

Theme: As neither the Jews nor the Romans had any authority over Jesus, save what the Father had given them –So Paul learns that neither of them have any power over *him* that has not been given by the Father to accomplish His purposes in the proclamation of the Gospel.

Background and Introduction: Paul made it to Jerusalem. Now he is headed to Rome – but not by the path he had planned. Paul sees – his plans going awry. We see - God at work in His plan for Paul to preach to the nations – and kings.

Plans change – God redirects

Examples: Earnest Shackleton – Adonirum Judson

I. Paul’s Passion

A. His Love

1. Proclaim the Gospel!
2. Reach the Jews – his people

- “looking intently” Acts 1:10; 3:4; 7:55; 14:9

B. His “Defense”

1. Not a Rebel

- a. Conscience Bound – “in all good conscience”

- Even when he was wrong.

- Clear conscience can’t justify us Phil.3:9; 1 Cor.4:4

- b. Less than positive Response!

- struck in the mouth!

- Treat him as guilty/condemned

- Like they treated the Lord before him John 18:22,23

- c. Paul reacts!

-Whitewashed wall?

-*Jesus uses even stronger language* - Matthew 23:27

2. Sinful response? Turn the other cheek?

- He is being *punished* without being tried.

- Responds humbly to the *office* of the high priest

3. Change of tactics
 - a. A true statement
 - Gets to the heart of the matter
 - b. A seriously divided body

II. God's Provision

A. His Presence

1. "Stood by him"
 - Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
2. In the crucible of persecution, rejection, danger

B. His Word – *Tharsei* – "Take courage"

- Matthew 9:2; Matthew 9:22; Mark 10:49; John 16:33

C. His affirmation

- Paul's calling? Acts 9:15

D. His Protection

- Gets Paul away from Jerusalem
- Foils the plot of the Jews to kill him

III. Take courage

A. The Lord is with you!

- Stands by his children in the crucible of life
- What comfort do you draw from that knowledge?

B. Live your life with integrity

- Seek to keep a clear conscience. 23:1

C. Submit your plans to God –

- not just when you are making them
- but at every step in pursuing them

D. Don't fear the "powers" that may stand in your way.