

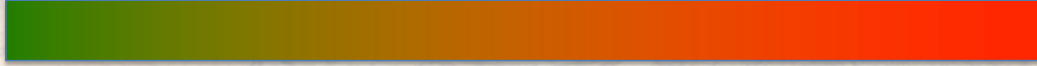
Without
a doubt

Pretty
likely

Maybe

We can
only hope

Beyond
hope



What are some future events that you might put in each of these categories?

What things can seem to threaten **God's good work** in our lives?

- Note: His agenda, not ours
- Confusion, opposition, lack of resources, lack of skill, trauma, ...

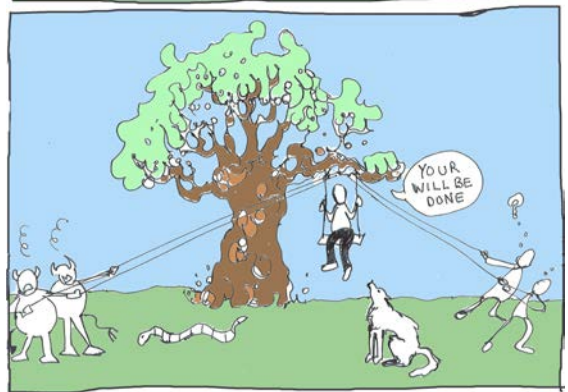
On this scale, where would you put **the work of God in your life?**

1

Divine Necessity

Acts 22:30-23:24

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2

Setting of this Story

- Paul came to Jerusalem anticipating trouble
 - Paul said: “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that **in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.**” *Acts 20:22-23*
 - “Coming over to us, [Agabus the prophet] took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, “The Holy Spirit says, “In this way the **Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.**””” *Acts 21:11*

3

Setting of this Story

- Paul came to Jerusalem anticipating trouble
- Paul was willing to suffer and die for Jesus
 - Paul said: “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? **I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem** for the name of the Lord Jesus.” *Acts 21:13*

4

Setting of this Story

- Jewish Christians were **skeptical** about Paul
- Jewish non-Christians **hated** Paul & **tried to kill** him
- Roman commander rescued Paul by **arresting him**
- Paul spoke to the people
 - They listened until he told about his call to the Gentiles
 - So they **tried to kill him again**
 - Paul was rescued by **Roman arrest**
- Roman commander was about to **torture** Paul
 - Stopped only when Paul said he was a Roman citizen

5

Acts 22:30-23:24

22:30-23:5 Paul's trial: the opening conflict

- 6-10 1. Paul confronted hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders
- 11 • Paul was not claiming perfection
- 12-15 • Instead: What they hated was his unwavering
- 16-24 commitment to **obey the call of God** on his life
2. Paul confronted hypocrisy of the High Priest
- Ananias was known for cruelty, greed & corruption
- Tried to silence God's word through Paul by violence
- Paul continued to submit to God and His commands boldly!

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Acts 22:30-23:24

²²30-²³5 Paul's trial: the opening conflict

6-10 Paul's trial: derailed by Paul's claim of resurrection

11 • Counsel: **Sadducees** + **Pharisees** (like Paul)

12-15 Powerful minority: **priests** Weaker majority: **scribes**

16-24 **No** ← Resurrection & Angels? → **Yes**

- Paul: not just politics
 - That would have focused on disproving the charge that he brought a Gentile into the temple
- Rather: Genuine path for sharing the Good News
 - Resurrection of the dead is central to the Gospel
 - It was solid common ground with Pharisees/Judaism
- Not looking good for Paul!

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Not a good week for Paul...

Day 1: Crowd tried to **kill** Paul, he was **arrested**. He spoke to the crowd, they tried to **kill** him again. Rescued by Roman **arrest**, then he was going to be **flogged**, but Paul stopped it by telling of his Roman citizenship

Day 2: Paul defended himself to the Sanhedrin. It descended into **deadly chaos**. Rescued by Roman **arrest** again

That night: Jesus stood near Paul to reassure him

Day 3: Jews made a **plot to kill** Paul on Day 4 or die trying. Nephew heard of plot and told Paul then commander

That night: **Paul taken by army** to Caesarea

Day 8: Jews appeared in Caesarea to **accuse** Paul

8

Acts 22:30-23:24

²²30-²³5 Paul's trial: the opening conflict

6-10 Paul's trial: derailed by Paul

11 Jesus stood with Paul to give Paul courage

12-15 • **Not:** "Don't be afraid of me"

16-24 • **Rather:** "Don't be discouraged by circumstances"

- Affirmation
 - His testimony in Jerusalem fit God's intentions
 - "Divine necessity" to testify in Rome in the same way
- "In the same way" = through many troubles...
 - Arrest, shipwrecks, injustice, ...

