

Study on Acts 25

by Atlee Yoder

This sermon delves into the themes of justice, self-control, and the coming judgment as seen in the interactions between Paul, Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa. It highlights the challenges faced by those who stand for truth and righteousness, even in the face of opposition and potential persecution. The importance of having a clear conscience before God and the need to rejoice in the shadow of His wings are emphasized, along with the call to repentance and turning from darkness to light.

Scripture: Acts 24:25, Acts 25:11, Acts 26:18, Matthew 11:25, 1 Timothy 1:6, Isaiah 6:9, Psalm 90:12, Isaiah 35:10

Topics: "Justice", "Repentance"

Description

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Transcript

Praise the Lord. It is very good to be here. I just want to greet you all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's just so much in that that we just can rejoice in. A little verse that came through my mind this morning a lot was Psalms. I like that psalm that says, if I can quote it now, it's, because you have been my help I will rejoice in the shadow of your wings.

And it just forms this picture of a brooding hen, you know, with her chiclets, chickens. And that's where we need to be found. That's where probably many times the Lord clucks like a chicken to get us back.

And we need to be tuned to hear that cluck. Anyhow, if we're under that wing, then we are protected. Another verse, while Rob was speaking, I was just really blessed with a verse somewhere in John where it talks about these things that speak unto you, that you shall have peace in the world.

You have tribulations, but I have overcome the world. And that's yet another thing that we can just rejoice in. Rejoice under the shadow of his wings.

And many other countless things just kind of fit that whole pattern of God being good and how that, oh, just some little thoughts of how there in John it says, the Gospel of John, soon after it starts in, it says that

the law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. And I just had to ponder on that a bit how, if you read into it a little bit, it seems like the law was missing this grace and truth. The intent of the law was good, but how it worked itself out throughout generations, it seemed like grace and truth just somehow lacked there.

But not so with the Lord Jesus. He brought us grace and truth. Let's rejoice in that.

The world goes on. It has its things that it rejoices in. It's short-lived.

There's a destination for those kinds of pleasure rejoicings. No, I think what we're talking about here is, is something that we have, we have a faith in, we have a hope for, the things that it cannot be seen necessarily, but we still hope for it. And, and that way our rejoicing is very different than the world.

The world will always have tribulation. It will always have the woe is me, the here I am again stuck, or something, something like that. Just, you name it.

The turkeys die, the chickens get sick. I don't have to mention all those things, but just, that's how it goes. But that happens to the Christians too.

It's, it's, it's the attitude we have when those things come that put us in that different, in that different category, in the kingdom of God. So, well, I guess I'll do another little lesson on Acts. We're getting back there towards the end.

And I just want to keep pointing out some things that are of interest to me and that stand out to me, and I think they do to you all as well. The other little thing I had spoken up with in my living room, and it's recorded and stuff, and it didn't know for sure how good it came out and stuff, but just some thoughts in review. I, I just really, I, it seems like I can read through the Acts here and find new things about all the time, and just things to, to meditate on that are good, things to question myself in, see if I'm right.

And the first thing would be, and if you all want to page to Acts 23, I'll just read verse, my main, my main chapters are 25 and 26, that's where I'm going, but just in review a few things there. It says, Paul earnestly beholding to counsel said, men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And it was then that the high priest got really upset and, and smitten him on the, on his mouth.

I think Paul was saying this with a true, sincere, honest heart. He had a good conscience before God. He had not acted out of deceit or, or vain or, or any way that was, was crafty.

But, but the accusations against him were not so. The accusations against him, maybe we'll read it today, were like, he is, he is the leader of a cult. He is a part of the ring.

He is a ring leader of a cult. He profanes the temple. Notorious man, like they, they were after him in a, in a bad way.

But through all that, Paul still, he just, he just knew he had a clear conscience before God. And so I want to touch on a few verses that relate to that. And the first one, I'll go to 1st Timothy 1. This is again, Paul speaking about having a clear conscience.

