



SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week of August 9, 2026

Acts 25:1-12

Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. 2 And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him, 3 asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way. 4 Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly. 5 “So,” said he, “let the men of authority among you go down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them bring charges against him.” 6 After he stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. 7 When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove. 8 Paul argued in his defense, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense.” 9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?” 10 But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. 11 If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.” 12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.”

1. As Christians, we think we understand Romans 8:28 - *that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose*. But when we go through confusing bouts of suffering, we wish we could change God’s plans for our lives. What do you think would happen if we had the ability to change our bad circumstances according to what we desired?
2. The Jews hated Paul with an irrational hatred. In John 15, Jesus foretold that the world would hate His followers on account of His name. Jesus the Prince of peace, loved the world enough to die for it, welcomed the outcasts, embraced the lepers, healed the sick, and gave sight to the blind. Why then, does the world hate Him so much, and by extension His followers as well?
3. When we encounter opposition or experience suffering and trials when following Christ, why might a believer pivot and change directions? Would you? Why or why not?
4. By the time the apostle Paul stood calm and poised before Governor Festus, he had already suffered tremendously in his service to the Lord. Imprisonments, beatings, stonings, shipwrecks, assassination attempts, and the list goes on. How do you think Paul’s suffering enabled him to live with such confidence, peace and assurance? How can believers today grow to be more like Paul?
5. Paul understood the sovereignty of God and His complete control over Paul’s circumstances, including his suffering. Yet, Paul never resigned himself to just “let go and let God”. Rather he was always proactive to make the most of his intellect, rights, opportunities, and voice to proclaim the Gospel. Why should knowing God’s in complete control motivate the Christian to action rather than complacency?
6. Pastor Stephen Cole said, *“Often the greatest opportunities for ministry that God gives us come disguised as frustrating or confusing circumstances where we seem to be making no progress at all.”* What should this teach us about the frustrating or confusing circumstances we face each day? Is this true even if you’re not in full time ministry? Explain.