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## The Lord Who Encourages

By Shannon Ford on June 28, 2022

### TODAY'S READING: Acts 23

After reading the missionary travels of Paul in the book of Acts, we might begin to think that he was used to these moments. You might believe that Paul was used to standing in vulnerable places and testifying to the person of Jesus Christ and His resurrection. However, I believe that Paul had moments of discouragement as he wondered about his fate like any of us would. In Acts 23, Paul has testified before the Sanhedrin council and receives word that there is now a plot to kill him. It is during the dark night that Jesus Himself comes and stands by Paul. This is the way God works. It is not enough that He works on our behalf and teaches us His ways. He wants us to know that He stands by us and is with us no matter what we face.

What would you like the Lord to say to you when he stands next to you in your moments of great discouragement? In our dark moments we are most often tempted to fear and despair. To Paul, Jesus' words were simply, *"Take courage."* Paul finds a special kind of communion with the Lord in needing to take courage. Jesus himself had a dark night before a trial with people plotting His death. Yet, in Gethsemane, when Jesus had His dark night, and needed someone to stand by Him, He was alone. Jesus went through the dark night alone so He could stand by us in our dark nights.

Jesus did not promise comfort or even safety to Paul. He called him to take courage. Someone once said that Jesus did not come to make us safe, but to make us brave. What would it look like for you to find courage from Christ? What situation has He called you to that requires courage? What task do you feel alone in? What awkward conversation is awaiting you? For the dark nights ahead, there are habits of courage that you must build into your life.

**PRAYER:** Lord, help me to not play it safe when it comes to engaging our culture and sharing the gospel. Give me the courage to be a witness for You regardless of the circumstances or the response of others. Amen.

### TOMORROW'S READING: Acts 24

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