Discovering the Power of the Word

A Reading and Listening Session

Based on Acts 24



With Sister Paulette Morrison on January 8, 2023



During our Sunday evening reading and listening session January 8, 2023, we delve into the book of Acts, chapter 24, continuing our exploration of the early church and the incredible journeys of the Apostle Paul. Our focus will be on Acts 24:1-27 (KJV), where we will unpack the trials and tribulations Paul faced as he relentlessly preached the Gospel.

The High Priest and the Accusation

Our story begins with Paul in Jerusalem. However, it wasn't a triumphant return, but a prelude to conflict. As we read in Acts 24:1-5, 'And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.' The **High Priest**, Ananias, representing the religious establishment, wasted no time in bringing accusations against Paul. Tertullus, a skilled orator, paints Paul as a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition among all the Jews, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24:5).

These were serious charges designed to undermine Paul's credibility and incite the Roman authorities against him. Reading these verses, we see the power of rhetoric, how words can be twisted to manipulate and deceive.

Blameless Conscience and Sticking with the Facts

Paul is given the opportunity to defend himself. Acts 24:7-8 tells us of the chief captain Lysias's intervention and command that Paul's accusers come before Felix. Paul's defense isn't a denial of his faith, but a clear and concise presentation of the truth. He emphasizes that he worships the God of his fathers, believing all things written in the Law and the Prophets (Acts 24:14-16 - although these verses are not directly in our selected text range, they provide vital context!). He maintains a **blameless conscience** toward God and men. Paul **sticking with the facts** is a crucial lesson for us. When sharing our faith, clarity and truthfulness are paramount.

- False Accusations
- Paul's Defence
- Seeking Truth

Reading this exchange, we can see the stark contrast between the manipulative rhetoric of Tertullus and the calm, reasoned defense of Paul. Paul does not shy away from his beliefs, but he presents them in a way that is both truthful and respectful, highlighting the importance of a **blameless conscience**.

Paul Before Felix: A Procrastinating Governor

Acts 24:10-15 provides a glimpse into Paul's testimony before Felix. He acknowledges Felix's experience as a judge and assures him he has not been stirring up trouble. Then Paul shares his faith clearly and boldly. The text shows us **Paul before Felix**, not as a criminal begging for mercy, but as an ambassador for Christ presenting truth to the best of his ability.

What's Felix's reaction? Acts 24:25-27 reveals **Paul and the procrastinating Governor**: 'And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loosed him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.' Felix is moved by Paul's message. He *trembles*, yet he postpones his decision. He seeks personal gain, hoping for a bribe.

This passage reveals a crucial truth: hearing the Word is not enough. We must act upon it. Felix represents those who are touched by the Gospel but choose to delay, perhaps indefinitely.

Everyone Is Going Somewhere

The detail that Felix was replaced by Porcius Festus (Acts 24:27) is significant. **Everyone is going somewhere** in life, and no position is permanent. Felix's time as governor came to an end, just as our time on Earth is finite. This reinforces the urgency of responding to God's call today, not tomorrow.

Paul's Message before Governor Felix

Paul's Message before Governor Felix focuses on “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.” Paul challenged Felix to consider his own moral failings and the consequences of his choices. These are the same issues we must grapple with today. Righteousness speaks to our moral standing before God. Temperance, or self-control, addresses our desires and passions. And judgment to come reminds us that we will all be held accountable for our actions.

Paul's courageous and concise articulation of his faith, even when facing opposition, should inspire us to boldly share the Gospel and be ready to give an account for the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15). Just as the scriptures convicted Felix, so too can they transform the lives of those around us. Let's dedicate ourselves to knowing the Word, living the Word and sharing the Word.

Remember the power of the Word of God is revealed by **reading the Word of God**, and applying it to our heart, mind and soul.

Conclusion

We've explored the complexities of Acts 24, witnessing Paul's unwavering faith in the face of accusations, his clear defense of the Gospel, and Felix's fateful procrastination. Through this passage, we're reminded of the importance of a blameless conscience, the power of truth, and the urgency of responding to God's call. Let us continue to read, study, and apply God's Word, so that we, unlike Felix, will not delay in embracing the transformative power of the Gospel.