

Acts: The Church on Earth

## The Words of Truth and Reason

Acts 26

### In Acts, we're looking at the Church on Earth

- The church isn't a building, it's people
- The **body** of Jesus - living, moving, doing the things He did and does
- By the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. Possessed by God.
- The church isn't perfect, but it's called to be Holy
- The early church lived earnestly for Christ

### Previously

- Saul, the Pharisee, violently persecutes the church
- Jesus knocks him off his high horse
- Calls him
- Truly the 12th apostle, the replacement the apostles tried to find in the flesh by drawing straws served God, but God is the one who calls and ordains
- Preached to Gentiles
- Turned to the Jews, his people, they immediately reject him
- On trial for stirring up the people...has committed no crime
- Several leaders already have struggled with what to do
- Paul appeals to Caesar, Festus brings in the Jewish King Agrippa to help figure out what to do

**Do you and I know what to do in life?**

**Do we ever stop and consider the direction we're headed? Even if it's good and everything is going fine?**

**Why do we believe what we believe? Is it because it's what we've been told? Have we experienced it for ourselves? Have we tested it to be true?**

**What do we want most out of life?**

*"The Christian believes the Bible because he has met its Author." — Ray Comfort*

**[Pray]**

**As we look at this chapter today, it's in the Bible for a reason. It's a very detailed look at a situation in Paul's life. I almost wonder why it's in here at all, other than maybe it exposes**

the ineptitude of man's government by man, and how it really was for the reason of the Gospel that Paul heads to Rome and eventually loses his life for it. That the call of God is specific and individual, important and focused, and that every little matter of our life is important to Him and even planned for His purpose.

Remember this verse from last time as we read:

**[Matthew 10:19-20 NKJV] "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; "for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.**

**[Isaiah 1:18-20 NKJV] "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.**

## Read 26:1-3

### King Agrippa

*One commentary (David Guzik) reminds us:*

*Paul stood before the man whose great-grandfather had tried to kill Jesus as a baby; his grandfather had John the Baptist beheaded; his father had martyred the first apostle, James. Agrippa's family history made him unlikely to receive Paul warmly.*

### Paul wasn't buttering him up, he was finding an avenue of connection

This is a good lesson for us. We often focus on the differences between us and the world, and rightfully so, but when trying to minister and relate, common ground is important.

**Paul recognizes who he's speaking to. He preaches but he speaks to the people in front of him. It's never a canned response.**

**"I beg you to patiently listen to me."**

**Sometimes it takes a little while to explain a situation fully.**

*In our day and age, everything is down to a sound bite*

*"3 seconds on a page"*

*People don't read, don't listen, don't pay attention (quick, frantic cuts in movies and tv)*

*YouTube "shorts"*

*Headlines*

*People don't take them time to fully read or consider a story, let alone why it's happening, and even less why it's being told to you. It's being told, promoted, etc. for a reason. To get you to do something. Usually buy something or buy in to a policy.*

**But for the gospel, it's simple, but we need to walk through it. I think most people reject it because they haven't fully thought it through.** They're too busy, or too distracted, by their next pleasure, their next sin, their next desire.

**:4-11**

**Paul explains how he was a Pharisee of Pharisees**

**About as perfect a life in Judaism as possible**

(Pharisees upheld doctrine and tradition. Saducees held more to the doctrine. Pharisees believed in the spiritual realm while the Saducees did not, that's why they're sad, you see. Saducees tended to be wealthy, controlled the temple. Pharisees more of the people and the synagogues. Saducees closer to Rome and non-native Jews.)

**V6 "stand on trial for the hope in the promise made by God to our Fathers"**

Paul ties to it back to what belief in Jesus really is...believing what God had promised all along to the Jewish people, and to the world through them.

He doesn't knock the Jews at all "they earnestly serve God ... in hope to attain"

**He highlights the fact that hope has put him on trial**

The rest of the Jews had been trusting in their works for so long  
Still do today. Destruction of the temple, hoping that their good works outweigh the bad.  
Many Christians, whether they say so or not, would be adhering to the same thing.  
That being "good" makes them right with God.

But not so. It is putting our faith and trust in the hope God gives through Jesus.

