# The Book of Acts Lesson 43

# Acts 25:1-12

# “A Life Above Reproach”

Introduction: Although surrounded by critics, you can live a blameless life…You can remain STEADFAST!

We live in a world full of critics. (There seems to always be somebody around to tell us whether they think what we are doing is right or wrong.)

1. Sports Critics 2. Movie Critics 3. Church Critics

4. Food Critics 5. Preacher Critics

As Christians our GOAL is to: Live a life pleasing to God, no matter what others think, say or do. It was Bob Jones who is credited with the saying “Do right if the stars fall. Do right till the last call. Do right when there’s no one else to stand by you. Do right when your all alone. Do right though its never known. Do right since you love the Lord. Do right. Do right!”

The Bible tells us that these influential men surrounded Paul and brought many grievous complaints against him.

As chapter 24 of Acts closes, we find Paul in a state of limbo. He has not been found guilty, yet he has not been set free, even though two years have passed. This could have been a frustrating time for him, yet the text indicates he had meetings often with Felix, which he surely took as an opportunity to preach Christ, although this was not Felix's motive.

Now, the story moves back to Jerusalem, where a new governor, Festus, has replaced Felix.

How did Paul find the strength to stand against such aggressive accusations from such critics? Paul lived an expectant and established life.

Paul’s life gives us two characteristics that will enable you to live a blameless life although surrounded by critics.

I. YOU MUST LIVE AN EXPECTANT LIFE.

 A. Paul Expected Opposition (v. 2 from 23:15) 2 Tim. 3:12

 1. From people who don’t understand God’s Word.

 2. From people who feel threatened by his presence. They don’t like your good influence.

 3. From people who weren’t going the same direction as he.

 4. From people who are having problems in their life

 B. Paul Expected Corruption (v. 3 high priests breaking no. 9) 2 Tim. 3:13

1. The word informed is from the Greek word emfanizw, which means "to indicate, disclose, declare, make known."

2. One can't help but think of children just waiting to get the other child in trouble with the teacher, because they don't like him.

 a. This seems to be the attitude of the Jews.

 b. They wanted to make Paul look like a bad, wicked, lawbreaker, so the governor would side with them.

 3. They tried to arrange another opportunity to kill Paul.

 a. His continued presence in Caesarea was a thorn in their sides.

 b. Their hatred of Paul blinded them to any possible consequences of their plan.

 4. Festus did not give them their request to bring Paul to Jerusalem. (Prov. 21:1)

 a. The Lord intervened by working in the governor's heart.

b. The governor gave them the alternative of going to Caesarea to make their case there against Paul.

 C. Paul Expected Criticism (v. 7 They surrounded Paul with complaints) 2 Tim. 3:8

 “For every action, there is an equal and opposite criticism.”

 1. They surrounded Paul

 a. This “religious” group of angry men was completely controlled by their rage against Paul.

 b. It seems Paul was alone in the judgment hall.

 c. Yet, he firmly stood his ground, relying on God.

 2. They slandered Paul

 a. Expect it from those doing nothing.

 b. Expect it from those doing things differently.

 D. Paul Expected Temptations (v. 9 effort to get him out of there)

 1. Paul now had to make a decision.

 a. Remember that Festus was a new governor.

 b. It was obvious that he was more concerned, with making a good impression than finding justice.

 2. Paul had the right to request a hearing before Caesar because he was born a free Roman citizen.

 a. Once Paul had appealed to Caesar, he could no longer be in any other court.

 b. The Jews had lost their opportunity to kill Paul.

 3. God's plan for him to go to Rome and preach the Gospel was now one step closer to becoming a reality.

 E. Paul Expected Protection (v. 4-5) 2 Tim. 3:11

II. YOU MUST LIVE AN ESTABLISHED LIFE.

 A. Established Credit (7-8) 2 Tim. 3:10

 1. Establish credibility by being faithful to church.

 2. Establish credibility by choosing credible friends.

 3. Establish credibility by Keeping your word

 4. Establish credibility by Refusing to compromise.

 5. Establish credibility by arriving to work on time and working hard.

 6. Establish credibility by Not taking short cuts.

 7. Establish credibility by Doing things for others.

 8. Establish credibility by Always telling the truth.

 B. Established Conviction (about where to stand, v. 10)

 1. Paul knew that God was working to complete His plan.

 2. Philippians 1:6 – “He which hath begun a good work…”

 C. Established Course (10-12)

Conclusion: You are going to face critics in your life. Some of you may be letting critics keep you from trusting Christ. Some of you may not be doing what God wants you to do because of critics in your Christian life.

 God wants you to live a blameless life despite your critics. You can expect opposition. You can expect corruption. You can expect criticism. You can expect temptation that would get you off the path. But praise God you can expect God’s protection!

 God wants you to live an established life. He wants to establish your credibility. He wants to establish your convictions. He wants to establish your course. Once he has, why let anyone steer you off course. It doesn’t matter how influential, wealthy, popular, beautiful or handsome they may be, there is a path of holiness that God wants you to walk down. Are you walking in that blameless pathway, one that is above reproach? Yes, you are surrounded by critics, but God is with you.

If you are a Christian, you can expect folks to criticize, but you ought to live so nobody will believe them.

 A Builder Or a Wrecker

 As I watched them tear a building down

 A gang of men in a busy town

 With a ho-heave-ho, and a lusty yell

 They swung a beam and the side wall fell

 I asked the foreman, “Are these men skilled,

 And the men you’d hire if you wanted to build?”

 He gave a laugh and said, “No, indeed,

 Just common labor is all I need.”

 “I can easily wreck in a day or two,

 What builders have taken years to do.”

 And I thought to myself, as I went my way

 Which of these roles have I tried to play?

 Am I a builder who works with care,

 Measuring life by rule and square?

 Am I shaping my work to a well-made plan

 Patiently doing the best I can?

 Or am I a wrecker who walks to town

 Content with the labor of tearing down?

 “O Lord let my life and my labors be

 That which will build for eternity!”

 Author Unknown