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Acts 22:30-23:24

²²30-²³5 Paul's trial: the opening conflict

6-10 Paul's trial: derailed by Paul

11 Jesus stood with Paul to give Paul courage

12-15 Plot made to kill Paul

16-24 • Vow: kill Paul or die trying → more than 40 men!

- Sin's strategy: give people a way to do what is wrong while claiming not to be responsible
 - "You ask for another hearing"
 - "We'll kill Paul before he gets to you"
- Paul's claim of hypocrisy was shown to be true
- Parallel to Jesus' trial and death

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Acts 22:30-23:24

²²30-²³5 Paul's trial: the opening conflict

6-10 Paul's trial: derailed by Paul

11 Jesus stood with Paul to give Paul courage

12-15 Plot made to kill Paul

16-24 Plot foiled (prevented from happening)

- Retelling of details emphasizes the experience of danger for Paul
- Irony: the plot of 40+ men and the most powerful leaders of the Jews stopped by a young boy
 - and God...
 - And this brought about God's purpose in Paul

11

The Big Idea

God protects and provides for His people

in all the work He gives them to do

even through dangers and difficulties

and flawed people and institutions

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- God's words when the non-Christian Saul became the Christian Paul: "This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the **Gentiles** and their **kings** and to the **people of Israel**. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." *Acts 9:15-16*
- Each character in this story kept his freedom, yet was used by God to accomplish the work that God called Paul to do
 - Only by such controversy and arrest did Paul have the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to the rulers of the Gentiles

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- At the center of this story...
 - 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 needed this assurance!

14

The Big Idea

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15

What is working to prevent or oppose God's work in your life?

- **Personal issues**
- **Societal issues**
- **Forces too big and powerful for us to understand or control**
- **"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." *Ephesians 6:12***



**The work God wants done is BEYOND HOPE
from a human perspective!**

16

God works all things together according to His purpose

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



• **“And we know that **in all things** God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called **according to his purpose**. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.... And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” *Romans 8:28–30***

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18

Application

- Take courage!

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But we have this **treasure** in **jars of clay** to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are...

hard pressed on every side, but not crushed;

perplexed, but not in despair;

persecuted, but not abandoned;

struck down, but not destroyed.

We always carry around in our body the **death** of Jesus, so that the **life** of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to **death** for Jesus' sake, so that his **life** may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, **death** is at work in us, but **life** is at work in you. *2 Corinthians 4:7-12*

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Welcome to Crossway Multinational Church!

We are a **church** that strives to be
for, of and **by**
the peoples of many nations

This is not normal!

And it is not just

because no one has tried!!

There are powerful forces

of evil and sin and history and society

that are working against this vision!

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Application

- Take courage!
 - Are you carrying around the death of Jesus in His call on your life?
 - Divine Necessity: God's call on your life must happen!
 - Yet "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." *Acts 14:22*
 - By the power of God
 - "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm.
Nothing is too hard for you." *Jeremiah 32:17*
 - **So don't become discouraged or lose heart!**

22

Application

- Take courage!
- Pursue bold, humble, godly, skillful obedience to Christ
 - “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, **I live by faith in the Son of God,** who loved me and gave himself for me.” *Galatians 2:20*

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[When facing severe opposition to God’s call on His life, Paul said...]
 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.** If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: **I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.” *Philippians 1:20-26*

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The Big Idea

God protects and provides for His people
in all the work He gives them to do
even through dangers and difficulties
and flawed people and institutions

25

Do you know God's call on your life? Are you following it?

- **Sometimes courage in the seemingly ordinary**
- **Sometimes courage in the extraordinary**
- **Always in the power of God!**

That night, Paul was deeply discouraged in God's call

Are you discouraged in following Jesus?

Do you know someone who is deeply discouraged in God's call?

Are you willing to follow that call?

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