Back in the first part of Chapter 22, Paul said in verse 4, *“I persecuted this Way to the death…”* Making a statement, *“Look, with* ***ferocious tenacity*** *I persecuted this Way…****unstoppable*** *in my effort to acquire!” B*ut later, in Philippians 3:12, Paul will use the same word, the same thought the same statement again…that he is in **voracious pursuit**…but now it is all towards serving the Lord! He says, *“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I PRESS ON* (that’s not press-on nails, man! *Maybe he’s born with it! Maybe it’s Maybeline!* HA!). NO! ***He presses on!*** Thats it, that’s the word, that’s ***his aggression, his power, his strength, his drive, his wrath man***…he says, *“Now I use that to PRESS ON, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me!”*

What’s my point!? I love this! The way you are **wired**, that special and singular and unique way you are…just as Paul was as aggressive as a Racoon caught in a trash can (watch out!), when you give your **whole heart** to the Lord, He doesn’t wipe you out…***that’s when you realize WHY you are that way in the first place!*** ***That’s when your design optimizes, man!*** He redeems you! And that is what happened to Paul and I have to tell you, that’s a major part of why you’re so joyful and grateful walking with the Lord…because **somehow, someway, everything begins to fit!** You become ***great full!*** God shows you how to properly apply your special specific wonderful design and being filled with His redeeming Spirit, you become FULL of great man…not just good enough…not just “Good Morning!” GREAT MORNING! HA!!

And Paul now, bringing his intellect to bear, his courage, his aggression, his tenacity…I mean, he is on the stair way to safety, just pulled out of a riot all about beating him down…and he still won’t give up and walk away…**Paul is full of GREAT**…giving his own testimony of Jesus Christ in front of his own people…and for him, this is a great moment!

Acts Chapter 22 Verse 10

* (He just slipped in the fact that Jesus is Lord!) **One step.** One move. That’s **all** he gets. *Go into Damascus…there you will receive more instruction.* Isn’t that so often how God works? God give me the plan! Paint me the big picture! Sure would son, and sure will…eventually…but if I do that right now…***where is faith?*** Where is trusting in Me? Where would dependence be? Where would there be a need for prayer? Faith, trust, dependence, prayer…these are all **building blocks** of maturity and character in the Spirit…all elements, ***essential elements***…not oils HA…essential elements of becoming strong in the Lord…and so while I would even now plead to know the outcome…beg for the big picture…I understand why I’m only given one step.
* Don’t fall away at step one. Do what the Lord has asked. Continue as He has commanded…God’s ways are higher than ours but they don’t have to be always entirely a mystery…***spend time in His text message…it’s long but it’s complete!*** HA! As you learn the Word of God then His plan and His ways and His heart and His character will become more and more known to you so that you may not know **exactly WHAT** He is going to do but you can know the Spirit of love, grace, Father behind what He has prepared…and it will help to settle you a bit. To know that God is on the throne. No snoozing, no breaks…good and righteous 24 hours a day…and ultimately eternity is His play.
* You know, for you and for me….well for Paul it was *“Go to Damascus…”*  Our step one, for you and for me is really…**Get into My Word, and get my Word into you**…and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do… ***Don’t fall away at step one, man.*** God has so much to tell you…

Acts Chapter 22 Verses 11 – 20

* I just want to make a ***quick observation*** here about what Paul just described for this crowd. Paul does not mention this **fantastic trance** in any of his letters, only here. Why? ***His faith and life is founded on the power of the gospel, the bed rock of God’s grace, and the Word of God…not spiritual experiences…***

Acts Chapter 22 Verses 21 - 24

* It’s interesting here, the crowd there in the *temple listens silently and intently* **until this one word comes out**…***gentiles.*** They literally lose their minds…there in the temple…in the representative house and presence of God Himself…and this sparks in me a great passion. Why? Because in the midst of every person there…hundreds and perhaps thousands…in the heart even of the temple…***Paul was the only single person serving God.*** Let me show you…
* Genesis 18, verses 17 and 18, God speaking with Abraham about Sodom…, *“And the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed IN him?”* Turn over to Genesis 22. Verse 18. *“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed…”* Over to Isaiah, Chapter 42 verse 6. *“I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the gentiles!”* And one last verse, look at Isaiah 49:6, *“I will also give you as a light to the gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth!”*
* These are the scrolls they read in the temple. The parchments they vowed their lives to under the law…and yet only one Jew among the thousands crossed the *culture’s criterion* to **serve God above men.** In these last days, in the midst of a *culture current* that would seek to sweep you away from the cross of Christ, would you dare to serve God if it meant shame and rejection in the sight of men? ***Paul is the only soul in the temple serving God that day***…and in that, think of the millions who have lived for eternity, given their lives to serve God over the millennia…in this moment, Paul has the strength of millions of men in his resolve to serve God even if he is the only one…

Acts Chapter 22 Verses 25 – 26

* (Speaking of the Roman Empire, it crumbled. In fact, it was cut in half…do you know how? They used a pair of *Caesars!* HA!) (Actual Roman joke discovered, *“One man complains to another: “The slave you sold me died!” “By the gods!  – the other replies – “During the time he was in my service, he never did such a thing!”*) It was a ***grievous wrong*** to even bind a Roman citizen without due process! Paul was such a special dude! Check this out! It was extremely uncommon to find such an *educated, intelligent, devout Jew who was also a Roman citizen!* Maybe the only one and God would use this unique background in amazing ways…**just like he will use yours and mine!**

Acts Chapter 22 Verses 27 – 28

* ***Man!! That’s the gospel right there!!!*** Not the Roman citizenship but the conversation! This Roman soldier, his citizenship was **purchased** with a large sum while Paul’s citizenship…he was **born into it!** Which one parallels the gospel? ***BOTH!*** The large sum paid was the blood of the Savior, for the forgiveness and abolishment of all sin through Him and yet…if you’re not born into it…***you’re out!*** We must be born again…laying everything down to come to the truth of saving faith by the grace of God and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit!

Acts Chapter 22 Verses 29 – 30

* The opportunity of a lifetime! Under the watch and protection of the Roman Guard, Paul would have the chance to preach to the council of Jewish rulers that he once was a part of…his heart must have been ***overly filled*** at this moment…truly*, the result, the fruit* of honoring God even in the midst of a day and culture that honors themselves…