

LIFE GROUP SERMON SUMMARY QUESTIONS

Acts Series

These questions are for the **May 2, 2021** sermon, "A time to appeal." Please read the sermon passage (Acts 25:1-12) together out loud.

Sermon Outline

WHEN THE POLITICAL CLIMATE CHANGES, FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST SHOULD . . .

1. Be alert to any renewed efforts for thwarting the gospel. (1-5)
 - a. Paul has been in jail in Caesarea for 2 years.
 - i. There is now a transition of power, from Felix to Festus.
 - ii. All things (even good and bad politicians) work together for good.
 - iii. In the Christian life, waiting is often the rule, not the exception.
 - b. No plot can overcome God's promise.
 - i. Religious opponents are committed to taking Paul's life.
 - ii. But God has promised that Paul will testify about Jesus in Rome. (23:11)
2. Be able to defend believers against false claims. (6-8)
 - a. Even when things look bleak, Jesus is seated on heaven's throne. He reigns.
 - b. Paul makes his defense: "I have not spoken against the Jews, the temple or Caesar."
 - c. God has a perfect plan which may include false accusations and jail time for believers.
3. Be aware of legal rights needing to be claimed. (9-12)
 - a. Paul, having been born in Tarsus, was born a citizen of Rome.
 - b. Paul would rather be in Nero's court in Rome (where God promised he would go) than in the religious court of Jerusalem, where religious people would surely kill him.
 - i. Christians must be legally savvy, understanding the times and culture.
 - ii. Appealing wisely to the legal system they live under.
 - c. When Nero reigns in Rome, remember that God reigns in heaven.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: So the political world we find ourselves in is set against God. This is no surprise and not grounds for panic or rebellion. Paul took every opportunity to testify about Jesus Christ while he was wrongly imprisoned for 2 years. How much time do you spend complaining about politics, government and perceived injustice against Christians? How much time do you spend gladly testifying about Jesus despite injustices?
2. Based on #1, above: We will not impact politics most by legal challenges and speeches. We will be most fruitful by loving our neighbor and testifying to them about Jesus Christ. Discuss.
3. Based on #2, above: Discuss this: God has a plan which may involve waiting and false accusations and jail times for faithful believers. This is his effective plan. This is his good plan.
4. Based on #3, above: Sometimes the worst hands to be in are the hands of religious people. Paul would rather appeal to Nero and get to Rome to testify there about Jesus. Later we see that Paul's testimony about Jesus spreads like wildfire through the Roman military in Rome. How have bad circumstances put you in contact with a new audience? Are they hearing the gospel from you? Are they hearing it through a joyful and contented heart?