



Principles for Godly Leadership and Christian Witness

"Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest." (Acts 25:10).

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"Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem. 2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, 3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. 4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither. 5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him. 6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought. 7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. 8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all. 9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? 10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. 11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar. 12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go" (Acts 25:1-12).

Introduction

In Acts 25, we find the Apostle Paul once again before rulers and judges - this time before **Festus**, the new Roman governor. Accused falsely by the Jews, Paul refuses to be manipulated by

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political convenience or mob pressure. Instead, he appeals to Caesar, anchoring himself in Roman law and divine calling.

This passage speaks profoundly to **contemporary Christians**, especially to **leaders** in the Church, about integrity, courage, justice, and the sovereignty of God amid human systems. Let us consider three principles from this narrative.

1. God's People Must Be Wise and Courageous Under Pressure

"Then Paul said, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged..." (Acts 25:10)

Paul's calm and reasoned response contrasts sharply with the hostility of his accusers. He uses legal knowledge wisely while entrusting himself to God. Christians today must not be passive in the face of injustice or opposition; rather, we are called to stand firm with **boldness and wisdom**, as exhorted in these scriptures:

- *"Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." (Matthew 10:16)*
- *"And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." (Philippians 1:28)*

Christians should cultivate discernment in confronting false accusations or church politics. Like Paul, they must learn the systems they operate within, but never lose sight of their heavenly citizenship.

2. Justice Must Not Be Sacrificed for Popularity or Expediency

"But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?" (Acts 25:9)

Festus, though new in office, sought political favour with the Jewish leaders. This impulse led him to consider an unjust move - sending Paul to Jerusalem where he knew Paul would likely be ambushed and killed.

- *"Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous." (Deuteronomy 16:19)*
- *"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." (2 Samuel 23:3)*

Leaders, both secular and spiritual, must resist the temptation to **appease the crowd**. Contemporary Church leadership is often pressured to conform to cultural or political trends. Yet true shepherds must uphold truth and justice, even when unpopular.

3. Trust in God's Sovereignty When the World Seems Unjust

"To Caesar shalt thou go." (Acts 25:12)

Paul's appeal to Caesar was more than a legal tactic - it was a recognition that God's plan would not be thwarted by human schemes. The Lord had already promised Paul that he would bear witness in Rome (Acts 23:11), and now the unjust decisions of men would ironically serve God's greater purpose.

- *"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will (Proverbs 21:1)*
- *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28)*

When believers face setbacks, betrayals, or systems stacked against them, they must trust that **God's providence rules over all**. No power on earth can thwart what God has purposed.

Conclusion: A Call to Stand

Paul's experience before Festus is not just a historical episode - it is a pattern for Christian endurance, leadership, and trust. So:

- Be **bold** like Paul in the face of accusation.
- Be **just** unlike Festus, avoiding decisions made for political gain.
- Be **faithful**, trusting that God can use even the flawed justice of men to advance His perfect will.

As the Apostle wrote from Rome later: *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith..." (2 Timothy 4:7)*, So may we.