

# How To Stand Against The World Without Being Like Them

## Acts 25:1-12

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / August 9, 2020*

**I. Your need to remember that those who oppose you for your faith are really opposing Jesus Himself. It's more about Him than it is about you.**

A. No one is neutral about Jesus Christ. All non-Christians are opposed to Jesus, either openly or subtly.

**Matt 12:30** "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

**John 15:18-25** "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. <sup>21</sup> But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. <sup>22</sup> If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. <sup>23</sup> Whoever hates me hates my Father also. <sup>24</sup> If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. <sup>25</sup> But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'"

**A. Your need to strive to stand for what is right in an honorable way; a way that is different from the rest of the world.**

**1 Peter 2:13-17** "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. <sup>15</sup> **For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.** <sup>16</sup> Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. <sup>17</sup> Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor."

**Rom. 13:1-5** "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those

who resist will incur judgment. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, <sup>4</sup> for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. <sup>5</sup> Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience."

Paul's consistent response to false accusations doesn't match the tone of his accusers. When standing before the pagan Roman government, he neither rebels against them nor lets them take advantage of him.

### **He simultaneously submits & appeals.**

He submits to their authority and appeals based on his rights as a citizen, and does so in a way that is honorable and pleasing to God.

**Acts 25:8-11** "Paul argued in his defense, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense." <sup>9</sup> But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?" <sup>10</sup> But Paul said, "**I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried.** To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. <sup>11</sup> If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. **I appeal to Caesar.**"

**A. You need to remember that God isn't tied to one method in order to work out His plan for His glory and our good.**

**Acts 25:2-4** "And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him, <sup>3</sup> asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way. <sup>4</sup> Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly."

**a. As dark as this present day & age is, it's not overwhelming to God or standing in the way of His good plan.**

**Isa. 14:27** "For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?"

**Job 42:2** “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”

**a. God has a plan for our lives, our world, and His Kingdom that ultimately results in His glory and our good every time.**

**Rom. 8:28** “And we know that for those who love God **all things work together for good**, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

**A. You need to remember that nothing and no one defends you more effectively than our great God!**

**Psalm 91:9-10, 14-16** “Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge—<sup>10</sup> no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent... Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. <sup>15</sup> When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. <sup>16</sup> With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

**Questions for Personal Reflection and/or Community Group discussion:**

- a. Pastor Peter said “No one is neutral about Jesus Christ. Everyone is either for him or against Him.” Do you find that hard to believe? Why or why not?
- b. Why is it so easy to forget God isn’t limited by earthly circumstances?
- c. In what area(s) of your life is the phrase “There’s just no earthly way...” accurate? Where do you need to remember God isn’t limited by earthly ways?
- d. Think about a recent time when you were greatly distraught. Where did you “run” for relief? Did it work?
- e. Why is it hard to “run to God” for help in time of trouble?
- f. We sang the song “Your Love Defends Me.” What does it mean to be “defended” by God’s love?