

A Sermon and A Citizen

Or

All Things to All People

Acts Chapter 22

1 Corinthians 9:19- 23 "For though I be free from all [men], yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all [men], that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake"

Act 21:40 **1) A Sermon for the Mob** vs Acts 21:40 - 22:22

When he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the stairs, motioned to the people with his hand; and when there was a great hush, he spoke to them in the Hebrew dialect, saying,

Act 22:1 "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now {offer} to you."

Act 22:2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he *said,

Jew in Speech

- Paul gives his defense (Greek = "apologia", a reasoned argument, or statement, apologetics)
- Paul spoke in the language of the audience.
 - It gets their attention
 - It removes hindrances to understanding
 - It creates the potential of acceptance to the message

Act 22:3

Jew by Birth

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.

- Paul began this message the same way Stephen did. "Brethren and Fathers, Listen" (Acts 7:2)
 - Isn't interesting the one who caused him to gnash his teeth and commit murder has become his example.
 - i.e. (Do you remember the moment in raising your kids that you hear something you say and realize you have become your parents)
- Paul give his credentials (A Jew, Born elsewhere but raised in Jerusalem, taught by Gamaliel, Taught the Law)
 - It identifies him to them
 - It gives him credibility
 - He names names. Gamaliel was a highly respected rabbi in that day. (Acts 5:34)

Act 22:4 "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons,

Act 22:5 as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.

Jew by Zeal

- Paul relates to the crowd reminding them of his own zeal against the Christians (Persecuted the Christians, Put them to death, Hauled them to prison, Had Letters of Approval)
- "Just as you" in verse 3 show Paul is telling them that they are the same.
- Paul recounts his authority
 - This gives Paul greater understanding than the hearers by being on both sides of an issue.
 - This gives Paul greater influence for he was like them, only greater in zeal.

He has their attention.

Act 22:6

Jew for Jesus

"But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me,

Act 22:7

and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'

- Paul is telling the people that he is one of them. Yet there is one major difference "But it happened"
- WHAT HAPPENED? Paul encountered Jesus! (Same Account as in Acts 9)
- Two questions need to be answered when a man encounters Jesus!

Act 22:8 "And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.'

- The 1st question is "WHO ARE YOU, LORD?"
- Bob Dylan sang "your gonna have to serve somebody. It may be the devil, it may be the Lord but your gonna have to serve somebody"
- Everybody is serving somebody. It might be the devil, it might be yourself, it might be the Lord. But everyone is serving somebody.
- Paul asked Who are you Lord. This person speaking now was previously is unknown by Paul. But now he knows he is the all powerful Lord. But he has never met him before. You see, all along in his zeal for God he was really serving himself.
- Each of us have or will encounter Jesus. Is He the Lord who you are serving? Is He Lord?
- **Luke 16:13** "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

- 2 times Jesus tells Paul that as he persecutes the church he is really persecuting Him. (vs 7+8)
- **John 15:4 + 18** "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither {can} you unless you abide in Me." and later in the same chapter "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before {it hated} you."

Act 22:9 "And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me.

Act 22:10 "And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.'

- The 2nd question is "WHAT SHALL I DO, LORD?"
- This is a truth that is tied to Lordship. If Jesus is Lord (meaning ruler, leader, and authority) He is the One to govern our decisions, directions and duties. This is the appropriate question to ask the LORD.
- Have you asked this question lately?
- Jesus answers as he answers us. He gives him the very next step not the 5 year plan. "Go to Damascus"

Act 22:11 "But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus.

Act 22:12 "A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, {and} well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,

- Paul again assures credibility and identification with the Jews, by speaking of Ananias
 - Devout by standard of Law
 - Well spoken of by the Jews

Act 22:13 came to me, and standing near said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very time I looked up at him.

Ananias Gives Paul not every detail but the big picture of what he has been anointed to do.

Act 22:14 "And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth.

Act 22:15 'For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.

- Ananias gives the big picture. Four things will happen
 - You will know His will.
 - You will see Him
 - You will hear His words
 - You will tell all men

- Isn't this the duty of us all
 - 1)To know His will,
 - 2)To fix our eyes on Jesus,
 - 3)To understand His Word, and
 - 4)To tell others .

