

# Paul before Agrippa

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let us turn now to the chapter we read in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 26.

And we'll consider tonight from verse 24 onwards. We'll consider that in the light of the conscience which the words are said.

Acts chapter 26, verse 24. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said to the loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee man.

But he said, I am not man, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things before whom also I speak freely. For I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him.

For this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then said Agrippa unto Paul, all must thou persuade me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, what both all must and all together, such as I am, except these bonds.

[ 1 : 27 ] Now a fortnight ago tonight, I considered with you words in chapter 24, where Paul preached in the presence of Felix and Drusilla on the subjects of righteousness, self-control and judgment to come.

Felix refused to set Paul free. He kept him under house arrest for two years, hoping that some ransom money would be paid by Paul or someone else for his release.

In the course of time, Felix was replaced as procurator in Caesarea by Festus. And shortly after this appointment, Festus went up to Jerusalem.

You have this in chapter 25. He went up to Jerusalem. While he was there, the Jews reminded him of this man, Paul, who was in prison in Caesarea, and suggested to him that he take him up to Jerusalem for trial.

Now, Festus determined to reopen the case when he got back to Caesarea, and to proceed along the lines of strict Roman justice in the case.

[ 2 : 57 ] When he spoke to Paul, he suggested to him that, that was when Festus returned to Caesarea, he spoke to Paul, and in the course of the conversation, suggested to him that he should go up to Jerusalem to be tried.

And Paul resisted that suggestion. He knew that he wouldn't get a fair trial in Jerusalem, that things were prejudiced against him there.

And in the famous words of verse 11 in chapter 25, he said to Festus, I appeal unto Caesar. And having made that appeal as a Roman citizen, Festus was duty-bound to send Paul to Rome to be tried.

And he had to send accompanying papers with the prisoner. The papers detailing the charges leveled against him.

But before these papers were drawn up, and before Paul was sent to Rome, Agrippa, a vassal king, a man who, you know, that's a king who ruled really by authority.

[ 4 : 27 ] He was a Jew, but he ruled by authority in Judea, by authority of the Roman authorities there, and he was really a puppet in their hand.

He was the last of the heralds. This man, Agrippa, and his sister, Bernice, came to visit Festus in Caesarea, a sort of a kind of state visit, and probably to compliment Festus on his promotion to this office of procurator in Caesarea.

Festus was a comparatively inexperienced Roman procurator, and he grabbed this opportunity of having a Jewish king in his presence at a time when he had this thorny problem.

This man, Paul, and all the accusation the Jews were living against him, and as yet no one had found this man guilty, and by rights he should really have been set free. And maybe, as we shall

see at the end of chapter 26, if he hadn't appealed to Rome, he would have been set free. So, Festus took this opportunity to refer the case to Agrippa. They discussed it between themselves, and Agrippa said, well, I would like to hear this man for myself.

[ 5 : 53 ] And so, chapter 6 opens with a picture of this assembly, Festus, with all his own officials, Agrippa and his sister Bernice, and those who accompanied them, gather together, and in comes this prisoner, man in chains.

We know that from the words that he said to Agrippa, I would to God, that already thou, but also all that hear me this day, was both almost and altogether, such as I am, except those bonds, except these chains.

Here's this prisoner, brought in in chains, in the presence of this august company, and he is told by Agrippa, you are now free to speak for yourself.

And Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself, and he thanked, very courteously, he thanked Agrippa, for the opportunity that he was given, to speak to him, about the reason, for his being there, that day, in chains, before them.

I beseech thee, he says, to hear me, patiently. And tonight, I want to look with you, at this, profound address, that Paul delivered, and look at the effect, that it produced, first of all, in the life of Festus, and secondly, in the life, of Agrippa.

[ 7 : 31 ] And I would like to deal with this, briefly, tonight. there are two or three things, that Paul, refers to, in this, in this address.

He gives us, an account, of his conversion. And he speaks of his, past life, he speaks of his, attitude to the Christian faith, in the past.

