

## Acts 29 – Week 10 – Faith on Trial – Bible Study Helps

### Sermon Summary:

This sermon examines Acts chapters 24-25, focusing on the Apostle Paul's trials before Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa. The central message emphasizes that a Christian's greatest defense is not argument but integrity and a blameless life. Paul demonstrates how living with a clear conscience before God and people creates an unshakable platform for gospel witness. Despite facing false accusations, political corruption, and a two-year delay in his ministry, Paul maintained his testimony by exercising himself daily to keep his conscience void of offense. The sermon challenges believers to live intentionally righteous lives, respond immediately to God's conviction, and trust God's sovereignty even in corrupt systems. Paul's ability to reason with Felix about righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come shows how effective gospel witness appeals to the conscience. The message warns against delaying obedience when God is working on our hearts, using Felix's response of waiting for a "convenient season" as a cautionary example.

### Key Points:

- A Christian's greatest defense is integrity, not argument; when your character is clean, accusations cannot cling to it
- Living blamelessly means accusations may come, but they cannot be proven true
- Paul exercised himself daily to maintain a conscience void of offense toward both God and people
- Effective gospel witness involves reasoning about righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come
- The most dangerous time to repent is tomorrow; delaying obedience to God's conviction is spiritually perilous
- God works even through corrupt justice systems and political opposition to advance the gospel
- Our life testimony serves as the platform from which we preach the gospel
- When God assembles people for worldly purposes, He provides opportunities for gospel witness
- Christians should intentionally quench strife and resolve conflicts before they escalate
- Trusting God means remaining faithful even during delays and apparent setbacks in ministry

### Scripture Reference:

- Acts 23:30-35
- Acts 24:1-27
- Acts 25:1-23
- Isaiah 1 (referenced: "Come now and let us reason together")

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### Stories:

- The Apostle Paul's Roman escort from complete chaos to Caesarea, demonstrating God's protection
- Felix hearing Paul preach about righteousness, temperance, and judgment, causing him to tremble but delay repentance
- Felix's corrupt hope for a bribe from Paul while keeping him imprisoned for two years
- Paul's appeal to Caesar as a Roman citizen, opening the door for witness in Rome
- King Agrippa arriving with great pomp to hear Paul, creating an opportunity for gospel witness before the elite
- Noah's story from Genesis 7, illustrating how people mock God's warning until judgment arrives
- The illustration of witnessing at the Tuscarawas County Fair, showing how God uses worldly assemblies for gospel opportunities

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### Discipleship Questions

Paul stated that he exercised himself daily to maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and men - what specific practices or disciplines could help you develop this same kind of intentional integrity in your daily life?

Felix trembled at Paul's message about righteousness, temperance, and judgment but delayed his decision saying he would wait for a more convenient time - what are the spiritual dangers of postponing obedience when God is clearly working on your heart?

Paul's greatest defense wasn't his arguments but his blameless character and integrity - how does this challenge our modern approach to defending the faith or our reputation when falsely accused?

The sermon emphasized that when your character is clean, accusations cannot cling to it - are there areas in your life where unresolved sin or compromise might undermine your testimony and ability to be an effective witness?

Paul was willing to use the Roman legal system and appeal to Caesar to advance the gospel - when is it appropriate for Christians to engage with secular systems or authorities to protect ministry and spread the gospel?

Paul spent two years in legal proceedings while his missionary journey was on hold - how do you maintain faith and purpose during seasons when God's plan seems stalled or delayed?

The sermon noted that Paul preached to Felix's conscience by addressing righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come - why is it essential to help people understand the seriousness of their sin before presenting the solution of salvation?

Multiple corrupt officials heard the gospel through Paul's trials, including Felix who kept calling for Paul hoping for a bribe - how does God use even corrupt systems and difficult circumstances to create opportunities for gospel witness?

Paul could confidently say that no one could prove the accusations against him - what steps do you need to take to ensure your relationships with God and others are clear of unresolved offenses?

The Apostle Paul's life was described as his defense, not just his words - in what ways does your daily life either support or contradict the message of Christ you claim to believe?

