**Unstoppable - wk 39 – I’ve got a bad feeling about this**

**“I’ve got a bad feeling about this” – Star Wars**

**Acts - Jesus: The Sequel**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Unleashed and unstoppable w/ a purpose)**

* **Acts 1 - The resurrected Jesus says goodbye, but - I'll be back!**
* **Acts 2-8 - The Church is empowered and grows in Jerusalem.**
* **Acts 8-11 - Gospel begins to pour into Judea and Samaria.**
* **Acts 11-20 - Gospel reaches Greece, Asia, & Rome – 28 yrs later.**

**Not by an insta post, twitter, mass email, or promos…**

* **Acts 20 - Paul heads home to give a full update and offering.**
* **Acts 21 – Only back 12 days, worshiping God in the temple, he is attacked by Jewish people – they attempt to murder him!**

**Roman authorities race in - and arrest Paul. While doing the right thing everything fell apart… or did it?**

**Paul reveals he is a Roman citizen with special rights – a trial (local authorities can not condemn to death a Roman citizen w/out Roman approval (trials).**

**(the riot, the beating, the arrest, Paul preaching on temple steps, his roman Citizen appeal – all went down in one day) Acts 22:30 But on the next day, desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he (Roman tribune Lysias) unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.**

**Luke is front row to all of this - great detail & names.**

**The rest of Acts reads like a John Grisham courtroom novel = series of trials, lies, jail, & transfers. Paul will be in jail the remainder of Acts. Several years & 6 chapters.**

**Trial #1 - Paul is confronted by Jewish leaders - Acts 23:1 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, “My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.” 2 At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! (God will punch you, you hypocrite) You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!”**

**4 Those who were standing near Paul said, “How dare you insult God’s high priest!” 5 Paul replied, “Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: ‘Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.’” (Paul must have known, might be sarcastic. Paul is getting feisty – he is not perfect) 6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead.”**

**This is a true claim. The center of Paul’s gospel was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead – but…**

**There seems to be another strategy – divide them among their party lines and to make one side (Pharisees) more sympathetic to him, instead of having them united against him.**

**7 When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees believe all these things.)**

**He stirs the pot between them. United to kill Paul but…**

**Sadducees – theological liberals. Denied life after death.**

**Pharisees – strictly followed the Torah. Believed in an afterlife.**

**Start attacking each other. Violence breaks out in the court.**

**9 There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. “We find nothing wrong with this man,” they said. (Plot twist) “What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” (What if he’s right? Now three groups arguing) 10 The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He (Lysias the tribune - officer in charge) ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.**

**That night must have been tough. Beaten, bloody, lonely, & bound. Where will this lead? What's going on? Maybe I should not have come here. Paul was warned 3X don’t go. This was a bad idea! This could be the end. Crying out to God!**

**11 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.” (In the same way you preached Jerusalem – you will do it Rome)**

**Jesus personally encourages Paul - I'm going to take you where you have never gone and farther than you ever expected. Keep doing what you know you are to do – be my voice. I got you!**

**The plot to ambush the police**

**Acts 23:12 The next morning some Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. 13 More than forty men were involved in this plot. 14 They went to the chief priests and the elders and said, “We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. 15 Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here.”**

**It’s a set up! While in route, they are going to attack, kidnap, and kill him. A vow to kill him.**

**16 But when the son of Paul’s sister (nephew - rare mention of his family) heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him.” 18 So he took him to the commander. The centurion said, “Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you.” 19 The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, “What is it you want to tell me?”**

**20 He said: “Some Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him. 21 Don’t give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request.”**

**22 The commander dismissed the young man with this warning: “Don’t tell anyone that you have reported this to me.” 23 Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, “Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. 24 Provide horses for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix.”**

**470 soldiers. Why so many soldiers and such a large response? 40 soldiers were about to attack Roman authorities. Not on my watch – avoiding a deadly riot. Paul is sent 50 miles away to Caesarea - late at night under military protection.**

**The plot thwarted. Paul escapes the ambush!**

**God says, “I told you I got you.”**

**25 He (Lysias) wrote a letter as follows: (Luke saw the letter) 26 Claudius Lysias, To His Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings. 27 This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, (making himself look like the hero – I saved him) for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. 28 I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin. 29 I found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment. 30 When I was informed of a plot to be carried out against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his accusers to present to you their case against him. (Transferred to a safer venue. We do that today)**

**31 So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. (halfway point) 32 The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. (200 went back) 33 When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, (MAP - capital of Rome in Judea) they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him.**

