 26:12-18)
  - ~ He was on the road to Damascus with the authority and intent of persecuting the Christians there when the remarkable encounter took place.
  - ~ He shared how Christ's presence was brighter than the sun—this had stopped him in his tracks.
  - ~ He told Agrippa of the question Jesus had asked and the command Jesus had given. (vv14-15)

**APPLICATION:** We see a very visible change in Paul who admitted that he was obsessed and enraged before, without Christ—but now, having trusted Christ, he was full of hope and stood composed as he told his personal story.

⇒ **What has you obsessed? Where is your focus? Whatever you focus upon is what will be multiplied in your life.**

- Paul told Agrippa that God expressed His purpose for Paul's life—"*... for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.*" (Acts 26:16-18)

**APPLICATION:** This was not just God's message to Paul. It is His message to all of us. Once we put our faith in Jesus and have the hope Paul is talking about, this is the goal. To go, wherever that may be—your backyard, across the street, the center of town or across the ocean—to show and share the light of Jesus so that others may see and be saved. That they may turn their eyes from darkness, be forgiven, and see the light.

- Paul continued to share how, from that day forward, Paul fully regarded Jesus as Lord.
  - ~ Someone to follow and model his life after rather than someone to fight against.
- Paul had repented of his past sins of persecuting the church and now witnessed to others the hope they could have if only they too would repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

**TEACHING TIP:** To recap, Paul's model was to tell his personal story—who he had been as a persecutor of the church, how he had encountered God's goodness and power, repented of his sin, and now told others about Jesus.

- In Acts 26:19-21 Paul presented the crux of his defense, the real reason he stood falsely accused.
- ✠ Acts 26:19-22 *“So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem, and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death.”*
  - ~ Paul stated that all he had done was become obedient to God’s calling on his life.
  - ~ His accusers did not like his message; thus, they had created lies to attempt to silence him.

**APPLICATION:** In presenting his defense, Paul simply shared the gospel and its impact on his life—without any fear of how it would be received. He just spoke the truth. This was his story. Does anything hold you back from sharing your personal conversion story? If it’s fear, pray and ask God to replace your fear with His confidence. If you don’t know what to say, ask the Lord to give you the words.

Your Jesus story is a big deal and can reach people when used. How can we reach the nations, the multitudes for Christ, if we don’t share our unique stories when the opportunity arises? Ask God for help and then ask God for opportunities, He will give it to you just like he gave Paul.

- Paul ends his defense with a powerful and encouraging truth. Look at verse 22.
- ✠ Acts 26:22a *“So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place.”*
  - ~ Throughout Paul’s life, in and out of jail, he recognized that he had been able to persevere withstanding persecution and preach to groups of all sizes because God had been gracious to him and given him help.
  - ~ Paul concluded with the fact that he had not shared anything new but was echoing the words of the Prophets and Moses—that Christ would suffer and, in His resurrection, proclaim light to the Jews and Gentiles.

**TEACHING TIP:** Paul trusted God and was confident that God was near, protecting and helping him. Even when it seemed that he stood alone, Paul knew God was near, not far off.

## Study Five:

### **Acts 26:24-32      Unpersuaded**

- “Unpersuaded” is an appropriate title for this final day of study. Festus was unmoved by Paul’s word—to the point that he told Paul that all of his studying had caused him to go mad, insane. (Acts 26:24)

- In Acts 26:25-26 Paul responded firmly that he was not ‘out of his mind’—in fact, his words had been those of utter truth.
  - ~ It was Festus who could not see.
  - ~ Paul revealed that the king knew of the things that Paul spoke—none of them had escaped his attention.
    - \* Christ death on the cross and resurrection from the dead was common knowledge.
    - \* The tomb could still be seen, and it was still empty.
    - \* There were numerous eye-witnesses who were alive and could testify to the account.
- Paul then directly asked the king, *“King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do.”* (Acts 26:27)

**TEACHING TIP:** Consider how personal and intense this question was.

**QUOTE:** Regarding Paul’s question to King Agrippa, John MacArthur stated— *“The implication was that if he did, he would have to concede that Jesus was the Messiah. Agrippa was stuck in a quandary. Admitting his belief in the prophets was tantamount to acknowledging Jesus as Messiah. That would make him look foolish before his Roman friends and outrage his Jewish subjects. Yet a Jewish king could hardly disavow the revered prophets of his people. Consequently, he avoided the question ...”*  
*(The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Acts 13-28)*

- Recognizing his dilemma, the king said, “Do you think you can convince me to be a Christian in such a short time?”
  - ~ After hearing Paul’s compelling personal testimony, Agrippa chose not to believe.
  - ~ No response is a response.
- Paul was undeterred by the king’s response; he stated that no matter the amount of time it took, he hoped that all who had heard his words—small and great, friend or enemy—would make the choice he had made to follow, trust, and obey Jesus.

**TEACHING TIP:** How was it that Paul was able to continue to trust God and respond with grace instead of developing a cynical attitude toward his accusers? The workbook pointed us to James 1—trials test our faith and develop perseverance, which produces maturity, and that through maturity, we may be complete, lacking nothing. Paul learned this from his many years being persecuted by his own people.

Paul had an eternal mindset. He saw eternally lost souls not earthly attacks made by men. Paul’s heart for the lost outweighed his own desire to get out of jail and break free from his chains.

## ✧ FINAL THOUGHTS

**ILLUSTRATION:** For a moment, let's return to the story of Adoniram Judson. After a year and a half of awful, brutal torture and complete misery in the Death Prison, by God's grace, he was released to help translate the peace treaty between Burma and England. He went on to finish translating the entire Bible, so now the Burmese people could have the Word of God in their own language. In 1831 he saw 217 people get baptized, and 126 more the year after.

After much loss and torture in his life, he made his way back to America. He found that, while he was gone, thousands of sermons had been preached about him and the work he was doing. Many prayers had been prayed on his behalf by people he didn't know. Years later he headed back to Burma to continue preaching the gospel, strengthen the church, and to complete his final accomplishment—an English to Burmese dictionary.

Adoniram, a man like Paul who was wrongly accused, who struggled much in his life due to torture and loss, had total trust and faith in our Lord. It's evident in a prayer he once prayed, *"One prayer my God, thy will be done one only boon I crave to finish well my work and rest within a Burma grave."*

He loved God so much and was so desperate to tell others of His saving grace that he, like Paul, didn't fear death. He wasn't angry at his misfortune and loss. He trusted God who is sovereign and in complete control of every situation. Even when it seemed as if God was far when he was starved and tortured, Adoniram trusted His plan.

Paul and Adoniram gave their life to preach the gospel and to make the truth be known. They staked their life upon the truth and were grounded in faith and hope.

✧ **Corrie Ten Boom said, "When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer."**

✧ **When hard times come, and God seems far—**

- ⊗ Sit and dwell in His Word.
- ⊗ Pray and ask for guidance.
- ⊗ Have confidence in your Almighty God whose hand will guide you as He did Paul and Adoniram.

✧ **Trust God—He is near.**