He speaks of the, conversion experience, that he had, on the way to Damascus. He speaks of the call, that was addressed to him, by Christ, to Christian, service.

These are the four things, that Paul, made us on, in this, address. Now this is, one of, three accounts, that we have, of his conversion, in the book of Acts.

The first account, is in chapter nine, given to us by Luke, who wrote the book. And the other two accounts, are given to us, by Paul himself. The first, in chapter 22, when he addressed, the Jewish audience.

[ 8 : 32 ] And this, in chapter 26, when he addressed, a mixed audience, of Jew, and Gentile. And there are, two or three, interesting things, that come to light. As he tells, gives a brief account, of his life.

And a, refers, in fuller detail, to his, religious, life. First of all, notice his, reference to the past, in verses four and five.

My manner of life, from my youth, which was at the first, among my own nation, Jerusalem, know all the Jews, who knew me, from the beginning, if they would testify, that after, the most straightest, sect of a religion, I lived, a Pharisee.

Now, what Paul is saying, here is this, he's telling them, the kind of person, he was. Now, this, as you know, is very often, what happens, when a person, gives his testimony, when he speaks, about his conversion, he tells, people, first of all, the kind, of person he was.

This is, it's against, this kind of background, that his conversion, is seen, in all its, blessedness, and in all its, glorious light.

[ 9 : 47 ] Now, Paul here, speaks about two things. He says, that he was, religious, from his youth up, and, his religion, was a particular, kind, of a particular, particular kind, of a particular brand, he was, a, Pharisee.

Now, that's all he tells, I was religious, and when I, grew big, when I, after the age of 12, or so, I became, a real, Pharisee. Now, that means, that he laid, a lot of emphasis, on, moral goodness, on, a, doing, the best he could, at all times.

He laid emphasis, also on his belief, of this, in the scriptures. His acceptance, of what God said, in the Bible, about himself. He believed, in the resurrection, from the dead.

He believed, not coming, Messiah. He believed, all, these, these, things. I was, he said, that kind of person, growing up.

I was, very, religious. Now, afterwards, he's going to speak, about his attitude, as a Pharisee, to the Christian, faith.

[ 11 : 10 ] But I think, there's a, lesson that, comes, clearly, to light here, for us, in connection, with, the giving of, testimonies. And, it is this.

Have you ever noticed, and I'm sure, you find it in yourself, have you ever noticed, the tendency, for people, to emphasize, or as the Americans, would put it, to major, on the kind of, person, he was, before God, made him, what he is.

You see, we tend, almost to go, out of our way, to tell people, that we were this bad, we did this, and we went here, and we were this kind, of person.

Well, I always get the impression, when Paul is giving, his testimony, that he's almost, in a hurry, to get away, from the theme, of what he was, that he might get, onto the theme, of what God, did for him.

His whole, thrust, this all, was directed, to the power, of the grace of God, in his life. If he was taking, half an hour, giving his testimony, he wouldn't spend, 20 minutes, telling people, the type of man he was.

[12:33] I believe, he would spend, five minutes there, and then spend the rest, telling people, about what Christ, did, and what kind of, person Christ is, and what kind of thing, Christ can do.

for other people. And if I were going, to give advice, to anyone, you young people, for example, when you're asked, to give your testimony, the only advice, I would give you, is this, and anyone, who gives us, a testimony, to give, can speak about this, otherwise, there is no testimony.

Emphasize, the grace, and the love, and the power, of the Lord, in your life. Don't spend, too much time, telling people, the kind of person, you wear, you'll paint yourself, black, but I'll tell you this, you'll never, paint yourself, as black, as you wear, so don't try.

But try to throw up, in glorious outline, the power, of the grace, of Christ. So, he tells them, the kind of person, he was.

Then he tells them, secondly, the attitude, that he had, to the Christian faith, in verse 6. Now he says, I stand, and judge, for the hope, of the promise, made of God, unto our fathers. Unto which promise, our twelfth tribe, that is the whole, of Israel, the Jews, instantly, serving God, day and night, hope to come.