**34 The governor (Felix) read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, (location of Tarsus – a region he is Gov over – I guess I have to do it) 35 he said, “I will hear your case when your accusers get here.” Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod’s palace.**

**Felix arranges another hearing – Trial #2 – after Easter.**

**Paul the persecuted apostle: Trusting God during the unknown**

**When you hit a wall – when doing what is right does not turnout right.**

* **He lived above accusation!**

**He had a clear conscience – lived above reproach. Luke is clear, Paul is innocent – they had nothing.**

**Acts 23:1 “I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.”**

**Acts 24:16 I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.**

**Acts 25:7 …many and serious charges against him that they could not prove.**

**I stand here with a clear conscience. Above accusation.**

**Philippians 2:15 That you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world…**

**1 Peter 2:12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.**

**When everything is falling apart or in the unknown, live a life that reflects who you serve. Give the world nothing to accuse you of.**

**We often get lax in the limbo seasons.**

**Don’t give the enemy a foothold (Eph 4:25-32)**

* **He knew it would all be worth it!**

**Acts 23:6 “I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead.”**

**Acts 24:15 and I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.**

**Acts 24:21 …I shouted as I stood in their presence: ‘It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.’”**

**Because of Jesus – we will be resurrected to eternal life.**

**Resurrected to a new glorified body. (1 Cor 15, Romans 8)**

**We are just passing through (Phil 3:20-21, 1 Pet 2:11-12, Eph 2:19)**

**Mom used to always say – “this too soon shall pass”**

**IN hospital - Rita Spring song, Worth it all (play song) Lyrics.**

**He held tight to a future hope! It will all be worth it!**

**The hope (supernatural confident knowing) something**

**2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

**When everything is falling apart or when in the unknown – hold tight to the hope that this will all be worth it – one day.**

* **He held tight the word of God**

**That night after the storm – he was not doing good, but God shows up!**

**Acts 23:11 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.”**

**Paul's Word from God – Take Courage!**

**1. Take Courage, the Lord is near - “the Lord stood near Paul” (I love that!)**

**In the darkness of night, Jesus is near. Paul is alone but is not alone.**

**Deuteronomy 31:6 “Be strong and co urageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you or forsake you”**

**He was miraculously freed from jail before… but not his time. But the Lord was there! Better to be bound in chains with the Lord than a supposed free man without him.**

**We often want God to bring us out of our circumstance – but he wants to meet us right in them. And walk with us thru them. Psalm 23 – he will walk with us and even lead us through the valleys.**

**2. It’s not over till God says it’s over**

**Acts 23:11 As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.**

**Paul, there is more for you to do – trust me.**

**Take courage. Sleep well. God is in control. It is hard to see it. Hard to believe it. The night is dark – the attacks are heavy – everything is falling apart… but God is in control!**

**There is more for you to do – God’s word to every Christian. More to hear the truth, more opportunities to glorify God, more people to love, to serve, more hungry to feed, more weary people to be encouraged. It’s not over for you.**

* **He trusted that God was working in the waiting**

**What follows in Acts is 4 years of waiting. Getting shuffled around.**

**But he held on to that Word from God and trusted God is working.**

**It's going to get tough - but remember I am at work in this**

**Waiting is not wasted. It’s part of the journey. God is always at work to accomplish His purposes. Paul was wanting to go to Rome – God told him he would.**

**The Lord knows what is happening with you - The Lord is with his kids.**

**Similar to Josephs life (Gen 37-50) God promised Joseph that he would be used powerfully, what follows was perceived tragedy. 20 yrs of trials, unjust imprisonment, being forgotten, then it happened.**

**God was using it all to accomplish His purpose.**

**Gen 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.**

**Maybe you're right there... God, I don't get it - I did what you said - things fell apart - "Take courage, I am at work in this"**

**Psalm 27:1** **The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid? / 13 I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. 14 Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.**

**Worth it all (Rita Springer) – Lyrics:**

**I don't understand Your ways**

**Oh but I will give You my song**

**Give You all of my praise**

**You hold on to all my pain**

**With it You are pulling me closer**

**And pulling me into Your ways**

**Now around every corner**

**And up every mountain**

**I'm not looking for crowns**

**Or the water from fountains**

**I'm desperate in seeking, frantic believing**

**That the sight of Your face**

**Is all that I need**

**I will say to You**

**It's gonna be worth it**

**It's gonna be worth it**

**It's gonna be worth it all**

**I believe this**