

# Respectful and Bold

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Acts 25 - Acts 26

**Three Key Applications of this narrative:**

## **1. Keep your conscience clear before God and entrust yourself to Him**

“Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense (verse 8).”

“I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well (verse 10).”

- The Apostle Paul could speak this way because he was a man who walked with a clear conscience before God. That doesn't mean he never sinned – of course Paul did sin. He wasn't perfect before the Lord. But he was doing the will of God and these false accusations against him were simply lies, so he could stand with a clear conscience and declare his innocence.
- The Apostle Paul walked with a clear conscience. He walked in the light. He also entrusted himself to the One who judges justly.

"For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. [23] When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly." -- 1 Peter 2:21–23

- The Apostle entrusted his life to God. Paul knew who was in charge, even when circumstances seemed to dictate otherwise.
- Paul was able to entrust Himself to God. And entrusting Himself to God brings peace.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” -- Daniel 3:16–18

- Their consciences were clear.
- They were obeying their Lord.
- They entrusted their very lives to Him who judges justly.

## 2. Recognize that some will call your love for Christ madness

And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.” -- Acts 26:24

- People who don't know the Lord or understand why we would love Him will think we are crazy for believing the gospel and for obeying God's Word.

[18] For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. -- 1 Corinthians 1:18

“To be earnest about wealth or power or science or pleasure or athletic championship is not crazy from the world's standpoint. But to be fervent about spiritual things is called madness.” -- Kent Hughes

- We are in the world but not of the world.

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. -- John 17:14

- Hebrews calls us to live as “strangers and exiles on the earth (Hebrews 11:13).”
- We seek a different city, and as seekers of that home, sometimes people will call us crazy!

## 3. Be respectful and bold in your proclamation

“I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently. -- Acts 26:2–3

But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. -- Acts 26:25

- Paul spoke respectfully, recognizing that God had put Agrippa in his seat. He spoke boldly as well.

“Luther's appearance at the Imperial Diet was described as objective, clever and well thought out. He had to appear before the Emperor twice; each time he was clearly told to take back his teachings. Luther didn't see any proof against his theses or views which would move him to recant” ([www.luther.de](http://www.luther.de))

"Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason - I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other - my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen." -- Martin Luther

## Questions for Discussion/Application:

- Look over the text, Acts 25 - 26 and take time to summarize the narrative as a group. In other words take a few moments to re-tell the story of what is happening here. What initial observations and insights do you have from this story?
- What does it mean to have a clear conscience before God? How can we live our lives with a clear conscience before God?
- When we sin, what is the biblical response? Should someone who is walking in unrepentant sin have a clean conscience before God? Why or why not?
- Jeremy said, "*The Apostle entrusted his life to God. Paul knew who was in charge, even when circumstances seemed to dictate otherwise.*" What does it look like for us practically, to entrust our lives fully to God. What keeps us, at times, from fully entrusting our lives to Him?
- How do we strike the balance of being bold and respectful in our evangelistic witness? In other words, how do we do both? Personally, do you feel your need to grow more in boldness --or in respect when it comes to your evangelistic witness? Explain.
- Consider taking time to pray, asking God that He would help us to live our lives with clear consciences before Him. Let us ask also that God would help us to be both respectful and bold in our witness for Him.