[13:59] And for that hope, seeking a grip, that I'm here. And, why should you, think it incredible, that God, should raise the dead? I verily, thought with myself, that I ought to do, many things, contrary to the name, of Jesus of Nazareth, and so on.

Now then, here he tells us, how his religion, worked, in his life, and particularly, with reference, to the Christian faith.

By the time, Paul became, a fully fledged Pharisee. The Christian faith, was beginning, to strike roots, in Jerusalem.

And was beginning, to spread, beyond Jerusalem. And this, religious man, didn't like the spread, of this, religious, fervor, indeed of this, religious fever, throughout the land, in his day.

So what did he do? Well, quite simply, he opposed it. He wasn't, a religious member. He wasn't, a morrow, and he wasn't, ungodly.

[15:06] And he didn't want, to destroy the Bible. And he didn't want, to destroy the church. And he didn't want, to destroy the Lord's day, God's day, the Sabbath day. He wasn't opposed, to any of these things.

He was only opposed, to the Christian faith. That's the point, he's making. I thought, with myself, that I ought, to do many things, contrary, to the name of Jesus, even though, I was, a very, religious, man.

So, what he's telling us, is this. I knew, and I've discovered, he says, looking back, that I was opposed, to the Christian, faith.

I didn't realize it. I didn't realize, that I was opposed, to God, when I was opposed, to the Christian faith. But I was. I wasn't, he says, opposed, to the thought, of a Messiah.

As a Pharisee, I looked, for a Messiah. And I wondered, when the fulfillment, of the promise, would come, because I believed, in the promise, that God gave, that a Messiah, would come.

[16:12] But when the Messiah, came, I didn't recognize, that he was the Messiah. And I tried, to destroy, the Messiah. And when there were, people in Jerusalem, and beyond Jerusalem, who became followers, of that Messiah, I tried, to destroy them as well.

And I received, authority from the chief priests. And I was, party to the death, of some Christians, in Jerusalem, and beyond. I gave my voice, for example, against Stephen.

And I punished, many Christians. And I compelled them, to blaspheme. And I was manned, against them. And I persecuted them, even unto strange cities, like Damascus.

Now what Paul is saying here, is that in those days, Christianity, was a threat, to his peace. It was a threat, to his very existence.

To him it was wrong. It was illegal. And it was an innovation, that he didn't like. Christianity, to him, was a nuisance. And the convictions, that he had, and there's no doubt about it, that Paul had convictions, in those days.

[ 17 : 27 ] As Jesus said to him, there's no point, he says, in kicking against, the things that you feel. The convictions, that he had, didn't make him, a friend of the cause, but an enemy. Didn't bring him, any nearer to God, but drove him, further away.

Didn't make him, any happier. But maybe, made him more unhappy. Didn't make him, any more satisfied, with life than he was. But more dissatisfied. He says, I became a mad man.

There was something, eating in. And instead of that thing, leading him to the Lord, it led him, further from, the Lord. Now I believe, that there are people like this, who are, to all intents and purposes, in some respects, at least, religious.

I believe there may be people, in this church tonight, people in Storch, and we certainly, who will say to you, that they're not opposed, to the Bible. And they're not opposed, to the Christian church. They're not against God.

But then you see, they can't swallow, this Christianity thing. And any time, they think of it, or any time, it crosses their path, it annoys them.

[ 18 : 39 ] It's a nuisance to them. And they rebel against it. Instead of becoming, happy with it, they become unhappy, the thought of it. And instead of becoming, satisfied through it, more and more, dissatisfaction, comes to the surface, in their lives.

They become antagonistic. And in many cases, they do things, that normally, they wouldn't do, just because, these convictions, that they have, instead of leading them, to the Lord, are only, leading them further away, from the Lord.

And I know, I'm positive of this, that there are people, there may be wives, and husbands, children, parents, who are suffering, at the hands of people, who are under conviction, but who don't yield, in submissiveness, of heart and will, to the Lord, who is convicting them, instead of yielding to them, they are only, as it were, gritting their teeth, and flying, in the face, of all these convictions, and making the lives, of people, who are very close to them, and maybe the closest people, in the world to them, making their lives, a misery, or at least trying to, just as their own lives, are as well.