1st Timothy 1, 18. This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecy which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare, holding faith and good conscience, which some having put away concerning faith have been, have made shipwreck. And then he gets specific and

he says, who is Hymenaeus and Alexandria, whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Still it's specific in who it was, but what actually happened, I don't, I don't really know. Some kind of act of blaspheming. They probably were crafty.

They probably were deceitful in their handlings of facts, their handlings of, you know, trying to maybe manipulate or pull, pull people to themselves away from Paul is what I am suspicious of. And that was called blaspheming, an act worthy to be delivered unto Satan. And so Paul here was encouraging Timothy to hold, hold the faith.

Seems like somewhere else he said something about holding the mystery of a faith, holding the mystery of faith in a clear conscience. If someone has that reference, I think we're, I think it's right in here too somewhere, if I remember right. First Timothy 6, holding to the mystery of faith with a, with a clear conscience, is that where it is? It's, it's somewhere in there.

It's what it says. And so it's yet another, another thing that Paul said, you know, that's an important ingredient for our Christian walk. And I want that.

I think we should all desire that. And I'm confident that you all do desire that. This is what, this is what the Apostle Paul had.

And he professed it before the high priest and the council there, and he got smitten on his mouth. Okay. Second Corinthians 4, another good verse to go to for that.

Second Corinthians 4 verse 2, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty. Let me read verse 1. Therefore seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we faint not. Like saying we don't give up.

But having renounced things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. I guess if I would, it kind of holds its own without too much emphasis, just how the things of dishonesty are to be rejected. The handling of God's word deceitfully is to be worked against.

These are things that I think they want to just kind of naturally rise up in our flesh sometimes. It's a part of the battle. But like it says somewhere in the scriptures that there is no temptation so great that God does not give us a way of escape.

And that's just yet another thing that we can have. That's yet another thing that we do have if we find ourselves under the, you know, rejoicing under the shadow of his wings. All right.

Yeah, it might seem like I go through these things, there's going to be different things to talk on and different things that stand out to me, but that's just a little bit how it goes. When you read through Acts, there's just a lot going on, a lot that's good. It's just good for us.

A couple of quick things there through Acts 23. Yeah, I thought I had a few. Okay, verse 11 says, 23 verse 11, and the night following the Lord stood by him and said, be of good cheer.

Here the Lord himself came to the sight of Paul, to his sight, and he said, be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. And that verse helps me a

little bit in understanding why Paul might have appealed to Caesar, Augustus Caesar, I believe, why he chose this hard path of when he was given the option to go all the way to Rome. And the Lord had already told him in a vision that he must bear witness in Rome.

He must preach the good news in Rome. So I don't know, am I just reading into it to make that link or not, but it stood out to me that further back we'll read maybe yet how that Paul chose to go. I think it was pretty much his choice to appeal to Caesar.

And then Agrippa said, if you appeal to Caesar, you will go. Okay, maybe I should just read this whole thing. Maybe starting at verse 14 there, and they came to the chief priests and elders and said, we have found ourselves under a curse, great curse that we will not eat until we have slain Paul.

Now, therefore you with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you tomorrow. This is the Jews in a very deceitful way, conspiring against Paul, figuring out how they could possibly set things up to where they could kill him. And so they went to the chief captain and said, yeah, just bring Paul down from Caesarea to Jerusalem and we'll try his case there in Jerusalem.

But in their minds, they were like, on the way, we're going to kill him. It says, as though you would inquire something more perfectly concerning him. And we, wherever he come here are ready to kill him.

I don't know that they told all that to the high council, but that was their intents. Anyhow, the story goes, Paul's sister's son heard of their lie in wait and went and entered into the castle and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him and said, bring this young man to the chief captain, for he has a thing to tell him.

So he took him, brought him to the chief captain and said, Paul, the prisoner, called me unto him and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who has something to say to you. And the chief captain took him by the hand and went with him aside privately and asked him, what is it that you want to tell me? And he said, the Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou would bring Paul down tomorrow into the council as they would inquire something of him more perfectly. But do not thou yield unto them for their lie in wait for him more than 40 men, which have bound themselves with an oath that they will neither eat or drink till they have killed him.

