



Resources for

Week 4.

Onwards to
Rome
and Caesar
- almost!

SETTLING

Somewhat remarkably, most of us can read, and understand, the following quite easily:

Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

You might like to try making sense of these as well:

- 1. A vheclie epxledod at a plocie cehckipont near the UN haduqertares in Bagahdd on Mnoday kilingl the bmober and an Irqai polcie offceir*
- 2. Big ccunoil tax ineesacrs tihs yaer hvae seezueqd the inmcoes of mnay pneosenirs*
- 3. A dootcr has aimtted the magltheuansr of a tageene ceacnr pintaet who deid aetfr a hatospil durg blender*

Why do you think it is, that despite totally wild spellings, we are able to decode these words and phrases?

FOCUSING

Have a look at this excerpt from the production "The Chosen". It is a dramatization of the well-known, (pun not intended!) episode when Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=el7dzoNV3IY>

The story is sometimes cited as an example of (or a model for) sharing faith.

You may, or may not, like the film clip but having watched it, reflect upon how you first encountered Jesus. Spend a few moments thanking God for his love and grace, and for those who were instrumental in you becoming a Christian.



Read Chapter 25vs 1- chapter 26 vs 32

Chapter 25 vs 1-22 Paul before Roman Governor Festus:

Having kept Paul under house arrest in Caesarea for over two years, Felix is moved out of office and is recalled to Rome to answer charges about his conduct as Governor. Paul's progress toward Rome has been seriously delayed and now he has to manage the change of governorship as Festus takes charge.

Despite the passage of time the Jewish authorities have lost none of the ambition to end Paul's life, by fair means or foul. Having been petitioned in Jerusalem by the Jews, Festus invites some of them to return with him to Caesarea and put their charges to him with Paul present. On arrival in Caesarea, the Jews launch their attack on Paul but once again without a shred of solid evidence to support their case. Paul's defence against their accusations is brief and concise.

Festus is faced with a tricky situation. On the one hand he wants to keep the Jews onside and avoid unrest but on the other he is dealing with a Roman citizen who has rights that must be respected. Unwilling to bow to the pressure and potential danger of being tried in Jerusalem, Paul stands his ground, reminds Festus of his rights and then plays his trump card, and "appeals to Caesar".

Festus has no reply to this and asserts that having appealed to Caesar, "then to Caesar Paul will go"! Case – apparently – closed!

However. . .

King Agrippa comes visiting. Herod Agrippa II was the Jewish King, tolerated by the Romans. As a matter of courtesy and pragmatism, Agrippa calls on Festus to pay his respects on his appointment to the Governorship. Having a high-ranking Jew in the house, Festus takes the opportunity to talk about the odd situation of Paul and explain that he was at something of a loss as to what to do about the issues of Jewish religion. Agrippa decides that he'd like to interview Paul and Festus agrees, obviously wanting to keep the peace with the Jewish king and also hoping to gain some understanding of what all the fuss is about so that he can explain it when he writes to the Emperor.

Chapter 25 vs 23 – 26 vs 32: Paul before the Jewish King, Agrippa.

Read through the verses above. In contrast to his *one verse* (Ch 25 vs 8) defence before Festus, Paul takes a very different tack when dealing with Agrippa, his defence extending to *27 verses!* (Ch 26 1 – 27)

Why do you think Paul adopts such contrasting strategies? Analyse Paul's defence and try to map out his tactics – perhaps identifying several different phases? (Vs 1-12; vs 13-15; vs 16-18; vs 19-23; vs 24-27.)

Does verse 32 imply that Paul had misjudged things? Would acquittal have been an appealing or acceptable result for Paul?



In this season of Pentecost, pray for the enabling power of God's Holy Spirit to energise and inspire us at St James, in our life, witness and ministry. Ask for God's help in nurturing our sense of expectation about what plans He has for us, as we move forward beyond the restrictions of the pandemic.

Ask for God's help in seeking out how you can encourage others in their walk with Jesus.

Pray for those who continue to feel uncertain about the future and the easing of Covid restrictions.