That's the kind of man, Paul was. Do you know, you get the impression, as he tells the story, of his conversion, that he was so manned, against the Christian faith, that he couldn't rest, day or night. Couldn't rest. That was the kind, of dissatisfaction, and restlessness, of spirit, that he had. And you know, that there are times, conviction, goes like that, in the life of an individual.

[ 20 : 19 ] It puts you off your sleep. And instead of having peace, through faith in Christ, you become the most miserable, of all creatures.

Well says Paul to Agrippa, I was, that type, of man. But then Agrippa, Agrippa, a wonderful thing, happened to me.

I was on the road to Damascus, he tells in verse 12, and here's the third thing, that he emphasizes, his conversion, to the Christian faith. At the very height, of his persecuting zeal, and when he least expected it, this wonderful event occurred.

And there were three things, that he emphasized, about his conversion, three supernatural elements in it. There was a light, there was a voice, and there were words.

Three supernatural elements, in the conversion of Paul. A light, a voice, and words. Jesus appeared to him, he tells us, on the road to Damascus.

[ 21 : 21 ] And he appeared to him, not to put him to shame, but to save him. He came to know him, as a real person, as a risen, and as a reigning Lord.

I don't know, he says to Agrippa, why you should think, it's a thing incredible, that God should raise the dead. Why do you think, it's incredible? Why? I'm going to come back, to this in a minute. You see, the connection here is this. Here was a man, who was so religious, that he believed, all the Old Testament prophecies. Now what was it, the Old Testament was pointing forward to? Particularly, supremely, it was pointing forward, to the coming of Christ, and the world. And what did the New Testament tell, the Old Testament tell people, who cared to read it, about this coming Christ?

That he was going to suffer, that he was going to die, and that he was going to rise again, from the dead. The Old Testament told that, prophesied about it. There was the word, there were the words of prophecy, all this was enshrined in the types, that God had given to Israel, and so on.

[ 22 : 20 ] Now he says, Christ came, Christ suffered, Christ died, Christ rose from the dead. Why do you disbelieve that? He says, why do you think it incredible, that God should raise the dead?

And why is that people, find it difficult to believe, the resurrection, of Christ from the dead? And why do they find it difficult, to believe that there will be, a general resurrection from the dead? Why? I'll tell you why.

Because they bring God, down to their own level. That's why. And they bring him down, below their own level. You see, because they can't raise people, from the dead. And because they can't conceive, of how it can be done.

Therefore, this is the wonderful conclusion, to which enlightened men, come to, and Paul came to, in Paul's day, and come to 1985, because they can't conceive, of how it can be done.

It can't be done. In other words, God, isn't in their thinking, at all. But the moment you believe in God, and the moment you believe, in the God of the Bible, you cannot but believe, that God, will raise, the dead.

[ 23 : 34 ] And if you don't believe, in the resurrection from the dead, doesn't matter who you are, be your bishop or otherwise, if you do not believe, in the physical, literal, resurrection of Jesus, from the dead, you do not believe, in the God, of the Bible.

It's as simple as that. Of course, some people may say, that's going too far. It is nothing of the sort. It is nothing of the sort. That's why, people don't believe, in the resurrection.

Because they don't believe, in the God of the Bible. Because the Bible tells us, that this God, raised, Jesus, from the dead.

And you believe, that God, or you don't. It's one or the other. You can't cut, start slicing things away, from the God, that you're going to believe in.

Because the moment you do it, it is not the God of the Bible, you believe in. You've made a caricature, an idol, of your own. There is only one God, in whom you can believe.

[ 24 : 41 ] With the faith, that the Bible commends, unto salvation. And that is the God, of the Bible. You take it, or you leave it.

You accept him, or you reject him. Agrippa says Paul, I don't know, why people find it, incredible to believe, that God raised, and Paul, could have gone on, to tell Agrippa, this is why Agrippa, because they don't believe, in that God.