That's Paul. And they are ready, looking for a promise from thee. So the chief captain then let the young men depart and charged him, don't tell anyone, basically.

And then, and he called unto him two centurions saying, make ready 200 soldiers to go to Caesarea and horsemen three score and 10 and spearmen 200 at the third hour of the night. So the commanders got his officers in gear and they put together this, like a mob of troops, something close to over 400 troops. And they ordered that Paul would be on his own horse.

And what came to my mind was that I'm not sure if they quite understood who they're predicting, other than Paul being a Roman citizen. The reason Paul even got spared the first time around in some earlier chapters was because he made it known to the chief captains that he is a Roman citizen. And just like that, they took him into protective custody and kept him there.

And they were really trying to seek out the matter further and see what's going on here to the degree that they would put together this big of an army of troops to take him from one place to the other. I'm not sure, Caesarea to somewhere, I'm not sure where. Anyhow, those are just some things that stand out to me.

But if we can transfer from there back to how Paul then actually got very good opportunity to speak to these Roman officers, that would be Felix, Festus, even to King Agrippa. They were starting to back off a bit. They were like, oh, well, especially when Paul started speaking to them about righteousness, judgment, and some other thing, like soundness or some kind of other quality.

They were like, oh, they kind of backed off. And they were like, in a more convenient time, we will hear you. So I'm just not sure if they actually knew who they were taking into protection here.

But in that way, God had it so that Paul was protected. And as much ministry opportunity that he'd already taken and done, having had to make two big trips and a third trip up through other provinces, God still had more work for him, even at this time. Maybe we'll jump up and get going on Acts chapter 25.

I thought there was a few other things that were just good there through 24. Maybe they'll kind of be brought out later, if you all see anything being pointed out. But Acts chapter 25 and 26 largely are then Paul being in front of these officers, Roman officers, governors, kings, and just the profound things that he had to say to them, and just the wisdom he was given to speak to them in a convicting way.

And I think it largely had to do that he really had a clear conscience and that different things that he wrote in the epistles would describe that. He would say he has not desired any man's gold or silver. Like throughout the epistles, you can see that Paul had a clear conscience and that he had always taken opportunity to preach, and that brought on a clear conscience.

Many other things, you can just start naming them. Paul did it, and in that way, he was clear in his conscience. It'd be like saying that's how he was working out his salvation.

I guess we all know that our consciences can be deceived, and those are all things that we need to guard against and stuff. But still, Paul just, he is that example of having a clean, clear conscience. And he did it through speaking in all honesty.

He did it through just being a trustworthy man. Throughout all his preachings, he never travels and stuff. He would say over and over how he never was a burden on, never tried to be or never was a burden on anyone, but supplied for his own needs.

Okay, Acts chapter 25. The 24 ends with Paul having an opportunity to, okay, maybe we need to just hit that a little bit. Starting in Acts 24 verse 24, after some days when Felix was with his wife Drusilla, which was Jewish, he sent for Paul and hurt him concerning the faith in Christ.

I don't know, was he, it says in the New Living Translation, sending for Paul, they listened as he told them about the faith in Christ. I don't know that they were actually inquiring, but of course, this was just going to be a thing that he was going to talk about, the faith he had in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled and said, go thy way for this time.

When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. We don't read anything anywhere that Felix ever lived up to that, where he actually did look for that season that he would again see Paul. All we see here is that, let's just read it.

And he, he hoped that also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might lose him. I mean, just in the back of his mind, he was like, well, if this guy would just give me some money, I'd free him up and he could go his way and I'd be, I'd go my way. Wherefore, he sent for him the offender and

communed with him.

Okay, it does say that he would commune with him often. But after two years, Porcius Festus came into Felix's room and Felix, willing to show that he was a favor, left Paul bound. Now when Festus was coming to the province of, after three days, he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

Apparently these governors would make their rounds. And so, so here he was in Jerusalem. Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him about Paul and besought him and desired favor against him that he would send for him to Jerusalem, lying in wait in the way to kill him.

