



LIFE Group Discussion Guide

February 22, 2026

Acts 21:27-22:29

CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

OPENING

- **When have you had to respond calmly in a tense or unfair situation? What helped you?**

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Our instinct when wronged is often to defend ourselves or strike back. Paul models a Spirit-led response—using adversity as an opportunity to testify about Jesus. This

passage invites us to consider how God might want to use our stories, even in uncomfortable circumstances, to reveal His grace.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read Acts 21:27–22:29 aloud together. Consider having multiple readers.

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Paul is falsely accused and nearly killed by an angry mob. Roman soldiers intervene and place him under arrest. Instead of defending himself emotionally, Paul requests to address the crowd and shares his testimony of encountering Christ. When the crowd reacts violently again, Paul asserts his Roman citizenship to avoid unlawful punishment. This passage shows wisdom, courage, and gospel focus in the face of injustice.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What false accusations are made against Paul?**
That he teaches against the law, the people, and the temple, and brought Gentiles into it.
- **How do the Roman authorities initially treat Paul?**
They arrest him for protection and to restore order.
- **Why does Paul request to speak to the crowd?**
To share his testimony and point people to Christ.
- **What key elements stand out in Paul's testimony?**
His former life, his encounter with Jesus, and his calling to serve.
- **Why does the crowd react violently again?**
They are angered by Paul's statement about being sent to the Gentiles.
- **How does Paul wisely use his Roman citizenship?**
He asserts his legal rights to avoid unlawful beating.
- **What does this passage teach about responding to injustice?**
Respond with wisdom, courage, and gospel focus rather than revenge.
- **How might God want to use your personal story to impact others?**
Through sharing testimony in everyday conversations and difficult moments.

APPLICATION

- Where might God be asking you to respond differently to conflict or criticism?
- Who could you intentionally share your faith story with this week?

CLOSING THOUGHT

God often uses our hardest moments as our strongest witness.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.

March 1, 2026 — Acts 22:30–23:11

Next week we'll explore **Acts 22:30–23:11**, where Paul appears before the Sanhedrin and receives encouragement from the Lord Himself. We'll discuss perseverance, calling, and trusting God's promises in difficult seasons.

PRAYER FOCUS

- Pray for boldness to share your testimony.
- Pray for wisdom when facing conflict.
- Pray for the invitation portion of our worship services—that hearts would be open, the Spirit would move powerfully, and people would respond in obedience and faith.

COMMENTARY

Acts 21:27-22:29

21:27-29 Paul returned to the temple at the end of the seven days to complete the Nazarite sacrifices. These would have taken place in the Holy Place of the temple. Some Asian Jews spotted Paul there and leveled a specific charge against him, accusing him of defiling the sanctuary by taking the Gentile Trophimus into the sacred precincts. Trophimus was one of the Ephesian church representatives who had accompanied Paul to Jerusalem (20:4). Paul had not taken him into the area that was off-limits to Gentiles. The accusations of the Asian Jews worked, however; and a mob gathered, intent on killing Paul.

21:30-31 The temple was the center of Jerusalem life, for the courtyard served as a “town square.” Word of the riot quickly spread, and soon a huge crowd had gathered, screaming for Paul's head. They dragged him out of the sacred area and shut the gates

to avoid any further defilement of the temple area. They would have killed Paul had he not been rescued by the timely arrival of the Roman troops.

21:32-33 The Roman occupation force in Jerusalem numbered 1,000 troops. They were housed in the fortress of Antonia, which was built onto the northwest corner of the temple area. Its high towers provided a full view of the temple area. The Roman commander had the rank of a tribune and was the highest-ranking officer in Jerusalem.

21:34-36 Even with the soldiers protecting him, Paul had to be carried as the mob pressed in for the kill. Fortunately the barracks were nearby.

21:37-38 Paul asked permission to speak. His use of Greek surprised the Roman commander ("Claudius Lysias," 23:26). Lysias mistook Paul for an Egyptian rebel. The Jewish historian Josephus said this rebel, a messianic pretender, had gathered a number of people at the Mount of Olives to attack Jerusalem in A.D. 54. The group was routed by the Romans, but the leader escaped. Lysias initially suspected that Paul marked the return of this man.

21:39 That Paul was a citizen of Tarsus, a city of importance in the Greco-Roman world, accounted for his knowledge of Greek.

21:40 Though the text says Hebrew, Paul probably spoke Aramaic to the crowd in order to communicate clearly with them. Aramaic became the new Hebrew, so to speak, among the Jewish people after the exile. In Paul's day Hebrew was used only by the religious elite.

