**WHEN GOD WORKS IN WAYS THAT ARE UNEXPECTED**

**Acts 23:12-35**

**EVEN WHEN WE CAN’T SEE HIM, GOD IS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ AT WORK ACCOMPLISHING HIS SOVEREIGN PLANS**

* *“When it was morning, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. 13 There were more than forty who had formed this plot. 14 These men went to the chief priests and elders and said, ‘We have bound ourselves under a solemn curse that we won’t eat anything until we have killed Paul. 15 So now you, along with the Sanhedrin, make a request to the commander that he bring him down to you as if you were going to investigate his case more thoroughly. But, before he gets near, we are ready to kill him.’”* (Acts 23:12-15)
* **The plots and plans of God’s enemies, and ours, are always subject to power and plans of God.**
* *“In him we have also received an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of the One who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of His will.”* (Ephesians 1:11)
* *“The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.”* (Psalm 103:19)
* **We can trust in the Lord’s promises and protection because He will never fail!**

**GOD CAN USE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ HE CHOOSES TO ACCOMPLISH HIS SOVEREIGN PLANS**

* *“But the son of Paul’s sister, hearing about their ambush, came and entered the barracks and reported it to Paul. 17 Paul called one of the centurions and said, ‘Take this young man to the commander, because he has something to report to him.’ 18 So he took him, brought him to the commander…”* (Acts 23:16-18a)
* **The New Testament is full of examples of the importance and value of children in God’s kingdom work.**
* *“So the commander dismissed the young man and instructed him, ‘Don’t tell anyone that you have informed me about this.’ 23 He summoned two of his centurions and said, ‘Get two hundred soldiers ready with seventy cavalry and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. 24 Also provide mounts to ride so that Paul may be brought safely to Felix the governor.’”* (Acts 23:22-24)
* **Regardless of human commanders, every army is subject to the Lord to use whenever and however He chooses.**
* Lysias the Roman Commander - *“I found out that the accusations were concerning questions of their law, and that there was no charge that merited death or imprisonment. 30 When I was informed that there was a plot against the man, I sent him to you right away.”* (Acts 23:29-30)
* **When you are walking faithfully with God, He can cause even enemies to plead your case.**

**GOD’S DIVINE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ IS SOMETMES PROVIDED BY THE LEAST LIKELY PEOPLE**

* *“So the soldiers took Paul during the night and brought him to Antipatris as they were ordered. 32 The next day, they returned to the barracks, allowing the cavalry to go on with him. 33 When these men entered Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. 34 After he read it, he asked what province he was from. When he learned he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, ‘I will give you a hearing whenever your accusers also get here.’ He ordered that he be kept under guard in Herod’s palace.” (Acts 23:31-35)*
* **Even the most powerful people on earth are subject to the Lord’s sovereign hand.**
* *“A king’s heart is like channeled water in the Lord’s hand: He directs it wherever He chooses.”* (Proverbs 21:1)
* **“Sometimes God delivers his children by the simple word of a young relative. Sometimes he has to call in the cavalry. At all times, he is ultimately in charge.” – Kenneth Gangel**

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**ICE-BREAKER:** Who is the person you trust most in life and why?

**START THINKING (Observation):**

* What does Acts 23:12-35 teach us about God/The Holy Spirit?
* How did the Jews intend to kill Paul? What was their plot?
* How did God expose the plot to kill Paul?
* How did God deliver Paul from the plot to kill him?
* How did God use Lysias the commander to defend Paul?

**DIGGING DEEPER (Understanding and Application):**

* How do you do at trusting in the sovereignty of God, especially in difficult circumstances? Explain
* How can you help each other to grow in this area?
* How does the way you view different people affect your ability to see them as people God can use for His purposes?
* What impacted you most about this story of Paul? Explain.
* What will you do differently based on this study?

**LOVING OUTWARD**

* Who do I you need to share Jesus with this week? Or, who do you need to have a follow-up conversation about Jesus with?
* Who are you inviting/bringing to church next week?