# Discipleship and Small Group Study Guide: Faith on Trial

Acts 24-25

## Opening Prayer & Introduction (5-10 minutes)

Begin by thanking God for the opportunity to gather and study His Word together. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and help each person apply these truths to their lives.

## Ice Breaker Question

*Have you ever been falsely accused of something? How did you respond, and what was the outcome?*

## Sermon Summary

Paul finds himself on trial before Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa. Despite false accusations and corrupt officials, Paul's blameless life becomes his greatest defense. Through these trials, Paul continues to witness boldly about righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. His commitment to maintaining a clear conscience before God and men opens doors for the Gospel even in the most challenging circumstances.

## Key Themes & Discussion Questions

### 1. Living a Blameless Life (Acts 24:16)

**Key Verse:** *"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men."*

#### Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to have a "conscience void of offense"? How is this different from being sinless?
- Paul says he "exercises" himself in this area. What does that tell us about maintaining integrity?
- In what areas of your life do you find it most challenging to maintain a clear conscience?
- How does having a blameless testimony open doors for Gospel witness?

**Practical Application:** *Take a moment of silent reflection. Is there anything between you and God that needs to be made right? Is there a relationship with another person that needs reconciliation? What specific step can you take this week to clear your conscience?*

## 2. Paul's Witness to Felix (Acts 24:24-25)

**Key Verse:** *"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled."*

### Discussion Questions:

- Why did Paul focus on righteousness, temperance, and judgment when witnessing to Felix?
- What does Felix's response (trembling but delaying) teach us about conviction versus conversion?
- Why is "tomorrow" the most dangerous time to repent?
- How can we reason with people about spiritual matters without being argumentative?

**Practical Application:** *When sharing the Gospel, do you typically focus on God's love alone, or do you also address sin, judgment, and the need for repentance? How might you incorporate all aspects of the Gospel message in your witness?*

## 3. Trusting God Through Delays (Acts 24:27)

**Key Verse:** *"But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room..."*

### Discussion Questions:

- Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles on a missionary journey, was stopped for two years. How might he have felt during this time?
- What does Paul's experience teach us about God's timing versus our expectations?
- Can you share a time when God's plan seemed delayed, but you later saw His purpose?
- How can we remain faithful when our circumstances seem "on hold"?

**Practical Application:** *Are you currently in a season of waiting? How can you trust God and remain faithful in witnessing even when life doesn't seem to be moving forward according to your plans?*

## 4. The Power of Personal Testimony (Acts 24:10-21)

### Discussion Questions:

- How did Paul use his life story as a defense against false accusations?
- Why is our personal testimony often more powerful than arguments?
- The pastor said, "The Christian's greatest defense is not argument, but integrity." Do you agree? Why or why not?

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- How does the statement "when your character is clean, accusations cannot cling to it" apply to your life?

**Practical Application:** *Can you articulate your testimony in 2-3 minutes? Practice sharing with your group: (1) What was your life like before Christ? (2) How did you come to faith? (3) How has Christ changed your life?*

### 5. Open Doors in Unexpected Places (Acts 25:22-23)

#### Discussion Questions:

- Paul witnessed to Felix, Festus, and was about to witness to King Agrippa—all through legal troubles. What does this teach us about God's sovereignty?
- The sermon mentioned how God uses assemblies of people (like the county fair) for His purposes. Where do you see similar opportunities in your community?
- How can we view difficult circumstances as potential platforms for the Gospel?
- What "open doors" might God be placing before you that you haven't recognized?

**Practical Application:** *Identify one "assembly" or gathering place in your community where you could be a Gospel witness this month. Commit to going with intentionality to share Christ.*

## Key Takeaways

1. **Keep your conscience clear—it's your best defense.** Exercise yourself daily to maintain right relationships with God and people.
  2. **When God is working on your heart, don't wait.** Delayed obedience is disobedience. Tomorrow is the most dangerous time to repent.
  3. **Trust God even through corrupt systems and delays.** God is always at work, even when circumstances seem unfair or stalled.
  4. **Your life is a platform for the Gospel.** A blameless testimony opens doors that arguments cannot.
  5. **Witness with reason and conviction.** Address righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come—not just God's love in isolation.
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## Personal Reflection Questions

Take 5-10 minutes for individual reflection:

1. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current "conscience void of offense" before God? Before others?
2. Is there someone you need to reconcile with this week?
3. What sin or issue have you been delaying dealing with? What's holding you back?
4. Who is one person God has placed in your life who needs to hear the Gospel? When will you speak to them?