Yet another planned ambush that did not work out. But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea and that he himself would depart shortly, thither. So Festus, this new governor, expressed his plans of going to Caesarea anyhow and encouraged Paul's accusers to just come up there and present their case.

Let them therefore, he said, which are, which among you are able, go down with me and accuse this man if there be any wickedness in him. And when he had tarried among them more than 10 days, he went unto Caesarea and the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, commanded Paul to be brought in. And when he was come, the Jews, which came down from Jerusalem, stood round about and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

I just can't imagine the frustration for the Jews having, having no ability to really make their case in front of, of Festus. Try one thing, then try another thing. And through manipulation and many grievous words and complaints, they tried to make their case.

But they just, they just came up empty every time. While Paul answered for himself, neither against, okay, this is Paul speaking, neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar have I offended anything at all. There's that pure and clean conscience.

But Festus, might as well say cowering under the Jews to give them a pleasure, giving them a pleasure, answered Paul and said, will you go up to Jerusalem and there be judged of these things before me? And Paul said, no, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat where I ought to be judged. To the Jews have I done nothing wrong, no wrong as they very well know. Paul just put it right back in their lap.

Luke, you have not, you have not been able to accuse me of anything with any kind of validity and you know it. For if I be an offender or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die. But if there'd be none of these things were of these accused me, no man may deliver me under them.

I appeal unto Caesar. Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, as thou appeal unto Caesar, unto Caesar thou shalt thou go. This would be the verse that I was earlier making a connection with Paul already having received a vision from the Lord Jesus that he must go to Rome.

And how all to explain that, to look at that, I don't know. But he knew he had to go. He saw an opportunity and he appealed to Caesar.

Okay, verse 13, and after certain days, King Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus. And if you look at some other versions, they were basically coming by, just doing what the politics do to come, came by and just puff each other up. They came to salute Festus, but it really was more like they came to admire him.

They came to, maybe other versions say respect him, or you can just kind of imagine their ways about those things. It still happens today. And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's case unto the King saying, there is a certain man left in bonds by Felix.

Remember Felix was the man earlier that said, I will call for you on a more convenient time. About whom when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, deciding to have judgment against him. To whom I answered, it is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die before that he, which is accused, have the accusers face to face and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

Therefore, when they were come thither, without any delay on the morrow, I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought forth against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed, but has certain questions against him of their own superstition. And in one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive, because I doubted of such matter of question, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem and there be judged of these matters. But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar.

Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. Tomorrow, said he, thou shalt hear him." So this is King Agrippa and Festus communicating about the prisoner, Paul, just helping each other catch up on the latest of the process of the case. And we see through that, that even they, um, it was just obvious that this man is, is not, not guilty.

He's being accused by the Jews. He has appealed to Caesar. What do we do anyhow? So Agrippa was gonna just have his, his turn with him too.

He asked to see him. Verse 23, when Agrippa was come and Bernice with great pomp and was entered into the place of the hearing with the chief captains and the principal men of the city at Festus' command, Paul was brought forth. And Festus said, King Agrippa and all men which are here present with us, you see this man about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem and also here crying that he ought not to live any longer.

But I have found that he has committed nothing worthy of death, that he himself has appealed to Augustus. I have determined to send him. And this last verse, I'm just going to read it in the New Living.

I just think it brings out so much of the hidden things of the case. But what shall I write the empire for? There is no clear charge against him. So I brought, so I have brought him before you all and especially you, King Agrippa, so that after we examine him, I might have something to write.

For it makes no sense to send a prisoner to the empire without specifying the charges against him. It just brings out the dilemma they were in trying to condemn someone that really was not guilty. This is the same pattern that came forth with Jesus.

Very, very similar. We could just go find the pages and it would just be very same. Pilate wasn't in the same spot.

He was asked to condemn someone that even he desired to release him. But that's how it goes. Part of our cross is to be falsely accused by the world.

