

THEY LISTENED, UNTIL...

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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

“And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said,
Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.”

Acts 22:22

Paul is giving the first of several defenses recorded in the Scripture having to do with his apprehension. He had arrived in Jerusalem and was in the temple when he began to be accused by the Jews as one who taught against the Jews, the temple, and the law.

Paul was drawn out of the temple, and the people tried to kill him. Roman soldiers spared his life, and as Paul was being taken to the castle, he was given an opportunity to speak to the Jews. They listened as Paul spoke of his Jewish heritage and training. They even listened as he spoke of his conversion on the road to Damascus. They gave their attention to the apostle as he testified of being a witness as Stephen was martyred.

Then Paul mentioned that God had called him to go to the Gentiles. At that point, they refused to listen any further. Our text says, “they gave him audience unto this word.” But then they cried out, “Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.” At this point, Paul could say nothing worthy of their attention, and they were ready to kill him. They would listen to many things, but they would not listen to someone speaking of turning from the Jews to the Gentiles.

Although we would have very little in common with these zealous Jews, there is one thing in our Scripture that most of us can relate to. Just as the thing that Paul mentioned abruptly turned them away, we can have the same tendency. I have

worked for many years with teenagers in some capacity or another. I have noticed with some teens that the moment they discern that a lecture is coming, they start to tune you out. More specifically, I think people have a tendency to quit listening when you begin to speak of things that they do not want to hear. Quite often, it has to do with some area of their personal sin or conduct. People who are guilty of a particular thing and are not willing to repent, do not want to hear about it. For instance, a non-tither will listen as you preach on many subjects. But when the subject of tithing comes up, he will no longer listen.

This should serve as a warning to all of us. Be willing to listen to the whole counsel of God. Proverbs teaches that a wise man will listen to reproof and instruction, not turn a deaf ear to it.