## Group Prayer Time

**Prayer Focus Areas:**

- Pray for boldness to maintain blameless testimonies
- Pray for wisdom to recognize and walk through open doors for witness
- Pray for specific individuals who need to hear the Gospel
- Pray for strength to obey God immediately rather than delay
- Pray for trust during seasons of waiting or difficulty

## This Week's Challenge

**Choose ONE action step:**

1. **Clear Conscience Challenge:** Identify one relationship that needs reconciliation and take steps to make it right this week.
2. **Witness Challenge:** Share your testimony with at least one person this week, focusing on righteousness, sin, and God's solution.
3. **Obedience Challenge:** If God has been convicting you about something, stop delaying. Obey this week.
4. **Trust Challenge:** If you're in a season of waiting, commit to trusting God's timing and looking for ways to serve Him where you are.

## **Closing Prayer**

Father, help us to live with clear consciences before You and others. Give us boldness to witness even in difficult circumstances. Help us not to delay when You're speaking to our hearts. May our lives be blameless platforms for the Gospel. Use us for Your glory, even in unexpected places. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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## **For Next Week**

Read Acts 26 in preparation for next week's discussion on Paul's defense before King Agrippa.



# Faith on Trial: A 5-Day Devotional Journey

## Day 1: Living with a Clear Conscience

**Reading:** Acts 24:10-16; 1 Timothy 1:18-19

### **Devotional:**

The Apostle Paul made a remarkable statement before his accusers: "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men" (Acts 24:16). Notice the word "exercise"—this wasn't passive or accidental. Paul trained himself daily, like an athlete preparing for competition, to maintain a clear conscience.

What does it mean to have a conscience void of offense? It means living in such a way that when accusations come—and they will come—they cannot stick to you. Your character becomes your greatest defense. Not your arguments, not your eloquence, but your integrity.

Think about Paul's situation. He stood before corrupt officials, false accusers with smooth words, and a justice system looking for bribes. Yet he could confidently say, "I have done nothing wrong." His life backed up his words.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- Is there anything between you and God that needs to be made right today?
- Are you at odds with anyone? What step can you take to resolve it?
- How intentional are you about maintaining a clear conscience, or do you just hope things work out?

### **Practical Application:**

Today, make a list. On one side, write anything that's creating distance between you and God. On the other side, list any unresolved conflicts with people. Don't let the sun go down without taking at least one step toward resolution. Remember: a clear conscience is your best defense and your greatest freedom.

## Day 2: The Danger of Delay

**Reading:** Acts 24:22-27; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

### **Devotional:**

Felix trembled. The governor of Caesarea heard Paul reason about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, and he trembled with conviction. The Holy Spirit was clearly at work in his

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heart. But then Felix spoke words that have echoed through eternity as a warning: "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."

A convenient time. When will that be, Felix? Tomorrow? Next week? Next year?

Felix kept calling for Paul over the next two years. He kept hearing the gospel. He kept being interested. But he never acted. He waited for a "convenient season" that never came. Eventually, he left office, and we never hear of him trusting Christ.

Someone once said, "The most dangerous time to repent is tomorrow." Why? Because you never know what a day brings. More importantly, each time we hear God's voice and say "not today," our hearts grow a little harder. The conviction becomes a little less. The urgency fades.

The Bible declares, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Not tomorrow. Not when it's convenient. Now.

### Reflection Questions:

- Is there something God has been telling you to do that you keep putting off?
- What "convenient time" are you waiting for that may never come?
- Are you treating God's conviction in your life as urgent, or as something you can address later?

### Practical Application:

If you're lost and have never trusted Christ, don't wait another moment. If you're saved but God has been speaking to you about something—a sin to confess, a relationship to restore, a step of obedience to take—do it today. Write down what God is asking of you, and take action within the next 24 hours. Don't be like Felix, who heard the truth repeatedly but never responded.

