Paul and his companions have arrived in Jerusalem. They greet the Elders of the church and receive a warm welcome – it is wonderful to see how the Jewish Jerusalem church rejoices to hear that there has been so much fruit amongst the Gentiles. It’s a very positive meeting, but the reader knows that trials and suffering lie ahead for the Apostle Paul. As soon as he enters the temple the trouble starts. Despite his best efforts to clear all of the lies and misinformation circulating about him it is the false witnesses that prevail.

**Personal Application**

Q Why do you think people like to attend a church where everyone is as much like them as possible?

Q Read v17-20a. Who does Paul meet with in Jerusalem, and why? What response do they give? What does this tell us about their attitude to Gentile converts?

Q Read v20b-25. What are the elders of the church concerned about? What do they propose?

Q Why does Paul go along with their plan (Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23)? How would you sum up Paul’s attitude towards Jewish law regarding diet, circumcision and temple rituals?

Q Read v27-39. Paul is falsely accused and attacked. Why does God allow this kind of thing to happen to his servants?

Q What can we learn from Paul’s example in this chapter? What is he passionate about and willing to suffer for?
Date: 30th October 2022   Passage: Acts 21:40-23:24   Preacher: Andy Bruins

Sermon Summary

We left Paul beaten, on the steps of the Roman barracks, preparing to address the crowd who are baying for his death! Chapters 22 and 23 complete Paul’s brief visit to Jerusalem: He will address the crowds, narrowly escape a Roman flogging, stand trial before the Sanhedrin and sidestep a murder plot all within a couple of days!

Personal Application

Q Why do we get discouraged as Christians?

Q Read Paul’s testimony in 22:1-21. What does he tell them about his background? Why is that important? Why did Paul change? Why did he go to the Gentiles?

Q Read v22-29. What does the crowd object to? Why is this such a big issue for them?

Q Read 22:30-23:10. Why is Paul unable to make any progress with the Sanhedrin?

Q Read 23:12-23. What surprises you about this plot against Paul? How is are all of these goings on in Jerusalem reminiscent of what Jesus went through?

Q Read 23:11. What sustains Paul in the midst of all of these trials? How is this a help and a comfort to you and I?
Sermon Summary

Paul is on trial. He has been moved to Caesarea where the Roman governor will oversee his case, first Felix and then Festus. The Sanhedrin are the first to bring their accusations but they really amount to nothing, and Felix can see that this is the case, but he still holds Paul for a further 2 years under house arrest - seemingly so that he can stay on the right side of the Jews. It is during this period that Paul will get to carry the name of Jesus “before the Gentiles and their kings” (Acts 9:15), starting with Felix and his wife Drusilla.

Personal Application

Q Evangelist Rico Tice talks about how in our personal evangelism we must be willing to cross the “pain barrier”. What do you think he means? Why is this so hard?

Q Read 23:1-21. What is Paul accused of by the Jewish leaders? How does Paul respond to the accusations? What wisdom can we glean from his example?

Q Read v22-27. What do we know about Felix and Drusilla?

Q What specific subjects does Paul speak to them about? How might these have been “risky” topics to speak about? What do you think motivated Paul to raise these topics?

Q How does Felix respond? Why is this actually quite tragic?

Q What can we learn from Paul’s example here?
Sermon Summary

Paul is detained in Caesarea for 2 years, after which Felix is replaced by Festus. The Jewish leaders see this as a new opportunity to get their hands on Paul, but they cannot substantiate any of their accusations in a civil court. Rather than stand trial again in Jerusalem Paul appeals to Caesar.

In chapter 26 Paul is allowed to give an account of himself as part of an effort to gather information to send with him to the imperial court in Rome. Paul has an opportunity to testify to the Gospel before Festus, assisted by Herod Agrippa II, his sister Bernice and all the nobles of Caesarea.

Personal Application

Q What was it that persuaded you to follow Christ?

Q Read 26:1-11. In v6-8, what does Paul say is the real reason that the Jewish leaders want him dead? How was Paul once like them? Why do you think he goes into so much detail about how he persecuted the saints?

Q Read v12-18. What changed Paul? What did this have to do with resurrection (v6)? Why did he go to the Gentiles?

Q Read v19-23. What was Paul's message to both Jews and Gentiles? What does he mean when he says he taught them to “prove their repentance by their deeds” (v20)? How can Paul claim that he is saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen?

Q Read v24-32. How do Festus and Agrippa respond?

Q If even the best evangelist (Paul), speaking to two knowledgeable and educated men still cannot convince them, what then is needed?

Spend some time praying for the salvation of the toughest cases you know.