22:1-21 reports Paul's address to the Jewish mob in the temple courtyard in Jerusalem, the same mob who moments before had sought to kill him. This is the first time he shared his testimony while he was under arrest. With the permission of the Roman commanding office, Paul addressed the crowd of Jews from whom he had been rescued. The people listened when Paul began to speak to them in their own native Aramaic. He shared his testimony with them.

22:1-5. Paul began by speaking of his life before he became a Christian. First, he noted his strong Jewish heritage. He was born into a Jewish family in Tarsus. Gamaliel was the leading teacher of the Jewish law (Torah) of his day. Torah studies consisted of learning by memory the written Old Testament law and the extensive oral interpretations of the law passed down from the great Torah teachers.

Paul emphasized his persecution of followers of this Way, Christians, and emphasized the intensity of his persecution. He had stopped at nothing, pursuing them even to their death. Paul emphasized his role as persecutor because it pointed to his Jewishness.

The crowd had accused Paul of flagrantly violating Jewish law (Acts 21:28). Far from that, Paul showed that no one had been more zealous for the law than he. Paul rejected

God through both religion and rebellion. You think you are good, Paul was better. You think you are too bad, Paul was worse.

22:6-9. These verses depict Paul's encounter with the Lord Jesus. Paul was journeying to Damascus to seek out the Christians among the Jews there (22:5). Just outside town he was stopped in his tracks. Although it was around noon, a light suddenly surrounded his party. Paul fell to the ground in awe at the heavenly vision. A voice from heaven addressed him by his Hebrew name, Saul. Jesus revealed Himself as the victim of Paul's persecution. To persecute Christ's church was to persecute Christ Himself. Paul wasn't looking for Jesus, but Jesus came looking for Paul. In the same way, Jesus came looking for you.

22:10-16. The second part of the Paul's testimony sets forth Jesus' instructions to Paul. Paul responded by surrendering to God. This time Paul knew that the Lord was the Christ whom he had persecuted. Jesus told Paul to go into Damascus and await instructions. Paul had been blinded by the light and had to be led into the city.

22:17-21. The final section of Paul's conversion account presents what happened after his encounter with Christ. Paul noted how Ananias came to him as he lay blind and waiting for the Lord's directions. Paul emphasized that the Christian Ananias was also a devout observer of the law, a Jew who was respected by all the Jews of Damascus.

Paul wanted the Jewish crowd to realize that both he and his fellow Jewish Christians were still faithful to the law.

Continuing his testimony, Paul described how Christ had changed his life. He returned to Jerusalem and prayed at the temple. There he had a vision. The Lord warned Paul that he must leave Jerusalem immediately. Acts 9:29 shows that the advice was well-advised; some of the Greek-speaking Jews of Jerusalem tried to kill him. The Lord knew they would not accept Paul's testimony about Christ.

Paul wanted to stay in Jerusalem. He thought that he would have an effective witness there. The Jews would have been aware of his reputation as persecutor of Christians. They would remember how he had participated in Stephen's martyrdom (22:19-20). They would know, therefore, that he was not a renegade Jew, a law-breaker, but the most zealous of them all. He thought he could be a powerful witness to the transforming power of Christ. The Lord had other plans for Paul. He would be Christ's witness to the Gentiles.

22:22-29 The Jews listened to Paul's account of his conversion, but the mention of his being sent to the Gentiles, was so contrary to all their national prejudices, that they would hear no more. Their frantic conduct astonished the Roman officer, who supposed that Paul must have committed some great crime. Paul pleaded his privilege as a Roman citizen, by which he was exempted from all trials and punishments which might force him to confess himself guilty. The manner of his speaking plainly shows what holy security and serenity of mind he enjoyed. As Paul was a Jew, in low circumstances, the

Roman officer questioned how he obtained so valuable a distinction; but the apostle told him he was free born. Let us value that freedom to which all the children of God are born; which no sum of money, however large, can purchase for those who remain unregenerate. This at once put a stop to his trouble. Thus many are kept from evil practices by the fear of man, who would not be held back from them by the fear of God. The apostle asks, simply, Is it lawful? He knew that the God whom he served would support him under all sufferings for his name's sake. But if it were not lawful, the apostle's religion directed him, if possible, to avoid it. He never shrunk from a cross which his Divine Master laid upon his onward road; and he never stepped aside out of that road to take one up.