

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study

“GOD’S WISDOM IN A VOLATILE WORLD”

For individual study or discussion

In 1747, the great theologian and pastor Jonathan Edwards preached the funeral service for the 29 year old missionary David Brainerd. The story of his brief life along with his personal journal, edited by Edwards, would later greatly inspire missionaries like William Carey and Jim Elliot. At the service, Edwards prayed the following prayer, highlighting the ways in which the example of Brainerd’s life could “stir up” other believers to greater devotion to Christ and his Kingdom.

“Oh, that the things which were seen and heard in this extraordinary person—his holiness, heavenliness, labor, and self-denial in life; his so remarkably devoting himself and his all, in heart and practice, to the glory of God; and the wonderful frame of mind manifested in so steadfast a manner, under the expectation of death, and under the pains and agonies which brought it on—may excite in us all, both ministers and people, a due sense of the greatness of the work which we have to do in the world, of the excellency and amiableness of thorough religion in experience and practice, of the blessedness of the end of those whose death finishes such a life, and of the infinite value of their eternal reward . . . and effectually stir us up to constant endeavors that, in the way of such a holy life, we may at last come to as blessed an end.”

A similar prayer could surely have been prayed at the end of Paul’s life.

- 1) Luke, however, did not, of course, write the book of Acts with the purpose of telling his audience to “dare to be a Paul.” We are followers of Jesus, not the apostle Paul. But Paul’s story here can help us consider how we should live out each day, remembering Paul’s admonition in Ephesians to be careful how we live, “not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” (Eph. 5:15-16)
 - What considerations did Paul probably make when he decided to tell the commander that he was a Roman citizen? Or to put it another way, how would you describe Paul’s worldview (encompassing his beliefs about God, people—Jews and Gentiles—and the expansion of God’s Kingdom) as he faced the angry crowd and the possibility of a flogging?
 - When is it right to assert one’s rights? Is there a time when it would be better to suffer an injustice? If yes, why and when? (See Col. 3:17; Luke 1:38, 50-55; and 2 Cor. 11:23-28.)
- 2) In his commentary on this passage, James Montgomery Boice posed the question, “What is the role of the state?” Worth considering along with that question is “How are states used by God to accomplish his purposes?” (See Dan. 2:21)
 - Does this passage give any guidance to the oppressed? (In his book, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, Howard Thurman notes that “the masses of men live with their backs constantly against the wall.” “What,” Thurman asks, “does our religion have to say to them?”)



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

DATE: January 10, 2021

SPEAKER: Joe/Chad

SERIES: Acts

PASSAGE: Acts 22:22-29

Family Dinner Table

Every single day we make choices. Sometimes the choices are simple to make. Should we wear the white shirt or the blue one? That’s easy. Which one is better looking or more comfortable? Which one is cleaner?

Other choices are much more difficult. Generally, the older you get, the more often you are faced with needing to make a decision when the best option isn’t so obvious. What kind of work should you pursue once you’re an adult? Should you live in this city or that one?

Even in smaller decisions, the best choice can be difficult to figure out. Should I let my friend know something that might really upset her at first but ultimately help her?

Paul’s decision to let the commander know that he was a Roman citizen is exactly the opposite of what he did when he was in Philippi. (See Acts 16:22-39) There he allowed himself to be beaten and only later revealed the fact of his Roman citizenship. How did he decide when to speak up and when to remain silent? He depended on God for wisdom! So here’s a question to think about: how can we become more wise with every year of life? As you think about this, it might be helpful to look up these verses: James 1:5, Ephesians 5:15-17, Proverbs 1:7, and Proverbs 19:20.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

National Memorial for the Unborn

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Christ Church Glasgow

¹Thurman, p. 3, quoted in Esau McCaulley, *Reading While Black* (2020), p. 80.