

**Welcome to the  
INVITE Churchwide Campaign!**



**Sunday, September 10, 2017**

**Week What We Hope People Will Become  
A Study of Acts 21:17 to 26:32  
(focal passage: Acts 26:22-29)**



When have you had to appeal to an important or powerful person for a vital decision: (a) defending yourself in a tax audit? (b) Asking for a pay raise? (c) Objecting to an assessment on which your property tax is determined? (d) Asking parents for their “blessing” on a marriage? (e) Submitting to the dentist or the surgeon?

How did you feel as you thought about what to say?

In today’s lesson, Paul stood before King Agrippa and Governor Festus to defend himself against accusations of disrupting the peace of the empire. He used the time to explain the gospel that his opponents called disruptive. In Acts 26:24, Governor Festus interrupted Paul’s claim that Jesus was raised from the dead. **Read Acts 26:24-29.**

“I wish before God that all who listen to me today might become as I am” (HCSB). This one sentence describes our *task*, the *target* of our task, and the *passion* for our task.

#### **Our Task:**

“I wish before God  
that all who listen to me today  
might become as I am.”

There’s a wrong way and a right way to expect people to “become as we are.”

#### **Wrong Way: Adopt my tastes and preferences.**



Read Romans 14:1-8. Paul wanted the Roman Christians to distinguish between what was essential and non-essential. Name some social, cultural, or political “non-essentials” that some Christians or churches expect people to adopt before receiving full fellowship or acceptance.

Even though it's not right to make non-essentials essential, in what ways are these expectations understandable in any group, including church?

In what ways do these standards keep people from being able to *hear* the gospel and grow spiritually?

**Right Way: "I have experienced the forgiveness and transformation of Jesus Christ and I want others to know that, too."**

Make a list of the benefits you've found in a relationship with Jesus that you know other people in your life would benefit from, too.

**The Target of Our Task:**

"I wish before God  
that all who listen to me today  
might become as I am."

Make a list of the nationalities and/or religions represented in your workplace and neighborhood.

Would Paul have included them in the word "all" (Acts 26:29)?

What characteristics of Austin make it hard for you to truly hope/expect that "all" would become believers?

We tend to decide ahead of time who is likely or unlikely to respond to the gospel. Tell about someone who is a believer today whom you thought would have never become a Christian.



Read Jeremiah 29:4-7. How does verse 7 apply to us in our city? How would obeying the command of verse 7 make it more likely for people in our city to hear our gospel?

In the sermon Pastor Tom said that we are called to be good neighbors and good communicators at the same time.

Why is this balance so hard?

Who are your role models for those who do this well, and what have you done to copy them?

**The Passion for Our Task:**

"I wish before God"

that all who listen to me today  
might become as I am."

The phrase could be translated as either "I pray" or "I wish." What we long for inevitably shows up in what we pray for. Since this is so, how long has it been since you "wished before God" that someone you know might become a believer as you are?

Why are Christians sometimes not as passionate as Paul to see lives changed with God's unchanging truth? List at least 3 reasons before moving on.

Write a group prayer list made up of the names of people you should "wish before God" to become believers:



Close with praise reports and prayer requests