

Privilege! Acts 23.16-35

The photo (from the Corinth museum) shows the tombstone of a young officer in the Roman army (with his portable writing-tablets!). He reminds me of Claudius Lysias, the tribune whose letter plays such an important role in Paul's story. Today's TFTD is from Rod Hill.



Acts 23.27 This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen.

Many years ago now, I was stood in a crowd, waiting for a bus. As the bus roared into the bus station it stopped before the waiting crowd (far too many to get on the bus) and the young, black conductor stood on the step of the bus surveying the crowd. Then he summoned himself to his full height, pointed at me and said "You, get on!"

I have never been so embarrassed in my whole life, whether before or since. Why me? Why was I being singled out?

Then he shouted again "Muzungu (white man) get on!"

I was being singled out for different treatment simply because of the colour of my skin. I have never forgotten that experience, as you can tell. White privilege, in a Zambian bus station

I wonder if you've seen this video that's been doing the rounds on Facebook for a while now
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3545259648830402>

A group of children are lining up to run a race, the prize for which is \$100. However, before they start there are some instructions:

"If the statement I make applies to you, take two steps forward:

- If both of your parents are still married to each other, step forward
- If you grew up with a father figure in the house, step forward
- If you have had access to private education, step forward
- If you've had access to a free tutor, step forward
- If you've never had to worry about your cell phone being cancelled, step forward
- If you've never had to help your parents out with the bills, step forward
- If it's not because of your athletic ability that you don't pay for college, step forward
- If you've never wondered where your next meal was going to come from, step forward

Every one of those statements had nothing to do with anything you've done, or decisions you've made. Now, turn around and look at those behind you.

Those at the front have a better chance of winning the \$100. Does that mean the others can't run fast? No, those at the front have a better chance of winning, no matter how fast those at the back run."

That's privilege!

In this passage Paul enjoys privileged status. He's a Roman citizen, from Cilicia.

But was he morally right to use his privilege to save his own life? And what of me? For the whole of my life I have been incredibly privileged, and not even thought about it.

BLACK LIVES MATTER, BECAUSE BLACK LIVES MATTER!

Rod Hill

Methodist Minister

You might be interested to follow up this short video on the Chester Diocese website:

<https://www.chester.anglican.org/news/black-lives-like-any-other-lives-do-matter.php>