

# PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

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## “IF YOU SEE WE’RE DOING SOMETHING WRONG...”

*“And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God’s high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees’ part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God. And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle. And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy. And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him” (Ax. 23:1-15).*

From this text several points of truth may be gleaned. For instance:

- A good conscience is not proof one is pleasing to God (vs. 1).
- Some people get really angry with faithful preachers (vs. 2).
- Hypocrisy and religion, sadly, often are close companions (vs. 1-5).
- Not all people believe in the resurrection of the dead (vs. 6-8).
- One cannot fight against God and prevail (vs. 9).
- The faithful need to “keep their chins up” during trials (vs. 10-11).
- Sometimes people can really get motivated and focused about a really bad idea (vs. 12-13).
- People often try to recruit others into their sinful agendas (vs. 14-15).

The above gleanings aside, we shall, for the rest of this article, make additional application concerning vs. 15 of noted text. Again, it reads: “Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.” Here’s a paraphrase of the proposal of those would-be murderers: “Say you would like to gain a more accurate understanding of some things, and when Paul comes to inform you of such, those of us who have our minds made-up against Jesus will kill him.”

Now folks, doesn’t a very similar situation happen still today? Certainly. How so? Here’s how: most of us have likely been in a congregational setting wherein someone announces, “If you see something that we’re doing wrong, please let us know...” right? Sure we have. Well, moving past the fact that nobody should be doing something which they are not sure is right (Nmb. 9:6-8; Col. 3:17), so often those “church of Christ’s” who make such statements really do not want their error brought to light. Truly, when one cares enough about the erring (Eze. 3:18) to take them up on their announced offer it usually does not go too well. For instance, someone points out to the elders of a group that there’s no authority for a make-up Lord’s Supper, what happens? More often than not, those who *said* they wanted to know if they were doing something wrong “kill” the messenger.

Yes, today it’s true many congregational leaders affirm their desire to be corrected if shortcomings exist. However, it’s equally true that many of those same people, who love status quo more than Jesus, really have no genuine desire to learn anything. Sad.