Acts 23:12-35 – This Is Our God

Acts 21 to 28 has riots, arrests, assassination plots, shipwrecks and snakes. It would make a great TV drama, and today's passage does not let us down.

God's plan – Acts 23:11

Before the reading, look at what comes just before it: the Lord stood by Paul and said, "Take courage! … you must also testify in Rome."

- God has spoken and has set out his plan for Paul.

Read Acts 23:12-35.

- God is never mentioned in this passage. It has no commands and no explicit truths. It is a story.
- It still shows how God works, so ask: who is this God who is moving through this story?

1. We will face opposition

- Opposition comes from our own flesh (Gal 5:16-17), from the world (John 15:18-19) and from the spiritual world (Eph 6:11-12).
- Caveat: not all opposition means we are on the right path (Acts 16:6-10).
- To tell the difference, go back to what God said.

2. God moves

- The nephew: who knew Paul had one? He hears of the plot and is led by the hand to the commander. God isn't mentioned, but this is our God, this is what He does.
- 470 soldiers: the commander acts partly to protect his own career and writes to Governor Felix. God uses a Roman to save Paul and move him towards Rome.

3. God's providence

- Providence is God working through people, circumstances and even things meant for evil to accomplish his purposes.
- He often works through ordinary things, not just miracles.

THIS IS OUR GOD – the perfect author (Proverbs 19:21)

- His purposes prevail.
- Trials still come, but nothing can stop what God has purposed.

4. What is your "Rome"?

- General: Matthew 28:18-20. Who is God putting in front of you today? (Luke's friends and the playdate.)
- Specific: a group of people, a ministry or a promise. If it has drifted, take courage.
- Jesus is the star, not Paul, and not us. But don't sideline yourself as a "background actor".
- Ephesians 2:10: we are God's handiwork, created for good works prepared in advance.

THIS IS OUR GOD

- What is God calling you into? Who has he put on your heart?
- Take courage: God is at work and he will make a way.

Questions

1) **What has God put on my heart?** *What is my "Rome"?*
2) **Where do I need to trust that God is working, even when I can't see it?**
3) **What is the next faithful step God is asking me to take?**