And even worldly Christians do it to us, or those that falsely profess Christianity. They do it to us. And that's okay.

That's okay. That's how it was at the beginning. You can expect it now.

Something we've read so many times how the Jews just without any conscience towards life wanted to kill Paul. And then if we take our minds back over that culture and back over their beginnings. Yeah.

Say again. Later in Rome he got beheaded. Yeah, we won't quite get to that today, but you're right.

So my thought is how, just how, I think it's another reason why Paul could so freely write to the Galatians that law has become a sin unto you. See how this became a sin to them. The law that they tried to uphold and squeeze into their, used for their benefit and stuff, had become a sin unto them.

Maybe there's no link to make there, but if you think back over that culture, God had set out the children of Israel to be a separate people, not to indulge themselves in the ways of the nations. And they progressed more that way where they fell away and they, what God had intended to become something good, it still was good, you know, but the people went and took it and turned it into something, something bad. A little bit like we, like Paul is encouraging Timothy that, that we are not to hold the word of God deceitfully.

I think this would be about the best example that you could find that people were holding the word of God deceitfully. The Jews using their, their law to try to condemn Paul so that they can kill him. Anyhow, I just wondered whether there'd be, I mean, surely all of these things have a certain shadow in the present day that, that we also need to be aware of.

God, yeah, yeah, you're right. It's, it's right here in these chapters. Yeah.

It's amazing how the movie world is captivated by drastic, dramatic stories, and they'll even go to the Bible to develop them. And that I believe would be handling the word of God in craftiness and deceitful ways. I don't think we're supposed to do that.

All right. So, so where we're at, I believe is, is this predicament that, that Felix was in, Festus in having to put together some kind of letter, some kind of writings to go along with, was this prisoner that was supposed to be doomed to die, but no one really could condemn him. And so it was a hard thing for him.

What he wrote, I don't know, but King Agrippa, let's just read there in verse chapter 26, King Agrippa said unto Paul, thou art permitted to speak for thyself, thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand and answered for himself. I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before you about all the things whereof I am accused of by the Jews, especially because I know thee to be an expert in customs and questions which are among the Jews, wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

My manner of life from my youth, which was at first among you, among my own nation at Jerusalem, knew all the Jews, basically saying the Jews know where I come from, they understand my beginnings, which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify that after the most strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee, and now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God to our fathers, under which promise our twelve tribes zealously deserve God day and night, hoping to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. I think even though there was a bigger crowd there, Paul was getting pretty intense with King Agrippa.

He knew the king knew about the Lord Jesus. He knew the king knew about everything that happened. There was nothing, it wasn't somewhere it reads something like these things weren't done in a corner.

You know it. You know Jesus was deceitfully handled. You know he died.

You know he resurrected. Are you willing to admit it? Verse 8, why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead? Again, Paul pretty directly responding to, I think, looking at or talking to Agrippa, the king. I used to think within myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Which thing I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests. And when they were put to prison, I gave my voice against them. It seems like Paul's interaction with the stoning of Stephen was maybe a bit more deeper than I previously had thought.

Here it says, here Paul admits that he gave his voice against the saints when they were shut up in prison and when they were being put to death. And just seems like he threw his lot in with those that were stoning Paul. Even though it says, when we read the account of the stoning, it says there was a young man there guarding the clothes.

But it does seem like Paul would be willing to admit that his interactions there was a little deeper than that. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme. And being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities.

Paul had missionary trips before he was a Christian, but they were not Christian missionary trips. Whereupon, as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun shining around about me and them which churn it with me. And when we all fell to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.

Pricks. And it just again comes up. I think they could read something like, it is hard for you to go against the conscience that you have.

You know better, but you don't do it. And that's a sin to you. It's hard for you to kick against the pricks.

And note also how they were all fallen to the earth. It wasn't just Paul that was knocked down. I would hope those others that were knocked down were humbled as well.

And I said, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Remember what Jesus had said, what you've done unto the least of these my, well maybe that one wouldn't fit all that well, but yeah, basically what we do to the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto Jesus. You've done it unto me.