**[Hebrews 11:1-2 NKJV] Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a [good] testimony.**

**V8 Why is it thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?**

They believe God made life, why would it be impossible for him to raise life?  
I think we struggle with this too. With miracles in the scripture. With even plain truth of creation, the flood, etc. Why would it be impossible for God to do these things? Why do we instead put more faith into a face on CNN or someone in a corduroy jacket at a university?

**The resurrection is real.** If we reason through it, perhaps t's less hard I'd say than making everything out of nothing.

**V9 Paul's initial reasoning in life was through his strict belief in the law, he missed the point, and thought his service to God was killing believers**

**[John 16:2-3 NKJV] "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. "And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me.**

*People today will cancel you, hate you, destroy you for what they believe...thinking they are serving their misguided form of righteousness by doing it. That somehow their doctrine of "love is love" demands vehement hate and murder of anyone who would simply disagree.*

**Paul compelled them to blaspheme...**meaning he did whatever it took to get them to deny their faith in Jesus. And some did, at least in word, to save their skin from Paul.

**Paul persecuted them to foreign cities...**he didn't stop in Jerusalem and Israel, he traveled as far as he could to try and get rid of the belief in Jesus.

*You see some people today will stop at nothing and their only motive that's apparent is they just hate God.*

**When evangelizing, sharing, etc...it would serve us and them well to try and see that, get to that heart of the matter. Not just argue some doctrine, but get to why they hate God, and minister to them there, reason with them there, that though their sins be as scarlet, they can be washed white as snow.**

**:12-18**

**Paul is really laying out that he was arm-in-arm with these people. Had their blessing, authority to carry out these atrocities against believers....of which he now is.**

He's really highlighting the significance of his conversion. It was no small thing. No accident. No doing of his own. No simple change of opinion. His whole life was upended by Jesus.

**Paul clearly shows that the RESURRECTED Jesus appeared to him in glory  
And knocked him off his high horse**

**Paul introduces Jesus to Agrippa the way Paul was introduced to Jesus**

There is a personal relationship, a personal call in all of our lives

**Paul clearly knows his call directly from the Lord**

It's not some abstract from the scriptures. Not something his "mentor" told him to do (I hate that word). Not his parent's business. It's what Jesus himself commanded him to do.

**Do we know the call on our lives?**

First and foremost, it's simply to be saved from our sin and the destruction of sin to come

**[John 3:16-21 NKJV] "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."**

**But from there, it is very specific.**

Disciples called to leave their nets, tax booths, jobs, etc.

Demoniac told to go back to his village and tell them even though he wanted to follow Jesus on earth.

Paul sent to Gentiles, Kings and in a way, the Jews...God lets him write Hebrews in my opinion for Paul's desire for his people...

**[Romans 9:1-5 NKJV] I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom [pertain] the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service [of God], and the promises; of whom [are] the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ [came], who is over all, [the] eternally blessed God. Amen.**

**God has an individual call for all of us**

Everything else should be subject to that call. He will always be faithful to get us back on track to it, as well.

Many people don't follow the call, as we see throughout the scriptures, too busy, want to get married, want to bury, etc...

**[Matthew 6:33-34 NKJV] "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day [is] its own trouble.**

**:19-23**

### **I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision**

Paul strove his whole life to be obedient to the law and tradition

### **But he missed the point**

**[John 5:39-40 NKJV] "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.**

### **The point was and is Jesus.**

The whole focus of all of the Bible is Jesus and getting us back to Him.

Thankfully Jesus showed up for Paul. And Jesus was showing up for Festus, Agrippa and the whole court this day. To be revealed in Paul.

### **Paul lays out that he was arrested because he was telling people to repent!**

There's no power in a sacrificial system if repentance has occurred. If Jesus fulfilled the law, became their sin, the power of the temple and sacrificial system goes away. You have to think that these people somewhere deep down were afraid of losing their power.