So you see, the Lord, had told, Paul, that the Bible, that Paul believed in, told him, all these things, about God, and about, the resurrection, from the dead.

And this is the Christ, who confronted him. It was this light, that shone into his heart. It was this vision, that he got, of the risen Lord, that prostrated him, on the ground.

And the words, of the Lord, went through him, like an arrow. And he cried out, Lord, who art thou? Lord, what would thou, have me, to do?

[ 25 : 55 ] And this is what happens, in every Ketzler conversion. I'm not saying, that you see a light, literally, as he did. I'm not saying, that you're going to hear, a voice, physically, as he did. And I'm not saying, you're going to see a vision, as he saw.

I will say, that you won't see, these things. But what you will get, is this, as Paul did. You will get a light, from without, coming into your heart. This was what he was told, then to go and do.

Go and preach, the Gentiles. Bring light, to them. Bring light, before their eyes. Bring the light, of the word, to their understanding. You see, in conversion, light, comes from without.

What is the light, that comes from without? The word of God, comes to you, with the power, and the conviction, of the Holy Spirit. It may not be, suddenly, instantaneously, in one night, in one sermon. But over a period, of time, the word, is the light, of the Lord. And the Holy Spirit, begins, to shed that light, into your mind, and into your understanding.

[ 27 : 01 ] The Bible becomes, the Bible becomes meaningful, relevant, a living word, to you. This is the light, from without, the revelation of God. But there's something else. There is also, a light from within.

A light from within. And that is, the Holy Spirit, enlightening your mind, enabling you, to understand, the Bible, or at least, some of it. Giving you, a knowledge, of the truth.

A search for the truth. Giving you, a desire, to know the truth. So you may be here, tonight for example, that person, who once upon a time, had no interest, in the Bible.

Now you have. A person, who couldn't care, that's about coming to church. Now you must, come to church. Why? Because you want, your mind fed. You want light, in your understanding.

That's the Holy Spirit, working. And the Holy Spirit, always does that. In conversion. And there is also, the entrance of life, together with the entrance of light. So that you're hated, to the things of God, is turned to love.

[ 28 : 06 ] Your opposition, becomes service. Your hostility, to Christ, becomes, now a change, to one of honoring, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fear, and despair, and dread, are now replaced, by, hope. God, laid hold, of Paul.

He converted him. Then fourthly, he tells us, that he laid hold of him, for a purpose. Verse 16 onwards. rise, he said to me, stand up. I have appeared unto thee, for this purpose, to make thee a minister, a preacher.

And a preacher's going to, witness to the things, that you've heard, and the things, that you have seen. And I'm going to send you, as a means, of delivering people. And I'm going to send you, to open their eyes, to turn them, from darkness to light, from the power of God, to Satan, that they may receive, forgiveness of sins, and inheritance, amongst them, which are sanctified, by faith, which is me, and all King Agrippa.

I was not disobedient, of the heavenly vision. And I went, and I preached to them, at Damascus, then at Jerusalem, throughout the coast of Judea, to the Gentiles, to the Jews, to them all.

[ 29 : 26 ] And having obtained, help of God, I continue unto this day, witness him, both small and great, saying none other things, than those, which the prophet, and Moses, say should come, that Christ, should suffer, that he should be the first, that should rise from the dead, and should show light, unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

Here you have finally, in this connection, God's purpose, for converting Saul, that he might serve him, as a minister, in the gospel.

In other words, Agrippa, I was converted, by Christ, that I might serve, Christ. Christ, came from heaven, to make this appointment, Saul of Tarshish, I am sending you, with the gospel, to Jew, and Gentile.

And there is nothing else, that you will bring to them, to open their eyes, to turn them, from darkness, to light, and from the power, of Satan, to God, that they may receive forgiveness, righteousness, and inheritance.

And here you have really, a summing up, a summation, of, the gospel. This is what it's all about. It brings light, to the understanding. It's the means, and the only means, by which people, are turned, from Satan, to God, from darkness, to light.

