

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Politics and The Gospel, Pt 4

Acts 25:13-26:3

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SermonAudio Blurb: Paul now finds himself being brought before King Agrippa, a man from a long line of enemies of God. How will he conduct himself in this moment? What will he choose to say? In this on-going saga of Paul's trials we again can see how this man conducted himself before the governing authorities for the sake of the gospel.

I. Introduction.

- A. I want to draw out more principles regarding a Christians stance toward the powers of this age.
 - 1. So far we have seen seven specific principles drawn from Luke's account of Paul here in Acts:
 - a. **Enemies** of the Gospel will use governing authorities for the purpose of suppression.
 - b. Government leaders can only learn of the gospel through the faithful testimony of believers.
 - c. When you speak the gospel make sure that you are clear about what is the gospel and the consequences of rejection.
 - d. **Never** underestimate the depth of hatred for the gospel.
 - e. Those of this age love the lie more than truth.
 - f. You don't have to give in to unrighteous demands.
 - g. Never underestimate the power and beauty of a clear conscience.
 - 2. Today we have one more section to examine and to draw out principles as we think about how the gospel intersects with politics. Another way to say this is how the faithful Christian intersects with governing authorities.
- B. What stands out in this entire section is how stable and focused Paul is.
- C. Well today, we have five more principles to add to this list.
- D. Background:

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1. We are introduced to two individuals that require a level of introduction to truly appreciate what is happening in this passage. King Agrippa and Bernice.
2. You should recognize the name “Agrippa” since that name is mentioned earlier in Acts. But I have a graphic, which is a family tree that helps you and I see how what is called the “Herodian Dynasty” factors into all of this. (For those with my notes, it is on the last page)
3. We are dealing with the bottom row here in chapters 24-26.
4. So there is the setting. Paul standing before this king and he knows all of this. He knows who he is speaking to. He knows this man’s life. And Paul knows the lineage from whence he comes and that it is rotten to the core.
- E. Five more principles to consider when thinking about the gospel and the Christian and their relationship to politics.

II. Politics and The Gospel.

- A. Our **first principle**: Realize the facts of the gospel mean nothing until the Holy Spirit converts the soul (25:19).
 1. Now, knowing the background of King Agrippa, we can understand how things are now ramped up to a whole other level of seriousness. And we see a bit more about how governments function in this section.

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2. And in the midst of all of this I want you to notice vs 19. He heard the charges the Jewish leaders made against Paul. He understands what is happening. He even understand the basics of the gospel, but it means nothing to him.
3. We talk about the three aspects of saving faith. Here we have the facts of the gospel. Jesus died and rose again. But we don't have the other two, agreeing with these facts and trust.
4. Ephesians 2:1, dead in sin. But Ephesians 2:4-5 then describes how one who is dead in sin can be saved. . . .
 - a. How does God make you alive in Christ? It is not because you believed.
 - b. John 6:44 says this, *"No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."*
 - c. Notice again who is doing the work here. It is God making a person alive in His Son, Jesus Christ. And in John it is God the Father who draws a person to Jesus Christ, and so that person comes to Jesus.
 - d. The way this all happens is with the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) So Jesus says in John 3:3 that you must be born again to be saved. And then says a few moments later, *"That which has been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit."*
 - (2) 1 Corinthians 2:14 says it this way: *"But a natural man does not accept the depths of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually examined."*
5. And this is what is happening in our passage. Festus has heard the gospel. He knows the facts. But they are simply words to him.
6. When you are being challenged or confronted for what you believe; whether it is by government officials, public gatherings, or family events, do not be afraid.

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- B. The second principle: Accept the fact that your decision has consequences (25:21).
 - 1. This is often missed by us today and part of the blame is on the false gospel hope that the American church tends to preach. I call it the victory-now gospel.
 - 2. This is something Paul knew and embraced. So he accepted the consequences of his decision.
 - 3. When you are dealing with the government and those in authority you need to be wise.

- C. The third principle: Notoriety cuts both ways (25:24).
 - 1. Paul was a man bold for the gospel. We have seen that over and over and over. He had developed a reputation and a following. But he also developed his enemies.
 - 2. In our culture today people are working so hard to become noticed.
 - 3. But it cuts both ways beloved.
 - 4. Serve the Lord with boldness beloved. But serve with your eyes wide open to the potential costs as your reputation as a believer grows. It comes with a cost.

- D. The fourth principle: Your perspective changes once you recognize God's sovereignty (26:2).
 - 1. Paul is invited by the king to speak. What a great opportunity and he takes it.
 - 2. Paul sees this as part of the kindness of God in his life. He calls himself "blessed."
 - 3. This only happens to a person who understands that his life is not in the hand of the king, the judge or any other created thing. His life is in the hands of his Creator.

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4. When we talk about God being sovereign we often limit what that means, but it can't be limited. The sovereignty of God means that He is Lord, Master, Creator and Sustainer over all things.
 - a. **Romans 8:28**, "we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."
 - b. Each of us will face many times where we are confronted with His sovereignty and we will find it to be a time of testing.
 5. But here we see a man convinced that truly God has appointed even this event to be good. A man who has been able to write that all that matters is that Christ is exalted before the world. A man who describes his life as being pressed and distressed but not crushed nor broken.
- E. The fifth principle: Showing proper respect can create opportunities for the gospel (26:3).
1. Notice the way he speaks to the king. In every way he shows respect and out of that respect he begs to be heard.
 2. Too often how we approach people and situations creates barriers that we erected ourselves that prevent being heard.
 3. Proverbs 16:21-24 is useful here. *"The wise in heart will be called understanding, And sweetness of lips increases learning. Insight is a fountain of life to one who has it, But the discipline of ignorant fools is folly. The heart of the wise gives insight to his mouth And increases learning to his lips. Pleasant words are a honeycomb, Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."*
 4. In Proverbs 15:28 it says, *"The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer. . . ."*
 5. This is what we see with Paul. He has determined that he will show honor and respect to a man he knows is an enemy of the gospel. He know who he is dealing with and he chooses wise and kind words.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Next week, Lord willing, we will see what Paul then says to this king.
- B. But let me end with this exhortation to each of you.

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1. We do not know what awaits us tomorrow. But we do know that whatever comes our way, we are to seek to honor God and magnify the gospel in which we hope.
2. Consider your ways right now. Consider your reputation you have developed in attitudes and actions. Seek the Lord to open your eyes to ways that you might grow and improve.
3. And in all of this, remember your Lord, Jesus who bought you out of sin through His blood and gave you eternal life through His resurrection.
4. Remember that He is your hope and do not neglect the opportunities to tell others of Him.

Benediction

**May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord cause His face to shine upon you and give you peace.
Amen.**

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Herodian Family Tree – New Testament Figures