## Day 3: Reasoning with the Lost

**Reading:** Acts 24:24-25; Isaiah 1:18; 1 Peter 3:15

### Devotional:

When Paul stood before Felix and Drusilla, he didn't just share nice religious platitudes. He reasoned with them. He talked about righteousness—what's right and wrong according to God's standard. He discussed temperance—self-control and the consequences of excess and sin. And he warned about judgment to come—the reality that we will all stand before God.

This is biblical evangelism. Paul preached to Felix's conscience. He helped him understand that sin is worse than we think, that we're guilty before a holy God, and that judgment is coming like a freight train.

Isaiah 1:18 says, "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." God invites us to have reasonable conversations about

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eternal matters. Not emotional manipulation. Not religious arguments. But honest, clear reasoning about sin, righteousness, and judgment.

When we witness to people, we need to help them think about serious matters: What happens when you die? Have you ever sinned? Do you know what God says sin deserves? Would you go to heaven or hell if you died today?

These aren't comfortable questions, but they're necessary ones. Felix trembled because Paul helped him see the truth about himself and his need for God.

### Reflection Questions:

- When was the last time you had a serious conversation with someone about eternal matters?
- Do you shy away from talking about sin, righteousness, and judgment because it's uncomfortable?
- How can you be more intentional about reasoning with people about their souls?

### Practical Application:

Pray for one person in your life who doesn't know Christ. Ask God for an opportunity this week to have a real conversation with them—not just about church or religion, but about righteousness, their standing before God, and the judgment to come. Practice asking questions like: "If you died today, are you 100% sure you'd go to heaven?" and "What do you think determines whether someone goes to heaven or hell?"

## Day 4: Trusting God in the Wait

**Reading:** Acts 24:27; Psalm 27:13-14; Isaiah 40:27-31

### Devotional:

"But after two years..." Those four words represent an entire season of Paul's life that we know very little about. The Apostle to the Gentiles, called by Jesus Himself, on a missionary journey to reach the world—and he's stuck. Imprisoned. Waiting. For two entire years.

Can you imagine? I'm sure Paul witnessed to everyone who would listen. I'm sure he encouraged believers and wrote letters. But his life was on hold. The journey stopped. The plans paused.

Sometimes we think that because we're called by God, things should happen quickly. We expect open doors to stay open, clear paths to remain clear, and progress to be constant. But that's not always how God works.

God uses waiting seasons. He uses delays. He even uses corrupt justice systems, false accusations, and circumstances that seem completely unfair. Why? Because He's working a bigger plan than we can see.

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During those two years, Paul went before Felix multiple times. He witnessed to Festus. He prepared for his opportunity before King Agrippa. He was positioned for his ultimate appeal to Caesar—which would get him to Rome, exactly where Jesus said he would go.

The wait wasn't wasted. It was part of the plan.

### Reflection Questions:

- Are you in a season of waiting right now? How are you responding to it?
- Do you trust that God is at work even when nothing seems to be happening?
- What might God be preparing you for during this season?

### Practical Application:

If you're in a waiting season, make a list of what you can do right now. Like Paul, you can witness to those around you, encourage other believers, pray, study God's Word, and maintain your testimony. Don't waste the wait. Ask God to show you how He wants to use this season in your life, and trust that He's working even when you can't see it.

## Day 5: Your Life as a Platform

**Reading:** Acts 24:10-21; Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:11-12

### Devotional:

When Paul stood before his accusers, his defense was simple: his life. He didn't need elaborate arguments or clever rhetoric. He could point to how he lived and say, "You can't prove any of these accusations. This isn't who I am. This isn't how I live."

Your life is a platform. It's the stage from which you preach the gospel. If that platform is shaky—if your character is questionable, if your integrity is compromised, if there are unresolved sins and conflicts—then no one can hear your message. They're too distracted by your life.

But when your life is blameless—not sinless, but blameless, meaning accusations can't stick to you—then your testimony becomes powerful. People listen. Doors open. Even corrupt governors and pagan kings want to hear what you have to say.

Paul could stand before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa with confidence because he had exercised himself daily to maintain a clear conscience.