[ 30 : 59 ] It's the only means, that will give you, a hope, for heaven above, for eternity beyond. And the only way, you can lay hold, of these things, is through faith, of Jesus Christ.

There's the gospel, summed up for you, in one word, from the lips, of Jesus Christ. Take it with you. It is that, which gives you, understanding.

You may say to me, but the gospel, isn't the only thing, that gives me understanding. The preacher, the ministers, who have been here, they're not the only people, who have given me, understanding, throughout my life.

I've read other people, I've read about other prophets, and philosophies, and what have you. Well, I don't deny that, neither would Jesus deny it. Of course, there are other things, that give you, an understanding of life.

There are many things, and I believe many books, and many people, who have opened your eyes, to things, that you never knew before. But listen to this, this is the only message, that will ever tell you, how your sins, can be forgiven.

[ 32 : 08 ] The only message, that will ever tell you, how you can, how you can be turned, from Satan, to God. The only message, that will ever tell you, how you can be delivered, from the darkness, of a life, that is under the dominion, of sin, to the light, of a life, that is under the dominion, of grace.

And it's the only message, that this world, has ever heard, that tells people, that the way, to all these blessings, is simply through faith, in Jesus Christ.

Christ. Now my friend, you've heard that message, from the time, you've been coming to church. Year, after year, after year, nothing else, has been brought, before you, but this, salvation, through faith, in Christ.

And the whole address, that Paul delivers, to these men, revolves, round, this central, fact, of the gospel. Jesus, is alive, from the dead.

Jesus lives, and Jesus reigns. Jesus gives, forgiveness, and repentance, of sins. Jesus saves, and that is the light, that Paul was commissioned, to bring, before, all, and sundry, and he had, nothing else, to preach.

[ 33 : 39 ] Remember what he said, to the church in Corinth? The Jews, he said, I meet Jews, and they tell me, give me a sign, Paul, show me the miracle. Prove to me, that what you've got, is right.

I come across, Greeks, he said, all they want of me, is, is the proof of philosophy, wisdom, philosophy, intellectual, understanding.

Never mind, these stories, about these Jews, and about this Christ. Give us some, that's going to, enlighten our minds. And I say, he says to Jew, and Gentile, I've got nothing, to give you, but Christ, crucified.

They ask, for a sign, and they ask, for enlightenment, but we preach, Christ, crucified. And I have, no knowledge, of Paul, ever, doing anything else, with any body, of people, he came across, be they Jew, or Gentile, male, or female, infants, or adults.

I have no knowledge, of any other means, that he ever employed, to bring people, to acknowledge, of salvation, but the spoken word. The spoken word. And if you don't agree, with what statement, I defy you, to prove me wrong.

[ 34 : 57 ] this is the great weapon, of the Christian church. Go, and preach, and preach, and preach.

And when preaching fails, continue preaching. All you can do is, sow, sow, sow the seed.

God, will give, the increase. Festus, stops him.

I was going to say, in midstream, but I don't think, he was in midstream. I think that Paul, was really finished, the sermon. Perhaps even the act of, if he was using his hands, and the act of, laying his hands down.

When Festus, reacted, as he did. And this is what I close, the sermon with tonight. Service suggests it is, the two reactions, as you see them here, depicted in the life of, in the attitude of, Festus and Agrippa.

[ 36 : 01 ] Paul says, Festus, you're mad, or you're a raving lunatic. You're a learned man, you're enlightened, you know a lot, you're an intellectual.

And your intellectualism, has brought you, to lunacy. You're mad, you're a fool. Agrippa, reacted differently.

At least the authorised version, gives you to believe, that what he said was this, Paul, you're almost persuading me, to be, a Christian. You're almost, persuading me, to be, a Christian.

Now, I know, that this translation, bristles with difficulties. And perhaps, the way it could be written, would be this, you know Paul, you're probably thinking, that with a little more time, you might persuade me, to be, a Christian.

Others say, that it was a sneering, reaction by, Agrippa, sort of, a feeling rather, embarrassed, and self-conscious, in his company, in the company, of the Romans, that he, he just sort of, pushed him off, to one side, and said, I'm not interested in that, you'd almost think that, you probably think, that you're persuading me, but, don't be daft, you're not.

