

CP – 9/8/24

Acts 26:24–32: Paul’s Defense Before Agrippa, Part 3

1. The Interruption (26:24–26)

- The Gospel is foolishness to the intellectual.
- The Gospel is too simple for the religious.
- The Gospel is infuriating to the prideful.
- Paul responded to the interruption with:
 - Grace (“most excellent Festus”)
 - Rationality (“true and rational words” – OT)
 - Brilliance (“not done in a corner”)
 - Everything about Jesus had been prophesied.
 - His life, death, resurrection, and ascension were public.
 - Pentecost was public.
 - Herod and his family had many interactions with Jesus and His Church.
 - Nothing was done in secret.
 - What Paul has been saying cannot be denied.
- How we respond to the cynical and skeptical is important.
- We must remember: **apart from God opening our eyes, we were just as blind.**

2. The Invitation (26:27–28)

- "Do you believe the prophets?"
 - This would primarily be prophecy concerning the Messiah.
 - Paul had already referenced this thought in 26:6 and 26:22
 - Christ is not the abolishment of the Jewish religion but the fulfillment of it.
 - All things pointed to Jesus.
- Paul goes from giving a defense to putting Agrippa on trial.
 - What are you going to do with what you know to be true?
- Agrippa dodges the question by asking his own question.
 - It’s sad that we put off making a decision about Jesus because the risk of believing seems to great. (Power, Applause, Favor, Career)
 - What’s the greater risk? Trusting in Jesus or not trusting in Jesus?

3. The Inspiration (26:29)

- “whether short or long” – If its the first time or the 100th time
- “I would to God” – He means, “I pray to God.”
 - Paul shifted from advocating for himself, to advocating for the lost in the presence of God.

- “you and anyone else who can here me”
 - Remember Paul’s ministry that he received from the Lord (26:18)
 - Open their eyes (blind)
 - Darkness to light
 - Satan to God
 - Forgiveness of sins
 - Become a part of God’s people
 - The ministry Paul received lets us know the condition of people outside of Christ.
 - For Jesus to give Paul this ministry tells us that there are people who needed this ministry because this is their condition.

- Paul’s deep conviction was driven by three truths:
 - He knew that Jesus commissioned him to this ministry.
 - He knew people were in this condition.
 - “both to small and great” (26:22)
 - Romans 9:3 — “For I wish that myself were accused and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh”
 - He knew that no one was outside the reach of God’s grace.
 - This conviction freed him to preach the gospel to all people without reservation.

***The scene ends in undramatic fashion:

- Agrippa doesn’t give Festus words to report.
- New Characters, Same God
- All 3 people are named, and they respond like nothing major had just happened.
 - And while we may look at them and wonder, is it any different for many church goers every Sunday morning?
 - We meet and experience the presence of God in prayer, song, and preaching of the Word, and we are quick to shut the Bible and head out the door.

Small Group Discussion

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the Scripture and sermon Sunday morning? What stood out to you? What convicted you? What questions do you have?
2. Why is the gospel come across as foolishness to those who trust in their intellect? Why does the gospel seem too simple for those who are religious? How does the gospel infuriate the prideful?
3. When it comes to how we respond to those who do not believe, why is it important for us to remember that we were once blind? Read Ephesians 2:11–12. Why does Paul implore the Ephesians to remember their past condition before Christ? How does this reality help us in our witness to others?
4. How did Paul turn the tables on Agrippa? Why does he appeal to Agrippa's belief in the prophets? How does Agrippa's deflection speak to you? What keeps people from trusting in Christ?
5. How does the conviction of knowing that Jesus has commissioned us, people are in a hopeless condition without him, and no one is outside the reach of God's grace empower us to freely share without hindrance or prejudice?
6. Pray that the Holy Spirit will drive these 3 convictions deep into our hearts so that we will be bold in sharing the gospel with others.