



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 43:**  
**“Courageously Witness or Cowardly Withdraw”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 23:1-11 and selected passages**

1. Why is it significant that Paul would claim to have a good conscience before God when talking to the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:1; cf. 24:16)? How did Paul’s confidence in the truth of Jesus Christ give him courage to say such a thing to this group of men?
  
2. Why did Ananias order Paul to be slapped (Acts 23:2)? What does Paul mean when he calls Ananias a “whitewashed wall” (Acts 23:3; Matthew 23:27-28)? Was Paul sinning by saying this (Acts 23:4; Exodus 22:28)? How did Paul not recognize the high priest (Acts 23:5)?
  
3. Why did Paul mention his belief in the resurrection of the dead in front of these men (Acts 23:6)? Why did this issue cause such a sharp dissention and uproar between the Pharisees and Sadducees (Acts 23:7-9; Matthew 22:23)?
  
4. Was Paul being devious by bringing up the resurrection at this point? What is the significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 4:25)? How does the resurrection of Jesus Christ relate to our own resurrection, which is our future hope (1 Corinthians 15:12-14, 19-22)?

5. How would Paul's belief in the resurrection give him *courage* to share the truth of Christ with the Sanhedrin (*Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:8*)? Does your belief in the resurrection give you similar courage? Why or why not?
  
6. Notice how quickly the Pharisees argued for Paul's innocence (*Acts 23:9*). Why were they so easily persuaded to "join forces" against the Sadducees? Why was their dissention dangerous? Have you ever witnessed similar dissention among Christians? How does God feel about dissention (*Psalm 133:1; Romans 15:5; Ephesians 4:3*)?
  
7. Do you think Paul was encouraged by Jesus' words to him in *Acts 23:11* (cf. *18:9*)? How are these words an encouragement for us as we share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others today (*Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 8:31-32*)? Do these words give you *courage* to share that message? Are you ready to share that message this week?

**Memory Verse:**

**"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, NIV*)