

087 - Testimony in Jerusalem - Acts 21:37-22:23

Call to Worship: Psalm 95:1-3

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-9

Sermon: "Testimony in Jerusalem" Acts 21:37-22:23

Benediction: Isaiah 26:3-4

This account

-demonstrates the Christian's relationship with the people of the world around him

-the Jews

-demonstrates the Reformed Christian's relationship with the people of the unreformed churches

I. Paul gave testimony that as a servant of Jesus Christ, he was not a political insurrectionist, but a gospel preacher (21:37-39)

A. the Lord Jesus Christ does not make us antagonistic toward the civil government, but respectful (37a)

B. not involved in any kind of political rebellion (38a)

C. not a murderer (38b)

D. just a respectable citizen (39a)

E. just wanting to preach to the people (39b)

F. APPLICATION: we find ourselves facing suspicions from the civil authorities along these same lines

1. "home-grown terrorists" or "domestic terrorists"

2. we are not hateful toward those who govern us

3. we are not hatching civil disturbances

4. it is true that we recognize sometimes governments become so corrupt, so fundamentally destructive, that a society has to throw off its government and institute new government

5. but we will not be found among those conspiring to commit murder in petty rebellions

6. we are respectable citizens

7. we just want the authorities to protect our liberties, that we may preach the good news of Jesus Christ

II. Paul gave testimony that as a servant of Jesus Christ, he did not reject or hate his people, but identified with them

A. as shown in his address to them

1. he spoke their language (21:40, 22:2)

2. he addressed them as men, brethren, fathers (22:1a)

3. he explained himself to them (22:1b)

B. as shown in his history with them (22:3)

1. he was born one of them

2. he was brought up among them

- a. in their city
 - b. with their teacher
- 3. he was taught religion according to their tradition
- 4. he was zealous toward God in the same way they were
- C. as shown in his previous persecution of the way of Jesus (22:4-5)
 - 1. binding and imprisoning both men and women
 - 2. traveling to Damascus to do more of the same
- D. APPLICATION: this is our testimony to our fellow Americans
 - 1. in recent years our culture has so shifted that it seems Christians are now often seen as somehow against our countrymen; we are haters
 - 2. actually, we do not hate them, but identify with them
- E. APPLICATION: as Reformed Baptists, this is our testimony to our fellow Baptists, also

III. Paul gave testimony that as a servant of Jesus Christ, his religious convictions had changed not for human reasons, but for divine reasons (22:6ff)

- A. Paul was humbled before God by a light from heaven (22:6)
 - 1. so bright it outshone the noonday sun
 - 2. so bright it blinded Paul
- B. Paul was told by the Word of God that Jesus is Lord (22:7-8)
 - 1. he had thought that he was serving God by persecuting the followers of Jesus of Nazareth
 - 2. but the Word of God came to him, convincing him that Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord
- C. Paul was made obedient to God through the Lord Jesus (10a)
 - 1. he asked the Lord Jesus what he should do
 - 2. the Lord Jesus told him what to do
 - 3. Paul obeyed
 - 4. from then on, that is how things were; Paul obeyed the Lord Jesus
- D. APPLICATION: This is how we would testify to our family and friends, also
 - 1. we now believe firmly in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord
 - 2. this did not come about by just a human choice or preference or interest

IV. Paul gave testimony that as a servant of Jesus Christ, this change of his religious convictions was not against the system of Moses, but in accord with it

- A. Paul's first contact among the followers of Jesus was Ananias (22:12)
 - 1. devout according to the law of Moses
 - 2. having a good reputation among all the Jews of his city
 - 3. given power by God to restore Paul's sight (13)
- B. It was the God of the patriarchs who chose Paul (22:14)
 - 1. to know His will
 - 2. to see the Just One
 - 3. to hear the voice of His mouth

4. to be His witness unto all men of what he had seen and heard
- C. It was the God of the patriarchs who commanded that believers be baptized (16)
1. a believer in Jesus Christ should not wait, but be baptized
 2. in baptism there is a symbol of the washing away of sins in the blood of Jesus Christ
 3. in baptism the name of the Lord is invoked
 4. for Paul to do this was not to leave the God of the patriarchs, but to obey His command; not to profane His great name, but to call on it
- D. APPLICATION: Our religious convictions are not against science or nature, but in accord with them.
- E. APPLICATION: Our religious convictions are not against the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution or the American traditions of freedom, but in accord with them
- F. APPLICATION: Our religious convictions are not against Jews or Israel; they are anti-semitic; we do not disavow the Old Testament scriptures
1. instead what we believe about the Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all that it really means to be a Jew, to be Israel
 2. He is the fulfillment of all that the Old Testament scriptures teach
- G. APPLICATION: Our religious convictions are not against the traditions of Southern Baptists, but in accord with them

- V. Paul gave testimony that as a servant of Jesus Christ, his preaching to the gentiles was not against God, but by His command
- A. The Lord told Paul that the Jews of Jerusalem would not receive his testimony, so he should quickly leave Jerusalem
 - B. Paul confessed to the Lord that he had been the church's chief persecutor
 - C. The Lord told Paul He would send him far away from Jerusalem to the gentiles
 - D. APPLICATION: This led Paul to be on the forefront of the controversy regarding justification through faith alone in Christ alone, not by works such as circumcision
 - E. APPLICATION: Thus, we would testify to the Roman Catholics, to any who advocate certain works for salvation, that we do this not against God's Word, but by it

- VI. Having heard Paul's testimony, the Jewish mob resumed rioting against him (22-23)
- A. they cried out against him
 1. that he should be taken away
 2. that he was not fit to live
 - B. made the show of stoning him
 - C. APPLICATION: Let us expect this! Let our joy and hope be in the Lord and in the life to come!

The accuracy of our Lord's predictions

-anyone who kills you will think he is serving God

Paul's charity toward his persecutors

-see Romans 10:2

God's grace to the chief of sinners

The similarity of our situation