**Everyone Has a Story
Acts 21:27-22:29 (page 797)**

**Main Truth**
Everyone has a story, but those that know Jesus can share their story with joy.

**Structure Thoughts**

**27When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, 28crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”  29For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.  30Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut.**

**31And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.  32He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.  33Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done.  34Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.  35And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, 36for the mob of the people followed, crying out, “Away with him!”**

**37As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” And he said, “Do you know Greek?  38Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?”  39Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.”  40And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying: 1“Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.”**

**2And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said: 3“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.  4I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, 5as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.**

**6“As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me.  7And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’  8And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’  9Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me.  10And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’  11And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.**

**12“And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 13came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. 14And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; 15for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. 16And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’**

**17“When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 18and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ 19And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you.  20And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’ 21And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”**

**22Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.”  23And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, 24the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this.  25But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?”  26When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.”  27So the tribune came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” And he said, “Yes.”  28The tribune answered, “I bought this citizenship for a large sum.” Paul said, “But I am a citizen by birth.”  29So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.**

 **Take Home Question: Are you ready to share your story?**

**Themes in Acts:** Witness, Growing Church, Glory of God, Filling of the Holy Spirit, Boldness, Prayer, Persecution