

Digging Deeper: Acts 24:1-27

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Day 1

Read through and pray over Acts 24:1-27

Acts 24:1-10: Paul has been taken to Ceasarea to face Felix, a Roman official. Ananias brings Tertullus to prosecute Paul. Tertullus begins to flatter Felix by speaking very highly of him and accuses Paul of stirring up riots, being a ringleader of the sect of Nazarenes, and of trying to profane the temple. With the Jews in attendance confirming these accusations, Paul seems to be facing a stacked deck. Yet when Paul was given the opportunity to finally speak he exclaims "I cheerfully make my defense." With the world seemingly against him Paul was willing and excited to stand for God. Take time to pray today that when accusations are thrown your way that rather than getting upset and speaking with contempt you would cheerfully take the opportunity to defend your belief in Christ.

Day 2

Acts 24:11-15: As Paul is speaking and defending himself against the false accusations, he does make one confession. Paul confesses that he worships God according to The Way (The Gospel of Jesus Christ). In his confession however Paul clarifies that The Way is a fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Read Matthew 5:17-18. Yes, Paul was defending himself but his focus was to point others to Jesus who is The Way. In our own defense and efforts to point out the errors of this world are we more concerned with proving our point and correcting others or is our goal to relate with others and point them to Jesus? Pray and ponder your actions and motives.

Day 3

Acts 24:16: Paul then makes a strong statement that he "takes pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man. You may have heard of the phrase "No Pain No Gain". The concept is that any true gains derive from deliberate and continuous effort and exercise. Paul knew that to live is Christ, and to die is gain(Phil 1:21). He chose to live everyday in Christ exercising his faith on mission for God to His people. This religious exertion provided Paul a clear conscience as he worked to please God and not cause others to stumble. Read and pray today over 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

Day 4

Acts 24:17-21: Finally Paul explains that as he was bringing alms(charitable gifts and offerings) and while in the temple he was purified and did not profane the temple. There was no crowd or ruckus. Paul obeyed the laws and he did not try to stir up anger in people, but rather he sought to reach people. He didn't compromise the gospel message of Jesus and Paul also did not unnecessarily offend others. What does it look like to sustain the gospel message of Jesus Christ without unnecessarily offending others?

Day 5

Acts 24:22-27: Felix heard from Paul. The accusations were without proof. Felix chose to delay judgment. Later on while Paul was being held Felix brought his wife to continue conversations with Paul regarding The Way. Felix was intrigued by the gospel of Jesus but he was not changed. He was unwilling to face judgment or walk in righteousness. I pray that as you have heard the truth of Jesus, his death that paid for our sins, his resurrection that gives us a living hope, that you would accept Jesus as your personal savior and the only way to God. If you have already received Jesus Christ, I pray that you live according to the truth instead of pleasing the audience of this world as Felix chose.

Day 6 - Consequences are unavoidable. Actions and inactions lead to some form of consequences in life. Thankfully Jesus took on our consequences for sin(Romans 5:8-9, Romans 6:23). Knowing the truth of Jesus Christ also has consequences. We must take pains as Paul did to run our race for Christ and not cause others to stumble but rather reach out lift them up in the truth. Pray that you will be able to stand with a clear conscience toward God and man.