Act 22:16 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized. and wash away your sins. calling on His

name.'

Act 22:17 "It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance,

Paul will skip a number of years and Jesus will tell him who he will go speak to. THE GENTILES.

Act 22:18 and I saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.'

Act 22:19 "And I said, 'Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You.

Act 22:20 'And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him.'

- Verse 19 + 20 Paul tries to argue with God. It is cool to see these big guns do the same thing I do.
- But the reality is that whether Paul or you or me, God will win the argument.

Act 22:21 "And He said to me, 'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' "

- Paul tells them that they the Jews will reject Jesus and that he took the message of the Messiah to the Gentiles.
- The mob cannot hear any more after hearing that one word. Salvation to the Gentiles.

Act 22:22 They listened to him up to this statement, and {then} they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!"

- How strong is the reaction over one word of "Salvation for the Gentiles"
- For this thought he should be removed from the earth. He should be killed.
- The offense is that Gentiles can be saved. What people group offends you that they can be saved. The drug addict, the prostitute, the homosexual, the democrat, the republican?
- They don't care that they would "Go to Hell" Does our inactivity say the same thing?
- What a message. Here is the Alter Call - Paul is going to be thrown on the alter.

Act 22:23 **2) A Citizen for the Man** vs 23-30

And as they were crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air,

Act 22:24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.

- The commander (Claudius Lysias - Acts 23:26-27) wanted to know what Paul did to cause this riot.
- So he ordered an interrogation. "EXAMINED BY SCOURGING" The interrogation was of the darker kind. It was not with lawyers present protecting the prisoner's rights. This was a scourging. A better description is a torture with a lash until the desired information is gathered.
- According to Porcian Laws - No Roman citizen could be tortured. The laws were developed from 509 BC and 195 BC because the assumption that a Roman Life was of greater value than all others. The only exception to this was in cases of plots to overthrow the government. Even then exile was a better option rather than inadvertently breaking the Porcian Laws.

Act 22:25 But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?"

Act 22:26 When the centurion heard {this,} he went to the commander and told him, saying, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman."

- As a centurion, who was under the commanders authority, was tying up Paul preparing him for the torture, Paul asks a by the way question.
- Is it lawful to do this to a Roman Citizen and worse yet to a Roman with out a trial?
- Paul becomes all things to all men that he might save some. He becomes just as they are A Roman.

- This gets the centurion's attention, who tells the commander. This gets the commander's attention.

Act 22:27 The commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" And he said, "Yes."

Act 22:28 The commander answered, "I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money." And Paul said, "But I was actually born {a citizen.}"

- The declaration of Roman Citizenship was accepted on face value. There was a death penalty for falsifying documents or lying about Roman Citizenship.
- The commander questions Paul about his citizenship. The commander had bribed his way into being a Roman Citizen. (there was no fee or license to be purchased for Roman Citizenship). Paul declared that he was born a Roman Citizen.
 - Paul's citizenship was authentic and more real than the commanders who manipulated his citizenship.
 - In the commander's mind Paul was of greater value than himself.
 - Not only that, but the commander is now in danger of ultimate punishment for treating a Roman Citizen in this manner.

Act 22:29 Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains.

- Immediately those soldiers let go of Paul. For everyone involved is in danger of death. The one who gave the order and those who carry out the order.

Act 22:30 But on the next day, wishing to know for certain why he had been accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Council to assemble, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

- With this incident that may come back on him, the commander needs to get all the facts. Even if it is to get himself out of hot water.
- The commander orders an assembly of Paul and his accusers.

1 Corinthians 9:19- 23 *"For though I be free from all [men], yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all [men], that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake"*

1 Corinthians 9:27 *"but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified."*

Paul, in his epistles many times writes about how to live. Live by the Spirit not the flesh. We are to put off deed of darkness. Being all things to all people does not mean living the world's lifestyle to be able to tell them about Jesus. It is more about not being aloof or some special person.

It is about being who you are. Being who you are is:

- Not trying to be someone you are not.
- Not trying to hide someone you are.
- Just be yourself.

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