



## Repentance Tabernacle Church

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### Paul on Trial!

**Focus Verses:** Acts 26:28-29 - <sup>28</sup>Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. <sup>29</sup>And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

**Lesson Text:** Acts 24-26

**Truth About God:** God will be with us through our trials.

**Truth For My Life:** I will point others to Christ through every trial.

Paul on trial and his accusers were confused because Paul's mission seemed to be making sure as many Christians as possible ended up facing their own trials for their faith in Jesus (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2). But after Paul was born again, he frequently found himself standing before religious and civic tribunals to give an account for his own faith in Jesus. **The persecutor had become the persecuted.**

Acts 24 opens with a recitation of the charges against Paul by a renowned Jewish lawyer named Tertullus. The violent plot to kill Paul was interrupted by the chief captain Claudis Lysias, who saved Paul's life. In the eyes of Tertullus and his associates, justice had been thwarted. They were urging Felix to right such an egregious wrong. After hearing the charges against him Paul offered his defense. He explained to Felix: *"And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me"* (Acts 24:12-13). Paul readily defended himself against every false accusation, but when it came to his Christian faith, he freely admitted he was guilty as charged. He told believers in Philippi: *"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"* (Philippians 1:21).

Paul's trial before Felix in Acts 24 was just the beginning. Over the final chapters of the Book of Acts, Paul ran a legal gauntlet all the way to Rome, the capital city of the imperial empire. Acts 24-26 outline Paul's defense before three successive secular rulers: Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. Paul transformed each trial into an opportunity to share his testimony of what Jesus had done in his life. These accounts provide previously unknown details of Paul's life and conversion. Paul was not intimidated by any of these rulers, regardless of the power they wielded. He may have remembered the promise God gave Ananias before Paul was even converted: *"He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel"* (Acts 9:15). More importantly they have shown Christians of every succeeding century how to respond when their faith is challenged by the powers of their day.

Jesus told His disciples: *"Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles"* (Matthew 10:18). As followers of Christ, we will sometimes be forced into challenging circumstances and situations for which we feel unprepared. But Jesus offered these words of comfort: *"When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak"* (Matthew 10:19).

We usually do not get to choose the time and place of our testing. However, when opposition arises, we can rest in the fact God has placed His Spirit inside us and He will speak through us. The message we communicate may not even be verbal: our witness may be a quiet, faithful Christian life amid turmoil and chaos. As Christians, our faith is on trial every day. **What testimony does your life offer?**

Even today many still dismiss Christianity as nonsense or worse. But even when we face opposition, we must continue to follow Paul's lead and speak the truth. We may not always convince others with our words. Our witness may seem to fall short at the moment. However, we should not underestimate the influence our godly life has on others long after we have left the room. God will be with us through every trial, but that does not mean every trial will end the way we would like. Sometimes God asks us to trust Him with our uncertain future. Even if we are chained in circumstances beyond our control, let us live in such a way that even our trials point others to Jesus.

We all need perseverance to endure the trials life inevitably throws at all of us. Whatever the trial, God will be with you. Keep persevering, remembering that your faithfulness serves as a testimony to others to point them to Jesus Christ.