[ 37 : 24 ] Well, whatever the translation is, I think that, Agrippa's attitude, is very different, to Festus's, and I just want to, close the service, by referring to them both, very briefly.

Festus said, Paul, you're a man, man. You've read too much, and you've learned, you've learned, you know too much, intellectually. You're gifted, and you're mad.

I'm rather surprised, myself, that this was Festus's reaction, because it's not, the kind of reaction, you come across, very often, amongst unbelievers. As a matter of fact, very often, it's the opposite, it's the opposite thing, that unbelievers, tend to say, certainly in 1985.

It isn't that, the Christians, or the preachers, are too intellectual, or too learned, it's the opposite. It's that, they don't know, enough. They've never seen life, as it were.

They haven't seen life, on the other side of the fence. If they're red mode, and if their horizons, were broadened, they wouldn't believe, that nonsense, that they preach, and speak about, so much.

[ 38 : 32 ] Is this not, the tendency you get today, the reaction you get, amongst certain people today? It's not that, the Christian church, is too learned, it's that, the Christian church, doesn't know enough, and if it knew enough, it wouldn't believe, what it does believe.

And so, they try to, push these things, to one side. Paul, the first, was a harebrained, enthusiast. Perhaps, you're here tonight, and you may be, thinking that, well, I haven't got enough, evidence to believe this, all these things, about the Christian faith.

And anyway, there are other people, who are far more, gifted intellectual, as some of the people, that you're used to listening to. And they, they don't believe the things, that we tell you about either. So you'd rather, believe them, than believe us. Now, all we can do, and all Paul, could do with Festus, was this, Festus says, I'm not mad at all.

I'm just telling you the truth, as it is, in Jesus. And all we can do, as preachers, is present, the truth, as plainly, as we possibly can.

[ 39 : 49 ] Lay it at the door, of your heart, and of your will, and of your conscience. Lay it, at the door, in the hope, that God, by his power, will open that door, that the truth, may flood in, like a river, to enlighten your mind, in the knowledge of Christ.

You may direct, and raise, whatever objections, and excuses you can, against the truth, and against the way, it is presented to you. Against the knowledge, or otherwise, of those who do present it. You may raise, whatever objections, you can. But no Festus, in the history of this world, has ever, changed, the truth. And it still comes to you.

Agrippa, well, Paul knew that he was more informed, than Festus. And I take these words, as they are in the authorised version, Agrippa saying to him, almost, not sneeringly, you're bringing, persuasion, to bear, upon me.

As though he was seeing, and conceding, that there were great reasons, for the Christianity, and for the acceptance, of the Christianity, that Paul was bringing, before him. That the proofs, for it was strong.

[ 41 : 12 ] The objections against it, were trifling. There were convictions, but they didn't become, conversion. It's as though, this man is bending, in a certain direction, but he didn't bend, far enough.

He has come so far, but he's, also come far short, of what the gospel, demanded of him. There are thousands of people, on that threshold, as people, as someone put it, outside the door, on the pavement, of, almost.

Perhaps you're here at night, and you're, almost, persuaded, to take a step, in the way of commitment, of life, to the claims of Christ. But you haven't done it yet.

And you remember this, that as long as you stand, on the pavement of almost, you are still unsaved, and still unconverted, and still, on the road, on the destination, still heading for the destination, to which that pavement leads.

And that is a lost eternity. But I want to leave you, with this thought. The wonderful insight, that you get here, into the preacher's heart.

[ 42 : 25 ] As Paul, fixes his gaze, upon Agrippa, and says, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all, that hear me this day, were both all, must know all together, such as I am, except, these, bonds.

