

CP — 5/5/24

Acts 22:30–23:11

Sermon Outline

Context:

- The Sanhedrin was the Jewish life Supreme Court on all things pertaining to the Jewish religion, not the political system.
- The Sanhedrin was made up of mostly Sadducees and Pharisees.
- Paul before the Sanhedrin marks the 5th and final time of their appearance in a trial.
 - Jesus (in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)
 - Peter and John (Acts 4)
 - The Apostles (Acts 5)
 - Stephen (Acts 6) — Saul of Tarsus was present.
 - Paul on "trial" (Acts 23)

1. The Confrontation of Conscience (23:1–5)

- Four questions to answer:
 - What is the conscience?
 - Why did Ananias have such a reaction?
 - How could Paul have a good or clear conscience?
 - How can I have a good or clear conscience?
- What is the conscience?
 - An inner feeling or voice that guides one in righteousness or wrongness.
 - An internal rational capacity that bears witness to our value system.
 - **Acts 24:16, Romans 2:14–15, 1 Peter 3:16**
 - Conscience is a trustworthy guide only when it is informed and ruled by God.
 - It's not God's voice nor is it infallible.
 - It can be lead astray.
 - It can be weakened, damaged, wounded, defiled, and seared.
 - **Hebrews 10:19–25; Titus 1:15–16; 1 Timothy 4:1–2**
 - Conscience must be subject to and informed by the Word of God.
 - To willfully act against conscience is to sin.
 - Conscience can be suppressed by sin.
- Why did Ananias have such a reaction?
 - Paul's good conscience indicted his conscience!
 - For the Jew, the bondage of unforgiven sin never allowed for a clear conscience.
 - In Christ, grace frees us from the bondage!
- How could Paul have a good conscience before the Lord?
 - Grace had set him free.
 - He saw the whole picture now; Christ is what Judaism was pointing to.
 - What about his past? What about his sin regarding Stephen (Acts 7) and remaining sin (Romans 7)?
 - Good conscience **does not mean** sinless perfection.

- How can I have a good or clear conscience?
 - A clear conscience is “presently walking in obedience to all God has revealed to you.”
 - Presently (not dwelling on failure or fear of the future)
 - Right now in this moment
 - **1 John 1:6–10 - “Walk in the light”**
 - Trust in Christ’s complete work
 - Obey what has been revealed (Faith, repentance, confession, reconciliation, etc.)

2. The Commotion in the Council (23:6–10)

- The Sadducees did not believe in the “spiritual” or the afterlife. (No resurrection)
- However, the Pharisees did.
- We do not have a record of a Sadducee coming to faith in Christ.

3. The Comfort of Christ (23:11)

- Christ sees you.
- He knows you.
- He is with you.
- He’s not done with you.

Small Group Discussion

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the Scripture and sermon Sunday? What stood out to you? What questions do you have?
2. Why did Ananias respond the way he did to Paul’s comment?
3. What is the conscience? How can we have a clear one? How does the conscience get damaged or seared? What happens when someone has a seared conscience? How does 1 John 1:6-10 help us to have a clear conscience?
4. How does Acts 23:11 encourage you? (Christ sees you, knows you, is with you, and not done with you). Discuss as a group.
5. Give testimonies to the comfort of Christ in your life.