

# **We Have Permission to Speak**

September 24, 2006

**Acts 26.1-3, 24-29**

*“Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You have permission to speak for yourself.’*

*So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: ‘King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.’” Acts 26.1-3*

*“At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. ‘You are out of your mind, Paul!’ he shouted. ‘Your great learning is driving you insane.’”*

*“I am not insane, most excellent Festus,’ Paul replied. ‘What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.’”*

*Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”*

*Paul replied, “Short time or long –I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.” Acts 26.24-29*

Our text today speaks to us today by directing our attention to one who was far from perfect, but who lived in the confidence of his position in Christ. Perhaps as we look at Paul's appearance before King Agrippa, we will not only come to understand his motivation to see people come to Christ, but we will also catch a vision of who we are in Christ that will give us the same kind of confident assurance which he had.

## **Always be prepared to give an answer.**

*“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer** to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. **It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.**” 1 Peter 3.15-17*

One characteristic which is unmistakable about the apostle Paul is that he was an aggressive soul-winner. Everywhere he went, and to everyone he met, he gave a witness of the grace of God and of their need to come to Christ for salvation. This meeting with Agrippa certainly was no exception.

*“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.” 1 Corinthians 5.20*

## **It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.**

Not everyone is willing to hear the truth. You will witness to people who profess themselves to be open-minded, thoughtful intellectuals, but who are opposed to the truth. They will not admit it. Many times they will seek to evade the truth by refusing to admit it is the truth.

*“At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. ‘You are out of your mind, Paul!’ he shouted. ‘Your great learning is driving you insane.’” Acts 26.24*

## **Reckless Arrogance or Bold Confidence?**

*“Paul replied, ‘Short time or long –I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.’” Acts 26.29*

*“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’” Romans 1.16-17; Habakkuk 2.4*