

Acts 25:23 to 26:11
Feilding Baptist
12th October 2026

Call to Worship

Welcome to worship with Feilding Baptist Church!

I read this verse this week, it took my breath away!

1 Corinthians 8:1 (NLT)

Now regarding your question about food that has been offered to idols. Yes, we know that “we all have knowledge” about this issue. But while knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that strengthens the church.

The issue for us might not be food offered to idols! But it could be something else. Our knowledge of these issues might make us feel important, but what is really important is love for each other. And yes, it is agape love, that selfless not selfish love. God first love. It is the same love that God has for us.

Father, thank you that you don’t have favourites, but that you love each of us. Thank you that you care about each one of us. Holy Spirit, please help us to love like Jesus, to not have favourites, but to have genuine care for each other.

Holy Spirit, please help us as we worship, to be grateful for Jesus, to be grateful for Your presence, to be thankful for the hope that we have. Please bless this time and this space I pray, in Jesus’ mighty name. Amen.

Message - Losing Sight

In light of Jesus, where will our beliefs and passions lie?

In the lead up to the Election we’ve got political polls on an almost daily basis. And the leaders’ debates have started. This week the leaders of the National and Labour parties faced off in front of Jack Tame on TV1. One of the questions Jack asked was ‘When did you last change your mind about something that mattered?’ One leader could think of a time, the other couldn’t. What about us? Can you think of a time when you changed your mind about something that mattered?

In today’s verses Paul tells of his change of mind. Next week we’ll hear about when that happened. This week we just see, in verses five and six, the massive turnaround in Paul’s direction in life. He has a change of direction in both his passion and belief. He now sees clearly. Which is what Paul Jones was saying last week in his message from 2 Kings 6; what do you see? Paul certainly lost sight, he admits that he was doing what he thought was right. Living and working by human conditions. But now he is seeing very clearly. He’s seeing God, and following God’s ways.

Let’s read;

Acts 25:23-26:11 (NIV - UK)

Paul before Agrippa

23 The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high-ranking military officers and the prominent men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was

brought in. 24 Festus said: 'King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. 25 I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome. 26 But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. 27 For I think it is unreasonable to send a prisoner on to Rome without specifying the charges against him.'

1 Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You have permission to speak for yourself.'

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defence: 2 'King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defence against all the accusations of the Jews, 3 and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

4 'The Jewish people all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. 5 They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion, living as a Pharisee. 6 And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. 7 This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. King Agrippa, it is because of this hope that these Jews are accusing me. 8 Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

9 'I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord's people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

v23-26 Cultural Understanding

This week I was asked if King Agrippa was a Jewish king? No I said, he was Roman. Was I right? King Agrippa was educated in Rome, and was appointed by Rome, but he was Jewish. It's hard to find a parallel. Perhaps the Waitangi Tribunal, they're appointed by the Government, they make some recommendations, but don't have the final say? When King Agrippa was first appointed he was too young to oversee all the provinces his father had, so he was given just one. But by the time of Paul, he was being entrusted with the other provinces. Trusted by the Romans. One of the jobs King Agrippa had was appointing the High Priest. So he needed a bit of religious knowledge. That's not to say there wasn't some manipulation to get the person who would most serve his and the Roman's needs.

So for Festus to bring Paul's case before Agrippa wasn't silly, for Agrippa indeed did have a good cultural understanding of the Jews, for Agrippa was Jewish. If the Romans were puzzled about what to put on Paul's charge sheet, Agrippa should get it. Here also, was the opportunity for Agrippa to meet the new Governor, and a good test for how they would get along.

Paul is sent for. Once again, let's look at who Paul is going to be speaking to. How could this be orchestrated? Paul gets to speak to the king, the high ranking military officials, and the prominent men of the city! How good! Oh, and Bernice, not any ordinary woman, this powerful and fashionable woman, the sister of Agrippa was influential. The Marilyn Munro of the ancient world. For this opportunity, Paul has not had to engage with any event organiser, he hasn't had to seek out a venue,

or come up with a business plan for the funding, it's all be put on for him! Superb! It has to be God's orchestration.

v1-8 A Changed Mind

Then Agrippa hands the mic to Paul, and says effectively, tell us your story! Give us your testimony! And Paul doesn't miss the opportunity. Now, of course, Agrippa hopes that Paul will say something to incriminate himself, and give them a reason to say, of course he needs to die. But Paul is no fool, and takes the opportunity to tell them about his change of heart. "Yes, I used to be like this", and imagine him motioning to the chief priests, "But now, I'm not." He talks about the past in v5, how he lived as a Pharisee, but in v6, he now lives with the hope that God has promised his ancestors.

So, we should wonder, how is it, that the chief priests can not see the same things? And perhaps some of them were wondering the same? For the Bible that Paul had, is the Bible they had, the Bible Jesus had, and it's our Old Testament, and these verses stand out as the ones that should have made the leaders realise that actually, Jesus was who He said He was.

Isaiah 25:8

He will swallow up death for ever.
The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears
from all faces;
He will remove his people's disgrace
from all the earth.
The Lord has spoken.

Isaiah 26:19

But your dead will live, Lord;
their bodies will rise -
let those who dwell in the dust
wake up and shout for joy -
your dew is like the dew of the morning;
the earth will give birth to her dead.

Daniel 12:2

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

And then there is Ezekiel 37:1-14 with the valley of dry bones that return to life.

These promises of God that are made to us, that were made to the people back then, give me hope! That life right now isn't it, that there is more to live for, and look forward to.

Paul is saying, Jesus is who these verses refer to. These verses make sense in the light of Jesus. Paul is saying, come on people, get with it! We knew Jesus was coming. We knew resurrection was of God. Our Scriptures tell us this, let's get on board with what we already believe!

Paul is saying that the resurrection that these verses refer to is now possible. Through Jesus' resurrection we can have hope! But the chief priests prefer to wait, prefer to believe, that the Messiah and this hope was still to come (Wright, 206).

Paul was the same, but he has had a massive change of mind! He has seen the light!

v9-11 Passion

And to show how big his turnaround was, the last three verses remind the audience how passionate Paul had been against Jesus, and those who follow Jesus. He locked up people who followed Jesus, and when they were to be executed, he fully supported that. He did this firstly in Jerusalem before hunting down these believers in foreign cities.

Now that's interesting. What does that tell you about the spread of the good news of Jesus? Despite the opposition, despite the prisons, and the executions, the church, the people of God, just grew, and grew, and grew. It couldn't be stopped.

What is the message for us today? Where do our beliefs and passions lie? In light of Jesus, what do we believe?

Let's head back to the top of the service; we can have all the knowledge...

1 Corinthians 8:1 (NLT)

[...But while knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that strengthens the church.](#)

In light of Jesus, where will our beliefs and passions lie?

Let's be passionate about following Jesus, and modelling His character. About the church, God's church.

Benediction - Nathan Nettleton

Go out into the world,
and labour to bring forth new life.
Dream dreams, pursue visions
and speak of God's goodness
in the words of those who would hear.

And may the God who breathed life into creation be your delight.
May Christ Jesus give hope to your dreaming,
and may the Holy Spirit, your advocate and supporter,
.....set your hearts ablaze with a passion for peace.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
...In the name of Christ. Amen.