

1-16-22

Acts 25:13-27; 26

What is something you are certain about?

What is something you are uncertain about?

Certain means, known for sure; established beyond doubt:

I am certain that the sun will come up tomorrow, although we may not see it. I am certain that more and more hair will continue to grow from my ears, nose and back, rather than my head. I am certain that I will eat more Oreos, Baby Ruth's, jelly buns and McDonald's strawberry milkshakes in my lifetime.

I am not certain of when I will die. I am not certain of where I will be in another 5 years. I am not certain if I will ever finish seminary. I am not certain of what the next day holds. As I reflected, I realized, even most of the things I was certain of had a touch of uncertainty to it.

All of us can be certain that we **KNOW** Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

1 John 5:13, These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Acts 16:31, So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Romans 10:9-10, that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

John 3:16, For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

There is no reason that you cannot be certain that you will spend eternity in heaven and that is through Jesus Christ.

Last week we left off in **Acts 25**, and we covered verses **1-12**. Paul was standing before Festus (Roman Governor) and Paul had enough of the crowd pleasing and invoked his Roman birth right, to have his case taken before Caesar.

In **Acts 25:13-27**, Festus has some visitors, King Agrippa II and his sister/wife Bernice. They came to welcome Festus into his new role. After "many days" went by, Festus brought up Paul's case to King Agrippa, referring to him as a "**certain man**." Festus states that the Jews had some accusations but nothing he considered worthy of death. He continued that the Jews seemed really heated about Paul speaking of some "**certain Jesus**" who had died but somehow was still alive and somehow this affected their religion, "**superstition**." It was some type of traditional, religious, whack a do, Jewish thing and being you are their King...help me! I am so uncertain of what to do or write!

Festus was in a bad spot, left to him by Felix. Paul was not guilty of any charges worthy of death. Claudius Lysias stated that in **Acts 23:29**; Festus states it in **Acts 25:18, 25** and King Agrippa confirms it in **Acts 26:30-32**.

So far there are somethings for certain. Paul was being railroaded, treated unfairly and the rulers are a bunch of spineless hacks. Their primary concern was pleasing those who could affect their political career.

But he kept his integrity, he prayed, he relied on the Holy Spirit for answers, and he continues to do what he can for God and trusts Him with the rest.

Acts 26

Help me set the stage: Festus, King Agrippa and his sister/girlfriend, religious leaders, and Paul.

What do you think they were wearing? Room full of unsaved individuals, heathens, murders, incest, and false religious leaders thinking that they have Paul on trial. He wasn't on trial, they are!

Read verses 1-11.

Paul knew somethings for certain, who he was without Jesus in his life.

I. PAUL WAS WRONG IN HIS THINKING AND DOING.

- Paul was raised up to be a Pharisee, his father was a Pharisee. He wasn't just an average Pharisee; he was an overachiever.
- He was zealous, passionate, believing and defending the articles of his faith. The Jewish fathers of the faith believed in a coming messiah, the Pharisee believed in eternity, resurrection, angels and miraculous.
- **Verse 9-11.** He thought he must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus. He did all that he did to defend his faith, although it was the wrong way.
- Have you ever thought, or done something a certain way to only find out later you were wrong?
- As coaches we tell our players if you are going to do something wrong, do it as fast as you can. That's what Paul did. No matter what side of the fence he was on, he was a getter done guy.
- His thinking and doing was wrong, because he thought he had to do something for God, to earn His favor, love, and acceptance.
- He was willing to destroy, pillage and plunder whatever he felt was an enemy of his God.
- Many of us, before we trusted in the free, saving grace of Jesus Christ thought, felt like we should be doing something to earn God's favor. If I give enough, or act a certain way, then I know God will look at my intention of my heart and life and allow me a good after life.
- The road to hell is paved with good intention.
- If we are not careful, we will continue down that same path after salvation. We get so use to responding a acting a certain way, we auto respond, auto pilot, the Holy Spirit isn't in control and guiding us. He is just a passenger in a stolen vehicle duct taped in the back seat as we drive off a cliff.
- To live God's way, we must be purposeful and deliberate. We must be in His word, if not, we will distort and twist the spirit of what His Bible says with our feelings. (Hello Mcfly!)

