

## **How to Handle Unjust Accusations (as a Christian)**

### **Acts 25**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Have you ever been unjustly accused by someone else? Someone accused you of doing something you didn't do, or misjudged your heart or motives?
2. This is exactly what happened to the apostle Paul here in our text. Paul had been unjustly arrested and jailed. He had stood trial once already. But for a potential bribe and for political gain, the governor – Felix – kept Paul in prison.
3. We read that there was a new governor by the name of Festus (24:27). Festus traveled to Jerusalem where the Jews immediately informed him about Paul, and asked him to send Paul to Jerusalem. Their purpose was to kill Paul. vs. 1-3
4. Festus refused, and so ten days later Paul stood in the courtroom of Festus. vs. 4-6
5. Paul's enemies proceeded to blast him, lying about him and accusing him. vs. 5, 7
6. If you have ever been unjustly accused, you know what a difficult thing this is. Maybe you are going through some of this right now. Accusations can come at us from coworkers, family members, friends, unsaved people, and yes – fellow Christians.
7. Can a righteous person that loves God encounter unjust accusations? Notice verse 7. *"...laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove."*
8. This is a reminder that living a godly life does not exempt you from being accused of much evil. Some of the godliest men that ever walked the earth have been accused of much evil. **Illustrations:** Joseph (Genesis 39:10-20), Daniel (Daniel 6)
  - Nobody encountered more unjust accusations than our Savior, Jesus Christ. Luke 23:1-2, 10; Mark 15:3-5
9. Some people have the attitude, "Where's there's smoke, there's fire." It wasn't true of Joseph, or Daniel, or Paul, and certainly not true of Jesus. This is an ungodly attitude.
  - What a shame that we are many times prone to believe an accusation about someone else without ever checking out the facts or talking to the accused.
  - This reveals the wickedness of our own hearts. Where there is smoke there is not always fire – sometimes it's just a liar! If you have ever been the subject of lies and unjust accusations, you know how difficult it can be.
10. Why does this occur in our lives? What is the right way to handle it? Of course, the Bible has the answer to these questions.

#### **First, why do righteous people encounter unjust accusations?**

- People don't hurl accusations for no reason at all. There are underlying issues at work in their heart. As we have studied the life of Paul, we can clearly see some reasons.

1. Envy – Acts 13:45, 17:5; cf. Matthew 27:18
  - Envy is a feeling of resentment toward others because of their possessions, position, or good qualities. People envy them, so they fabricate something about them to make them look bad.
  - Christian, beware of envy. It is a work of the flesh. Galatians 5:21
  - An envious heart leads to an evil tongue. 1 Peter 2:1
2. Anger and hatred – Acts 23:12-14
  - Envy turns to hatred if not repented of. Titus 3:3
  - When we allow anger and hatred to overtake our body, many times we say things about people that simply are not true.
  - The Pharisees envied Christ, which, in turn, caused them to be filled with anger and hatred against Him. This, in turn, led them to say untrue things about Christ.
3. Bitterness – Acts 21:27
  - These Jews from Asia are the ones that were so angry with Paul at Ephesus for hurting their idol business.
  - Now, several years later, their anger is stronger than ever. They had become very bitter at Paul and had a personal vendetta against him.
  - Bitterness is also associated with evil speaking. Ephesians 4:31

### **What is the right way to respond to unjust accusations?**

1. Search your heart and honestly evaluate whether any part of the accusation could be true.
  - When Paul was accused in chapter 24, he denied many of their accusations. But notice verse 14. Of course, this wasn't an issue of sin. But in their minds, it was.
  - If the accusation is true, admit it and confess it. If you have been wrong, become a better person because of it. Proverbs 28:13
2. When confronted with unjust accusations, simply tell the truth. Acts 25:8; cf. 24:10-13
  - There is no need to run from the situation, or hide from your accusers, or dodge them. Look them straight in the eye (like Paul) and tell the truth.
  - The Bible says to “...*put away lying and speak every man truth with his neighbor.*” Ephesians 4:25
3. Do not allow yourself to get bitter. 2 Timothy 4:16
  - Bitterness is a spiritual cancer. I would rather have people be angry with me than for me to be angry with them. Life is too short to spend precious hours fretting about a past wrong.
4. Resist the temptation to seek revenge. Romans 12:19-21
  - If necessary and appropriate, use the court system to protect yourself. Acts 25:9-12
  - Paul knew that to go back to Jerusalem and the religious kangaroo court of the Sanhedrin meant death.
  - Paul wisely exercised his right as a Roman citizen and appealed to Caesar.

5. Ultimately, you must leave it with God and allow Him to fill you with peace.  
Philippians 4:6-7
- The truth is, you ultimately have no control over unjust accusations.
  - God will be the final judge and will vindicate you in His time. The verdict of eternity stands above the verdict of history.