

University Heights Church  
of Christ  
445 Columbia Ave.,  
Lexington, KY 40508  
(859) 255-6257  
www.uheightschurch.com

**WORSHIP SERVICES**

**Sunday**

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is  
immediately followed by a  
short worship period)

**First Friday of Each Month**

Singing: 7:30 PM

**LEADERSHIP**

**Elders**

David Collins  
John Thompson  
Troy Antle

**Evangelist**

Adam Litmer

**Deacons**

Richard Brundige  
Matt Thompson  
Adam Litmer  
Bill Morelan  
Jim Parsons  
Pat Seabolt  
Adam Daniels  
Jamie Powell

**IN NEED OF PRAYERS**

Bill Osborne, Jim Parsons, Rachel  
Thompson, John Thompson,  
Larry Billator, Karen Spivey, Sandra  
Russell, Jeff Howerton (also his  
aunt), Janet Brundige, Rhonda Boyd  
(and her sister, Dorothy), Paul  
Atkisson, Julia-Ann Dixon, Ed Allison,  
Dwight Antle, Keia Burton, Robert  
Brundige, Valerie and Barry Boyd,  
Janett's mother, Sandy Driver, Erlene  
Young, Larry Sells, Evelyn Damron,  
Jean Gartland, John Blessing, William  
Roberts, Paul Lyda, Pete Soro, Mattie  
Johnson, Elijah Epling, Sandra  
Queen, Linda Moore, Sheila Johnson,  
Virginia Gordon, Glenn Lake, Annie  
Allen

# University Heights Messenger

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## **Become Such As I Am**

Adam Litmer

Acts 26 describes a striking scene. A king, queen, governor, military tribunes, and many of the great men of the city of Caesarea stood before a man in chains. That man's name was Paul. He gave his own defense for none were present to speak on his behalf. When given permission to begin I doubt anyone expected to hear what they heard. If he was ashamed of his predicament he did not show it. If he was awed by the people before him it was not evident. If they were expecting groveling and pleas for mercy they were disappointed. What they heard was gospel preaching, plain and simple.

Due to Paul's words and manner governor Festus interrupted with an accusation. *Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.* Paul was not acting like a prisoner. He was addressing these lofty officials with uncanny boldness. No embarrassment or hesitation colored his words. His manner was respectful, yet without the wheedling flattery such people were accustomed to. What's more, Paul was speaking of things carnal people simply cannot understand (1 Corinthians 2:13-16). To Festus his words sounded insane. Perhaps he thought that his rude outburst would rattle the chained apostle and cause him to "remember his place." Instead, Paul addressed him respectfully, yet

with boldness intact. *I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words.*

Next, even more stunningly to those listening to him, Paul turned to the most powerful man in the room and addressed him directly. *For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.* This was an invitation for Agrippa to become a Christian. That's what this entire scene was about. Agrippa had wanted to hear Paul's case out of curiosity (Acts 25:21-22). Remember that Paul had appealed to Caesar and to Caesar he had the right to go (Acts 25:12). Agrippa had no right to prevent this so he simply wanted to hear a case he found interesting. The result was that several of the highest dignitaries in the land heard the gospel preached.

Agrippa himself was taken aback and exclaimed, *In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?* It is difficult to determine whether Agrippa was sincere or mocking. Was he claiming that Paul nearly convinced him to become a Christian? Was he mocking Paul for the effort? Could the truth be somewhere in between? Regardless, there was nothing ambiguous in Paul's response to him. *Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.* Paul wanted every person in that room to become what he was, only unchained.

Yet what *was* Paul? He was a Christian, a saint washed and cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:7). He understood the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:8) and thus could gaze upon the pomp and pageantry in that room, the expensive clothes and signs of great wealth, the fancy titles and honorifics, and count them all as rubbish (Philippians 3:8). What did

any of it mean in the final analysis? Paul only had eyes for the souls of the people because he knew all men stand on equal ground at the foot of the cross. Whether king or servant, they all needed Christ equally.

To ask how Paul could have spoken as he did before such people is to ask the wrong question from the wrong perspective. The right question is how could he have spoken differently believing as he did (2 Corinthians 4:13)? Recall Peter's words and heed them. *If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you...If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name* (1 Peter 4:14, 16).

In the days to come Christians will be called before officials to answer for their faith more than has previously occurred in this country. As our nation moves further into the "post-Christian" era, Christians will be put on "trial" before friends, family, classmates, and coworkers to explain their actions and beliefs. Let us use those times as Paul used them. His primary concern was not to appease the crowd so all the attention would turn from him, but to move all that attention to Jesus Christ by explaining the reason for the hope that was in him (1 Peter 3:14-15).

Be prepared for what's coming, brethren. Yet see in it the extraordinary opportunities to spread Christ's gospel among those who have never heard it. Let them see a Christian unrattled by false accusation and mocking. Let them see what a room full of powerful officials saw in Paul all those years ago.