And so even though Paul persecuted saints to Jesus, it was as though he was persecuting Jesus. But rise, stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which you have seen and of those things which I will show unto you in the future, delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles unto whom now I sent thee, to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive

forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. For upon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

Again, this is Paul really making this communication between him and the king. But preach first unto them at Damascus and at Jerusalem and throughout all the coasts of Judea and then to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance. For this cause the Jews caught me in the temple and went about to kill me.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day witnessing both through the small and the great, saying none other thing than the things which the prophets and Moses did say should come. I just, again, I'm reminded how big a difference there is in how we understand just the thing that we read. Paul here understood the prophets and Moses and he understood the fulfillment of it.

He understood it just made perfect sense to him when Jesus would say something like, not one jot or tittle shall depart from the law till all be fulfilled. Paul understood the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. And then on the other hand, when the others, the Jews, read these same words, these same scriptures, there's like this veil over their head and they just cannot, they cannot see this kind of truth.

Okay, this is really linked together, verse 23, that Christ should suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles. And so this is yet another thing that Paul understood as a fulfillment, you know, that Christ should suffer. He should be the first to rise from the dead.

He will be the one that shows light to the people, to the Gentiles. And as he thus spoke for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, you're beside thyself. Much learning doth make thee mad.

It's the only thing he had left to say. All through this, the grip was still quiet. It was Festus that spoke first.

But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the King knows of all these things. And I think so now he was speaking to Festus and like the King knows all these things.

King Agrippa knows. For the King knows all these things before whom also I speak freely. For I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him.

These things were not done in a corner. These things of Jesus being the first to rise from the dead, being a light to the Gentiles. Paul somehow knew that Agrippa knew about it, but just was too cowardly to really stand on his own feet with it.

And then here, King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know thou believest. And then it's this interesting, just like this heart-wrenching response from Agrippa. Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

Why not just all the way? Why not just, why just almost? There was, there was too much of a prestige in his life. There was too much to give up. There was too big of a cross to bear.

The cost was just a bit too high. And then Paul says, I would to God that not only you, but also all that hear me this day, were both, both altogether, such as I am, except these chains. And when he had thus spoken, the king rose, the governor, and Bernice, they had sat with him.

And when they had gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, this man does nothing worthy of death or of bonds. Then said Agrippa and Hephæstus, this man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar. I thought I had a few more thoughts to go with that.

I don't really know that I have. It's just a lot of things go through my mind when I read this and I just maybe might leave it at that. Just want to close off with a prayer and then we'll open it up for discussion.

Hopefully some brothers have some thoughts about these things. Oh God be with us. Just want to thank you for yet another opportunity to read your word and to see the truth that flows through it.

Thank you for grace and truth that came through the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you that we can rejoice in the shadow of your wings, that in you, in the world, there's tribulation, but you have overcome the world. In you there is truth, the way, the truth, and the life.

We thank you for that. We want to give our lives for you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Appreciate what was shared today, Robert shared, Natalie shared, and I don't have a lot in mind, but thankful for that. I was thinking a bit about how Christ had to suffer a lot. It doesn't seem like he had a real pleasant life from his youth because of all the... He did have a free conscience.

He did have that. He was right before God, but mankind, I think, always troubled him. And I think one reason that so many people fall away today is they think Jesus is this great Jesus, that everything's just fine, everything's just good, and don't realize that they're suffering.

Paul suffered a lot, and the Anabaptists, I didn't read any of them, but that book was full of people that suffered and died for him. Their families were torn apart. Some were drowned, some were beheaded, some were... It's a distressful time for Christians if the law turns against them hard enough, and it happens from time to time.

But there is that part of a clear conscience that we can rejoice in. I just see in one place where the disciples were rejoicing that demons were going out, and Jesus said, rather rejoice that your names are written in the book of life. I think it's okay to rejoice when I think of that young... I don't know how young he was, but that man that had his legs healed, and he couldn't walk.

