

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS WILL BEGIN AGAIN THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 15TH

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

When most of us think about tolerating something, we think of putting up with things that we don't like. But sometimes tolerating something can mean that what we're experiencing isn't even moving the needle enough with us to illicit a response. In Acts 22, we find the apostle Paul taking the stand in his public defense in Jerusalem and sharing 4 things with the crowd. The crowd tolerated three of them, but the fourth one sent them into a rioting frenzy. We would be wise to learn from Paul's experience!

1. **The Jews could tolerate Paul's religious works:** Paul said in Acts 22:3 that he was just as zealous for God as the Jews. He then lists a lot of the work he had done in the name of religion, but they weren't very impressed because they worked for God, too. Our works will never be enough to save us, or anyone else who is lost.
2. **The Jews could tolerate Paul's personal testimony:** Paul then goes on to share his testimony about how Jesus met him on the road to Damascus, but this failed to really move the listeners toward a response. Why not? Because it was Paul's testimony. See, Jesus isn't just my Lord, or your Lord, or our Lord. He's THE LORD. The lost are perfectly ok with you loving Jesus. Just don't ask them to.
3. **The Jews could tolerate Paul's divine encounters:** Paul even shared a pretty powerful encounter that he had – a man named Ananias who was sent to him through a dream to pray for him and restore Paul's sight. Powerful, right? Not enough to even get a yawn from the Jews. They'd heard stories like that before, and so Paul's experience – as awesome as it was – didn't move them closer to an encounter with Jesus.
4. **The Jews couldn't tolerate Paul's call to the Gentiles:** Finally, in Acts 22:21, Paul said that God was sending him far away to the Gentiles, and that one statement instigated a riot. Why? The Jews couldn't tolerate the idea of people that different being accepted by God.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What was one helpful, eye-opening, or troubling insight or principle from this week's message?
- Have you ever been around Christians who worked really hard for Jesus and the church but couldn't get along? Describe that experience.
- Paul made the following statement in the message: "God's way rubs man's way the wrong way." What types of individuals rub you the wrong way? How hard is it for you to accept them into the family of God?
- Grace is a beautiful thing to give and to receive. How many times is grace mentioned in Ephesians 2:4-8? What does grace do for each of us?
- Read John 13:35. Why do you think our ability to love one another is such a powerful witness to the world that we're following Jesus?
- Grace makes outsiders insiders. Who do you know right now that needs to be brought near Jesus? How can you apply grace to that situation?