

Sermon Discussion Questions for October 25, 2015

Acts 23-24

Supernatural Conscience

1. Understanding the context
 - a. How did Paul end up before the Roman Governor Felix (see *Acts 23*)?
 - b. Who is Ananias (*24:1*) and who does he represent?
2. Understanding the primary cast of characters
 - a. Felix: former slave; now a governor; known for his brutality & immorality
 - b. Tertullus: prosecuting attorney; hired by Sanhedrin; con artist; corrupt
 - c. Paul:
3. Understanding the three charges brought against Paul by Tertullus & Jewish accusers
 - a. insurrection (vs. 5a)
 - b. leader of a sect (vs. 5b)
 - c. profaning the Temple (vs. 6)
4. Paul's defense
 - a. insurrection charge is not even possible (vs. 11-13)
 - b. not a sect but a fulfillment of the Old Testament (vs. 14-15)
 - c. not profane but rather one who has a clear conscience before God and man (vs. 16)
5. The primacy of the *conscience* in the New Testament
 - a. natural and inherent: Romans 2:15
 - b. capable of corruption: Acts 23:1; I Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:15
 - c. capable of being clear and morally compelling: Rom. 9:1; 13:5; I Cor. 8:7-12; 10:25-29; II Cor. 1:12; 4:2; 5:11; I Tim. 1:5,19; 3:9; II Tim. 1:3; Heb. 9:9,14; 10:22; 13:18; I Pet. 3:16,21
6. Martin Luther (Diet of Worms, addressing his accusers before Emperor Charles, 1521)

"Unless I am convinced by sacred Scripture or by evident reason, I cannot recant. For my conscience is held captive by the Word of God, and to act against conscience is neither right nor safe."

- a. What do you think Luther meant by this statement?
 - b. Do you agree with this statement?
 - c. Have you ever acted against your conscience?
 - d. What was the result of that action (circumstantially, relationally, and internally)?
7. How to have and keep a clear conscience: *1 John 1:8-10 > the gospel*
8. "The Rest of the Story" (Acts 24:22-27)
 - a. Felix's response to the gospel
 - b. Your response to the gospel (what did you observe during the "standing exercise")?
 - c. Reformation Sunday, 2015 – a day when you and your conscience can be cleansed and reformed forever !