Maybe from his birth, I can't quite remember, but he was just leaping around and rejoicing, but maybe later he also had to suffer. Suffering is part of Christianity, and there's rejection that we have to go through. But then there's also the part of rejoicing and being right before God, and it's all a combination.

We can't separate any of them. I wouldn't want to, but in Acts 24-25, it stood out to me, and as he discussed justice, this was talking to Felix, discussed justice, self-control, and the coming judgment. Felix became frightened and said, go away for the present.

When I have an opportunity, I will send for you. And then, I don't know, I guess I've read it before, but I didn't remember it at the moment. In verse 26, at the same time, he had hoped that money would be given to him by Paul, but he was just waiting for a bribe for years, seems like.

Obviously, he thought Paul was just going to give him lots of money, and the church would come up with money. I'm not sure what he had in mind, but he was hoping to get money. But when Paul was talking to him about justice and self-control and the coming judgment, he became frightened.

It wasn't something he wanted to hear. Let's press into that. God bless us.

Thank you, Brother Outley. There's so many verses in there that you could park on and just try to understand. I appreciate Walter's comment about Festus about the money.

I looked at the other one, too. When Festus, he cried out with a loud voice, you're crazy, you're beside yourself. Like that, I mean, what would prompt him to say that? I guess a lot of times the Jews, like take, for example, the man born blind, and after he opened his eyes, rather than give glory to the God, and Jesus healed so many people in the Sabbath, instead of saying, hey, this is a miracle, instead of being like Nicodemus, they called the parents together and said, hey, was he born blind? How did that happen? Their heart is not, as Jesus said in Matthew 11, 25, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed it unto babes.

And again, in a couple of chapters later, Isaiah says, in Matthew, he's quoting, I fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, by hearing you shall hear, and not understand, and seeing you shall see, and yet not perceive. For this people's heart is wax gross, and the ears are dull of hearing, and the eyes they have closed, lest at any time you should see with the eyes and be healed. And so it would cause people to have, as brother Atkins said, they get a feel over them as hard-heartedness, no mercy, or they just, I don't know, it's, they get to a point, not really reprobate, but they just, rather than seeing a miracle and praising God, they would say, hey, you did it on the Sabbath, you broke the rule, and that's, it seems to be the mindset of so many things.

Oh, by the way, and I apologize, I said 1 Timothy 6, it's 1 Timothy 1, verse 6, for that conscience thing, I thought I knew that, but a clear conscience, but yeah, and one of my strongest testimonies, my faith is the fact that Paul laid down his life for the gospel, and you know, in 26, or 25, which you read, it doesn't say about, he was blinded, like it does in Acts 9 and Acts 16, the light blinded, but when he's talking to Festus, or Felix, rather, he just said that, you know, I arise, it doesn't talk about his own blindness there, showing, you know, hey, I was blind for three days, and they led me, he just said that, rise up and go into Damascus and preach there, the Lord be magnified. Oh, teach me to number my days. Teach me, O Lord, to number my days.

Teach me to number my days. And let me be holy before the Spirit, and daily in priesthood pray. Life is like the sand, to dribble through the grass.

Flowers we all fear, to perish as the grass. A thousand years with Thee, as yesterday is past. Teach me, O Lord, to number my days.

Oh, teach me to number my days. Teach me, O Lord, to number my days. Teach me to number my days.

And satisfy early my deep yearning heart, that I may rejoice always. Preach for years and then, our hope our lives may hold. Bleeding years we spend, a tale so quickly told.

And just when priesthood stood, our labor we behold. Teach me, O Lord, to number my days. Oh, teach me to number my days.

I must prevail. I must prevail. I must prevail, O Lord.

The first shall pass away, and the third with loyal hearts will sing, glory, glory to our King. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, amen. Therefore, Lord and King of the Lord shall return, and God with singing unto Zion,

her everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.

Therefore, Lord and King of the Lord shall return, and God with singing unto Zion, her everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall be away. Therefore, Lord and King of the Lord shall return, and God with singing unto Zion, her everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.

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