

king's chapel

Community Group Discussion Guide

Week of October 26, 2014

This Week's Focus: Paul is examined by the Sanhedrin and stands strong in the face of opposition as God's good providence works to fulfill His eternal plans and purposes.

This Week's Text: Acts 22:30-23:35

*"God's providence is His constant care for and His absolute rule over all His creation for His own glory and the good of His people. **Jerry Bridges***

*"Providence means not that by which God idly observes from heaven what takes place on earth, but that by which, as keeper of the keys, he governs all events." **John Calvin***

*So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above." **John 19:10-11***

*"Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'" **Isaiah 46:9-10***

Related Texts: Ephesians 1:11; Matthew 5:39-41, 7:6, 10:16; 1 Corinthians 4:1-4; John 19:10-11

Observations and Questions for Discussion:

- What in the text/sermon was most illuminating or helpful? Why?
- In Acts 22:30-23:1 Paul is facing imminent death. What do we see here that shows us one of the secrets of his boldness? How does 1 Corinthians 4:1-4 help us understand what a good conscience is?

- Discuss the circumstances when we are sharing our faith when we should stand up for our rights? When should we shut up and confess our wrongs? What other times do we need to be very shrewd in our response?
- Why do you think Paul, a Pharisee, did not know that he was talking to the High Priest?
Reference Acts 23:3-5.
 - Could his response have been sarcasm?
 - Could it be he was unable to see him? Reference Galatians 4:13-15 and 6:11.
 - What do you make of his reaction in verse 3. Was it sinful? Righteous? Justified?
 - How does Paul's own statement in Ephesians 4:26-27 shed light on this situation?
- Paul also responds with Scripture. What does that say about Paul? What does that say to us?
- What was Paul's tactic in this hearing? Reference Acts 23:6-10. Was it successful? Was it smart and truthful or was Paul more concerned with his own welfare? How did his answer point to the gospel?
- How does verse 11 shape what happens to Paul in the rest of this chapter?
 - What was the state of Paul's heart and attitude?
 - What does verse 11 guarantee? What does it not guarantee?
 - How can we properly apply this promise to our own life?
- John Stott writes: "the most... cunning of human plans cannot succeed if God opposes them." How does what happens in Acts 23:12-35 reveal this statement? Trace the happenstances.
- Read Acts 2:22-24 and 4:27-28. Discuss how God used the most evil act without Himself being evil to accomplish His most gracious provision.
- How does God's providence bring comfort to His children?

Gospel Celebration:

- Jesus stands with us because He first stood for us! *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.* 1 Peter 3:18
- The gospel assures us that *"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"* Romans 8:31-32

Next Week's Text: Acts 24