- Each moment of each day we must capture our thoughts, feelings and run them through God's fact checker. Even when we think everything is gravy.

Romans 12:1-2, I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- As you walk through your day, are your thoughts and actions a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God? Which is your what?
- To be a proper follower, tool, subject, friend, child of God we must be pliable. How can the Word of God penetrate our hearts and change our thoughts and doings if we aren't?

II. PAUL CHANGED DIRECTION.

- You do know it is ok to change direction, right?

Romans 12:2, Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- The only way that we can gain wisdom into the will of God is to allow God to renew our mind. So many times, we struggle with, what is the will of God? We cannot discern His will until He (God) is in control of you.
- Because I am not the sharpest knife in the drawer, I need God's Word broken down as simple as possible. Look how the ERV translates **Romans 12:1-2**.

Romans 12:1-2, So I beg you, brothers and sisters, because of the great mercy God has shown us, offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him—an offering that is only for God and pleasing to him. Considering what he has done, it is only right that you should worship him in this way. 2 Don't change yourselves to be like the people of this world, but let God change you inside with a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to understand and accept what God wants for you. You will be able to know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect. ESV

- **Read Acts 26:12-18.**
- What was Paul's new direction? It is found in **verses 16**.
- To be a minister, a witness of things which he has seen and things that Jesus will reveal to him.
- What was God's will, purpose for Paul with this new direction? It is found in verse 18.
- **"To open their eyes"**, remember what it felt like to open your eyes this morning? How about this week when you get up to do life? Ugh!!! My alarm went off this morning at 5a.m. My eyes hurt to open; I didn't want to open them. Then I walked to the bathroom and like always turned on the brighter of the two light sources we have. Ouch! I instantly shut them and turned on the one that wasn't so bright. I peeled one eye open and looked at myself and thought, bro you are getting so old, and rough to look at.
- When the gospel is presented and our eyes are opened to the truth that we are sinners in need of a savior, it can be a tough pill to swallow, and we often want to turn the light off and close our eyes.

- **“In order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God,”** Once our eyes are open, we can then turn, (change direction) from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. Another way of putting it, is submitting. Eyes are opened, clean out the sleep and continue in the light that now illuminates the path ahead.
- **“That they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me,”** Do you want to want to receive forgiveness from your sins? Do you want an inheritance?
- Then you must be sanctified (set apart) by placing your faith, **“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1) “And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” (Heb.11:6)**
- **Read Acts 26:19-21.**
- **“To repent”** means to change the mind, not in a superficial way but a deep change that affects one’s fundamental attitudes. Christians once loved darkness, now they love the light of the gospel, in the light of Christ. They once loved the world and the things in the world, now their love is given to the Lord and to His people as they reach out in love to the lost. They were careless about sin before, but now they realize that all sin is against God and they see first His kingdom (rule) and His righteousness.
- When we repent, genuine repentance, we will show works, deeds worthy of repentance. The Greek verb here also indicates this must be ongoing. Believers must keep on doing works or deeds worthy of the changed minds, attitudes, and actions they profess.
- **Read verses 22-23.**
- Paul’s works befitting repentance were on full display. No longer was he persecuting the church, now he was being persecuted for it. There was no question about it, Paul changed direction!
- He went from beating and killing to witnessing to everyone. Proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ. Christ would suffer, He would be first to rise from the dead and would proclaim light to all people.

Conclusion

There aren’t many things for certain but having a personal relationship with Christ can be one of them.

Festus was searching for something to write Caesar about Paul and why Paul was even in custody. (Acts 25:26) What is it you are searching for?

Paul was wrong in his thinking and doing. What is wrong in your thinking and doing?

Paul changed direction. He repented and the rest of his life was littered with proof of his salvation. We are still tripping all over the evidence of his transformed life. Is there proof of God’s salvation in your life?

I am not talking about work salvation. I will work to prove that I am saved. I am talking about a salvation that produces fruits of work. (evidence)

Let’s settle it today!