*Much like the folks in power these days*

**Paul says he's not teaching anything NEW. It's all there, right in front of them, in the words of Moses! The one they revered the most.**

**That the Christ must suffer. It was clear Jesus fulfilled all of these prophecies if they would but look.**

**:24-32**

### **Festus interrupts**

Paul you've gone insane. You're so smart, you know so much, but it's thrown you off the deep end

People like to live in their safe little boxes

They don't like the big world outside their own perception, of things that they haven't thought of or are afraid to encounter

Trying to share truth with people, they will stick their heads out for a minute, see how unprepared they are and how it will upend their way of life, so they go back in...knowing full well there is a huge storm outside and it will eventually get them.

Especially people in power, people with "something to lose," people who think they have science and the world figured out. **To them the cross is an offense!**

**Paul rebuffs, “I’m not crazy. I speak the words of truth and reason.”**

The Bible, when actually read, actually looked at...makes perfect sense.

It is true. Everything that is said has been verified or is constantly verified.

Multi dimensions, spacetime, the circle of the earth, weather patterns, geology, archaeology, it's all there. Future events (past future and present future) come to pass.

It doesn't contradict itself and the supposed contradictions, when actually dug into, only solidify that there isn't a contradiction.

**But most of all, that there is a God. He made you. He loves you. He made life and of course has power over death.**

**He knows that Agrippa is understanding what he's saying. A lot of people probably did see, but were kept down by the religious leaders of their day.**

**“Not done in a corner”**

Christianity was no secret. Jesus was open in the community. The church was vocal and present and not hidden away on some commune.

They were “in the world and not of it”

**Agrippa says something telling and tragic “you almost persuade me to become a Christian”**

He's right there. He knows it makes sense. But something holds him back. His love of self or power or sin keeps him from embracing the truth.

Nothing sadder than someone knowing the truth...the rich young ruler who walks away sad. He was right there. Could have followed Jesus. But when told HE had to give up everything he owned (that's not a general command, it was his specific command) he went away sad.

I can't imagine all the people who heard Billy Graham in person and didn't choose the life the Holy Spirit was offering...how their torment must be. Agrippa as well.

**Paul lays it all out, uses the opportunity to share the gospel, and at the very end brings up the chains.**

That was the end of the conversation there. Was it a mistake? Should he have never mentioned his chains? The conversation was over anyway, they were done listening.

Reading the room is important when we share. Be sensitive to that.

*Commentary: Paul showed that even though he was in chains, he had more freedom in Jesus than any of the royalty listening had.*

**They all get up and say things in their chambers that are very telling...**

**“This man is doing nothing deserving death or imprisonment.”**

There’s literally nothing wrong here. But we can’t free him. If he hadn’t appealed to Caesar we’d let him go. But since he has we have to send him or we’re going against Roman law.

*Commentary: was Paul’s appeal to Caesar a good thing or a bad thing?*

*i. Some people believe it was a bad thing, and that Paul was trusting in the power of the Roman legal system instead of in the power of God. They say that Paul might have been set free by Agrippa if he had not appealed to Caesar.*

*ii. However, we should see the fulfillment of God’s plan through all these events. By his appeal to Caesar, Paul will have the opportunity to preach to the Roman Emperor the way he had to Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, thus fulfilling the promise that Paul would bear My name before...kings (Acts 9:15).*

*iii. The appeal to Caesar, and his subsequent journey to Rome at the Empire’s expense, were also the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit’s purpose that Paul should go to Rome (Acts 19:21, 23:11). This also answered a long-standing desire in the heart of Paul to visit the already present Christian community there (Romans 1:9-13).*

**Paul shared truth and reason. And Festus and Agrippa listened for a while. But when it came down to it, they were unwilling to act personally on it, and professionally they were bound by the law to send Paul to Caesar.**

**We live in an unreasonable age. Despite the calls to “trust the science” and that we’ve got so much knowledge and technology...we’ve abandoned it for feeling and love of sin and self rather than love of God and others.**

**We can do our best to reason with the world, but we shouldn’t be surprised when they reach an end of bearing with it and want to stay unreasonable.**

**Know that your faith and calling and election are sure. That what we believe is the most reasonable thing possible.**

**God loves you. God has made a way for you. And He has a plan for you.**

**Jer 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**

**Will you be obedient to the heavenly call on your life?**



**[Ephesians 1:3-4 NKJV] Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly [places] in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,**

**[Ephesians 2:10 NKJV] For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**