

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: **Acts: To Be Continued**
TITLE: **Paul on Trial**
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In Acts, Luke shows Jesus' friends continuing the kingdom mission that Jesus started in his earthly life and ministry. The Book of Acts is all about Jesus' followers continuing his mission in the world. We are the ones God has entrusted with carrying the message of Jesus forward. **Today, we look at Acts 24** to see how Paul's trial played out.

Questions to ask yourself:

- How do I seek to justify my life?
- In what way do I defend myself and all the things that make me *me*?
- What is the grand justification and explanation of my life?

Acts 24 Summary:

- Paul is on trial and chooses to defend himself.
- In verses 1-9, we hear the prosecution. The first four verses are flattery toward Felix (the governor), and the remaining five verses accuse Paul of profaning the Temple and being a ringleader of the group of Jesus-followers.
- In 10-22, we hear Paul's defense for his life. He concedes he was at the Temple, but argues he wasn't doing anything wrong there. He denies being a ringleader to the group, but says that regardless, the Jesus-followers aren't dangerous. Paul tells Felix he goes to great effort to have a clear conscience before both God and man.
- And in verses 23-27, we see the seemingly anticlimactic response from Felix, who essentially decides to make no immediate decision. Paul sits in prison for two years (he would not pay any bribes). During that time, he does get to have good conversations with Felix about Jesus, but he is not released.

What does this mean for us, specifically?

- Especially in light of the reality that every one of us, at some juncture, will have to offer some sort of justification for our lives, *we should be ready*.
 - Every follower of Jesus needs a strong defense against the false accusations that will come our way.
 - Scripture repeatedly describes Satan as “the adversary” or “the accuser” or “the deceiver,” and his goal is get us and others to believe his lies and accusation.
 - If he says “You’re guilty,” We say, not anymore. Jesus took our guilt.
 - If he says “You’re alone,” We say, not in Christ. He is Emmanuel, God with me. If he says “You’re worthless,” We say, we’re wrapped up in Jesus, the only Worthy One.
 - And if lies are spread about us, we use it as yet another platform to try to put Jesus on display.
 - Jesus is our ultimate defense.
 - When Paul gives his defense, he’s not defending a mere past action. **All that he is** is on trial: his beliefs, values, actions, words, hopes, behavior... everything. And Paul’s desire is to have all of that stuff defined and defended by the gospel. So, how much of your life is explainable apart from the gospel?
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For Discussion:

1. Have you ever had to defend yourself to someone or a group of people? How did you handle that situation?
2. How much of your life is explainable apart from the gospel? What is your ultimate defense?
3. Can you draw a line between _____ and the gospel? Consider how you spend your time/money, how you treat your family and friends, how you work, or how you deal with your pet peeves, for example. If/when people take note of those aspects of your life, do they see Jesus?