

Sermon Date: March 16, 2014  
Paul before Festus & Agrippa – Acts 25:1-27  
Doug McBride

The following is a synopsis from Acts 24 leading up to our current teaching out of Acts 25

- Paul is brought to Caesarea to address Felix the Roman governor of Judea – Acts 23:33-35
- Put on trial before Felix, accusations are made against Paul by the Jewish elders through Tertullus who is a polished lawyer – Acts 24:1-9
- Paul gives a defense – Acts 24:10-21
- Ordered to stay in Caesarea under a house arrest of sorts, yet Paul can move about freely – Acts 24:23
- Paul is kept in Caesarea for 2 years to pacify the Jews while Felix and his wife Drusilla beckon for Paul to come and speak with them about his faith – Acts 24:24-26
- Felix is replaced by Festus who will now inherit the issue of Paul – Acts 24:27

Read Acts 25:1-27 – Paul before Festus and Agrippa

1. Where does Festus go to address the issue of Paul with the Jewish leaders (v. 1-5)? What new threat to Paul do the Jewish leaders plan as soon as the new governor Festus arrives, and how is it thwarted?
  
2. Paul is brought before Festus in person to face charges brought against him by the Jews (v. 6-7)? How does Paul defend himself (v. 8-11)? How does Festus respond to Paul (v. 12)?
  
3. What does Paul apparently hope to accomplish by appealing to Caesar?
  
4. Doug made an observation about Paul's strategy in defending himself against his accusers (v. 10-11). While Paul rests on God's providential care, he also has to listen for how God wants him to respond *and* he has to "show up." Sometimes the answer is "The Lord will fight for you and you only need to keep still" (Exodus 14:14) and other times the answer is "Be strong and very courageous, for you shall put this people in possession of the land I swore to give them" (Joshua 1:6). Discerning and discovering which applies is a major element in the discernment to which all Christians are called. Sometimes when we pray and wait for God to act, the answer is to be still, other times to take action. In the same way we balance between two tensions – when to speak and when to just keep silent.
  - a. In your own experience how have you discerned when to "keep still" and allow the Lord to act, and when to take the initiative and take action? Looking back, would you do it differently now and why?

5. Who enters the picture now to hear Paul's defense (v. 13)? Who is Agrippa? Who is Bernice?
  
6. What is the substance of the conversation between Festus and Agrippa (v. 14-21)?
  - a. Luke makes us aware of a very interesting conclusion Festus has come to as he presents the dilemma of Paul to Agrippa (v. 18-19). What is that conclusion that leads to his confusion?
  
7. How does the action unfold as Festus passes the Paul torch (so to speak) onto Agrippa (v. 23-27)? What is the mood and environment like?

*Closing Questions:*

*Do we look for mirrors of Jesus in our lives? Are we willing to be a fools to the world and wise in God's eyes rather than just the opposite? And foolish we will be if we dare to say "Jesus, I will stand where You stand." And when we do, will we be shocked at being treated like Jesus?*

*Do we view our lives as helpless victims?*

*In a world set against God where we are again called to pour ourselves out on behalf of others as simply an overflow from what God has done for us, will we then complain that the world is emptying us?*

*Paul is not a helpless victim. As opportunity presents itself, rather than being mired in self-pity, Paul stands ready to bear witness to the existence of God. Although Paul is denied justice & freedom unfairly, even still he waits on the still quiet promptings of the Spirit of Jesus. He refuses to miss God's hand working. He refuses to become victim and instead thinks victoriously. He knows his King reigns.*