

INTRO

- What is the longest trip you have ever been on?

READ

Acts 22:30-23:10

After his public speech, Paul needs to be rescued again by the soldiers from the angry crowd. Now the Roman authorities want him to be interrogated by the religious leaders of his time, to find out if he did anything wrong.

The encounter between Paul and the Jewish leaders is not so much about Paul, as it is about the wrong commitments of the religious elite of his time. From the outside they seemed to care much about holiness, justice, and truth. But in reality, they only pursued corrupted versions of them.

REFLECT

1. The wrong kind of holiness

The very religious leaders were very strict about the holiness laws in the Scriptures. But they pursued them in a way that promoted oppression and injustice, rather than being a blessing for them and the world.

Jesus shows us that holiness is for the sake of humankind, and is meant to draw people closer to God. We must pursue in response to him who called us (1 Peter 1:15), and not to make ourselves superior to others.

Qu: What happens when we try to be holy to save ourselves? How can we pursue holiness for the sake of others?

2. The wrong kind of justice

Those leaders also pursued justice with the use of force, which inevitably turned into violence.

This is typical of when we try to do God's will through human strength. When we seek power we easily fall into trying to achieve things by force.

This is also not the way of Jesus. He preached about how the powerless in the world are the ones truly blessed, and how in the Kingdom of God greatness is measured by service and sacrifice, and not by power and authority. He gave the supreme example by achieving our salvation through his own suffering and death (Matthew 20:25-28).

Qu: Are you tempted by power in human terms? How can you make yourself available to God for Him to work through you in your current position?

3. The wrong kind of truth

Finally, the leaders forgot the entire issue of holiness and justice when a theological discussion broke out around Paul. They were even more concerned about being right and imposing their view on others.

Jesus, in contrast, taught us that he is the truth, the way, and the life (John 14:6). We can't compromise the truth, but the truth is Jesus, and only in him can we find life because he is the only way to God, who made us for Himself.

Qu: How are we presenting Jesus to the people around us? Do we live like what Jesus said it's true? How can we bless others with this truth?

RESPOND & PRAY

- What encouraged/challenged you the most from this discussion?
- Spend time praying for one another and those you know who need to hear the good news of salvation.