You get a picture, of a man, of great sincerity, and open heartedness. A man of great tenderness, a man of great desire, for the lost. A man, who would give Agrippa, gospel, and spiritual liberty. A man, who would give him, every blessing, that Christ, could bestow upon him. A man, who would wish him, every privilege, that the gospel has, for those who come. But, who wouldn't want him, to have any of the burdens, or the anxieties, or the difficulties, or the problems, or the oppositions. That are inevitably, associated with the gospel. I would, he says, that you are all together, a Christian. I would give anything, he says, for that. But at the same time, I wouldn't want you, to have these chains.

There you have the heart, of the preacher. What a testimony, to the change, in this man's life. You know, Agrippa said, there was a day, he told him earlier, I would have hauled, the likes of myself, to prison.

[ 43 : 40 ] I would have signed, the death warrant, of believers. Look at the chains, Agrippa, I would give anything, to see you, a believer.

Before, I would have bound you, with chains. Today, all I would want, to see you bound with, are the chains, of the love of Christ, in the gospel, of his grace.

And that is Christianity. That is the sincerity, of Christianity. The sincerity, that wants to see, people delivered, without having, the oppositions, and the difficulties, that are associated, with the gospel. And I tell you this, I tell you this, at the same time, the more, you adhere, to Christ, and the gospel, of Christ, the more, you will know, of opposition, and antagonism, and difficulties, and anxieties, in life.

And I hope, that you and I, have sufficient, interest in Christ, and his cause. Have sufficient, love, for Christ, and for his cause.

[ 44 : 58 ] I hope, that we have, sufficient, love for him, to make sure, that we do not, compromise, our position, as Christians, in, this world.

Here you have, the heart then, of the believer. And I say this to you, tonight, who are out with Christ. I say this to you. And I'm only saying, what every Christian, would say to you.

What your own, Christian relatives, and friends, would say to you. If you only knew, my friend, how much their hearts, are open for you. And how much, they would give, to bring you to the Lord.

If you only knew, the prayers that go up, on your behalf. If you only knew, what they would wish for you. They would wish you, nothing but good.

Nothing but blessing. Nothing but privileges. Nothing but peace, and contentment, and satisfaction. Forgiveness, through faith, in Jesus Christ.

[ 46 : 00 ] They wouldn't want you, to have a care in the world. But they know, at the same time, that the moment, you are bound, by the chains, of his love, you will inevitably, you will inevitably, have the opposition, and the anxiety, that comes, with it.

Remember what Paul said, to Timothy, as a young minister. Timothy said, you will have, you will have, your own share, of the hardships, associated, with the gospel.

But they're worth having, for the sake, of the one, in whose name, and for whose sake, we bear them.

There's one person, here tonight, who needs a message. One person, who needs a message. It's this type of person.

You sit loosely, to Christ's, claims upon you. You may think, that you're avoiding difficulties.

[ 47 : 20 ] But little do you know, the difficulties, that await you, if you live, like that. You compromise, your position, as a believer.

you do it. You sit loosely, by his claims. And you love him, so feebly, and so little, that you're prepared, to associate, with those, who hate him.

And you will live, to regret it, for the rest, of your life. May God grant, that you and I, may be all, together, committed, to the Lord, Jesus Christ.

And if you do have problems, as a result of that, and difficulties, as you will, you remember this, the difficulties, cannot be compared, with the glory, that will follow.

And the last, picture that you have, and I'm almost finished, of my studies, in the book of Acts, I hope you haven't found, these things, too long. One more study, will see us, through to the, end of this book.

[ 48 : 32 ] The last, picture that you have, as this book, and as this page, close, on Agrippa, and Festus, and Burnis, is this, they turn aside, from Paul, and the gospel, and they chat, among themselves, and they say, if this fellow, hadn't appealed to Rome, he could have been set free.

And the page closes. And that's all, we hear about. And how often, is it true of people, who come to hear the gospel, who may be impressed, with the appeal, and the claims of Christ.

And the moment, they're away, from the church, or perhaps even the moment, the sermon finishes, they begin chatting together, about anything, and everything.

And the effect, has gone. Is that going to be you, once again, tonight? Let us pray. Our Lord, be with us, and guide us, and bless us with thy peace, through believing, and the praise to be thine, forever in Christ.

Amen.