



Sunday, May 27, 2012

Paul's Defense in Jerusalem

Speaker: David Robinson

Scripture: Acts 21:37-23:11

Sermon Notes:

1. Paul defends himself before the mob, giving evidence that he is a Jew who was educated in Torah and zealous for God, even persecuting “the Way.”
2. The bright light and the voice from heaven on the road to Damascus was recognized by the Jews as a theophany, the voice of God calling Paul to service.
3. Knowing that he was being commissioned by Jesus, Paul asks “What shall I do?” (Acts 22:10).
4. The name “Ananias” means “The Lord is gracious.”
5. Ananias' message confirms to Paul that God hand-picked him to see Jesus (the Righteous One) and to witness to His name.
6. Paul met the Righteous One (Isaiah 53:11) who would bear our iniquities and cause us to be counted righteous.
7. Paul left Jerusalem a condemned sinner, met Jesus on the road, and arrived in Damascus justified.
8. In a vision Paul is told to leave Jerusalem to be a prophet to the Gentiles (Acts 22:17-21; cf. Isaiah 6).
9. Only Jesus can provide the righteousness that comes from God, having taken our condemnation in our place on the cross. It's a free gift of God to be accepted in faith.
10. We're offered eternal life, as Christ has reversed the death sentence due us on account of sin.

11. The prophet Isaiah speaks of God lifting the veil of death and tears from all people (Isaiah 25:7-8).
12. In Acts 22, Paul's conversion and his calling are closely linked.
13. We're saved for God's purposes and glory – in Paul's second call, he was sent to foreign, Gentile cities.
14. We must not be hasty or presumptuous when listening for God's call for our lives.
15. People and prayer both indicate God's calling on Paul's life.
16. As you're listening to God's call, hear what other brothers and sisters are saying. Be diligent in prayer.
17. Paul's conversion and calling entailed tribulation – God had to humble, mold, and equip him for service.
18. We need to be humbled and shaped for service (cf. Hosea 6:1-2).
19. God revives us through suffering and tribulation.
20. Our hearts will remain restless until we submit to God's purposes for our lives.
21. The Father calls us, the Son redeems us, the Spirit comforts us in our trials.

Application Questions:

1. What was the significance of the bright light and voice from heaven to the Jewish mind, and to Paul in particular?
2. Compare and contrast the calling of Isaiah, Moses, and Paul (Isaiah 6; Exodus 3:1-12; Acts 22:6-21).
3. Do we testify about our name as Christians that the Lord is gracious? Or do we deny it by the way we treat others?
4. How do we respond to the call of God? Are we running or resisting?
5. What means does God provide to discern and follow His vocational call upon our lives?
6. What was the role of suffering in Paul's experience? What purpose can it have in our vocations?