

February 17/18, 2007

Study Questions
The Unstoppable Church
Strong, Shrewd, Submissive
Acts 25:1-22
Pastor Bryan Clark

Opening Discussion

1. Is humility weakness? Why or why not?
2. Does being a good Christian mean we just roll over and give in when conflict arises?

As Christians, does humility mean we let ourselves be pushed around or taken advantage of?
3. What do you think of when you think of being shrewd or astute?

What does that mean in the environments you find yourself in at work, school, etc.?
4. Is it possible to be both strong and submissive?

Bible Study

1. Read Matthew 10:16-20. What are Jesus' instructions to His followers right before He tells them they will stand before kings, governors and courts for His sake?

What does it mean to "be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves"?
2. Read Acts 25:1-12. In what ways does Paul model Jesus' words?
3. Paul was submissive before the courts and respectful of those in authority. However, he was also very aware of the Roman legal system and what his rights were. What do we learn from Paul's behavior before the courts?
4. Read Acts 25:13-22. We may tend to think that Paul's shrewd behavior should have gotten him released. Wouldn't that be the point? However, his ability to navigate his way through the Roman legal system didn't gain him release. It gained him an audience with the King and eventually Caesar himself. The success or failure of Paul's actions in these courtrooms depends on what we understand Paul's mission to be. How does this help us redefine success or failure through the challenges and conflicts in our world?
5. Compare Paul's words in Philippians 1:12-20. How does understanding our mission affect our perspective in the midst of difficult circumstances?

6. Paul's strength came from his understanding of his calling (Acts 19:21; 20:22-24; 23:11). Paul's responses and clever working of the Roman legal system were not primarily to gain freedom but to complete his mission to get to Rome and proclaim the Gospel to Caesar. In what ways does having a clear sense of our calling help us respond rightly in the midst of difficult circumstances?
7. Practically speaking, how can we be strong, shrewd and yet submissive in the culture in which we live?

Perhaps some group members have current situations they are facing that might serve as case studies to process this question. At the end of the day, how can these situations, hard as they may be, be used by God to accomplish the mission?

Application

1. What is the mission and what is your specific calling? If you don't know perhaps some of the group members could help you process this question to clarify either or both.
2. What is necessary for you to be strong, shrewd and submissive in your current situation?

What resources might help you grow in these areas?

3. What can you do to continually remind yourself that the purpose of life is not comfort and convenience but accomplishing the mission and fulfilling your calling?