

## Passage to Ponder

(Acts 23:1)

Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

In today's Bible study of Acts 22:24-23:10 were going to see that through the grace of God Paul was able to live as a good citizen and with a good conscience before God. Before we study this whole text I want to take a moment to ponder the statement that Paul made which is, "I have lived in all good conscience before God". Let's break this statement down to see what Paul meant and also see how we can apply this to our lives.

Paul said he **lived** this word in Greek means to behave as a citizen, or to conduct one's self as pledged to some law of life. **In Good conscience**, conscience has been defined as an inner witness or awareness in a person's heart to conform to or to depart from the will of God. The result of either of these chooses leaves a sense of approval and peace or conviction.

Paul told the Sanhedrin that he lived in all good conscience before God; this means that in every way he as a citizen of heaven lived in peace before God and that he was doing exactly what God wanted him to do. How could Paul say this? Paul could say this for two reasons, 1. He walked in God's grace; and 2. He walked in the Holy Spirit. When Paul stood in front of the legalistic Pharisees who only focused on the outward and made this statement he was basically saying I am walking in the will of God and I am living a spirit filled life.

I say this because the bible teaches that it's the Holy Spirit that works on the believer's conscience, to convict and guide us as we walk with Jesus. Paul's was a person that was given over to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the result was not weirdness, but power because it caused him to walk in the perfect will of God.

This morning you and I like Paul can say to people, I live in all good conscience before God. The ways we do so is by first walking in the grace of God and secondly walking in the Spirit of God. A couple of practical ways to help us walk in the Spirit are;

1. Read your bible and pray, this helps us to train our conscience to think biblically and to have a biblical world view.

2. Recognize that as you walk with Jesus the convictions on your conscience and the lack of peace about situations might not just be you but are the Holy Spirit; telling you don't do that or don't go there.

3. Recognize that as you walk with Jesus the Holy Spirit will guide and lead you by burdening your conscience. It could be about an area in your life; it could be to talk to a particular person, or it could be that God wants to do some ministry through you, when you sense a burden or desire, step out and see if God opens or closes a door.

If you're unsure pray, seek the word, look for the peace of God or ask godly counsel. The result of walking in the grace of God and in the Spirit of God is you will be able to say like Paul did I live in all good conscience before God.