



Sermon Discussion Guide

07.09.23 Message | Keith Ehresman | Acts 25:1-12

Key Scriptures:

Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him, asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way. Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly. “So,” said he, “let the men of authority among you go down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them bring charges against him.” After he stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove. Paul argued in his defense, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense.” But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?” But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.” Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.”

- Acts 25:1-12

And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

- Romans 8:27-28

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.

- John 3:16-21



Message Highlights:

- Our circumstances don't control our mission!
- God often places specific people in our path or disrupts our plans in order to remind us of our simple purpose: proclaiming the Good News of the Risen Savior.
- The book of Acts tells God's plan for us as image bearers; it reminds us of our purpose and who strengthens us to accomplish his purposes.
- As Christians, we must live in such a way that others may come to know Jesus and become homesick for Heaven alongside us.

Conversation Starter:

Have you ever felt homesick, whether you were traveling or longing for Heaven? How has prioritizing discipleship and your relationships with others helped to reveal a glimpse of Heaven in your life?

Discuss the Message:

1. How did Paul respond when the chief priests accused him of wrongdoing in Acts 25?
 - a. What do you think enabled Paul to navigate the false accusations made against him and the disruptions he faced once he was on trial?
 - b. Honestly consider how you tend to respond when you find yourself 'on trial.' What do you cling to?
 - c. How can you embrace Christ's mission for us, to proclaim the Gospel to all people, no matter your circumstances?
2. Read Romans 8:27-28. In light of Acts 25:1-12, how can God's definition of good differ from the world's definition of good?
 - a. How have you seen God work things together for your good and his glory?
 - b. In what ways can you use God's goodness to encourage those around you, either through your testimony, generosity or other means?
3. What kind of people come to the light, according to John 3:16-21?
 - a. How have Paul and other members of the early church modeled what it means to do what is true throughout the book of Acts?
 - b. How can this passage strengthen us as we seek to carry out God's mission?

Pray:

Spirit, we submit our lives and our plans to you. We know that you move in ways that we often don't expect or understand, but ultimately you lead us to live in a way that honors God above all else. May we be open to your divine disruption and guidance. May we bring others to know Jesus by remembering our purpose as your sons and daughters. Thank you that our circumstances don't have to define who we are. In Christ's name, amen.