

A Witness to the Faith

Acts 26: 19-23; 27-29

This was a stressful and frustrating time for Paul. At this time he had been under house arrest for more than two years. He was accused and arrested in Jerusalem by the influence of the Jewish Sanhedrin. Following an appeal to Caesar, he was brought to Caesarea, where he remained bound. While in Caesarea, he was examined by two Roman governors, Felix and Festus. King Agrippa arrived in the city and Festus desired him to hear Paul's case as well.

Our text follows Paul's opening remarks as he stood before Agrippa in defense of his faith and the charges brought against him. He has just recounted his miraculous conversion on the Damascus Road, and his call to be a witness to the Gentiles. The verses we have read record Paul's bold declaration to Agrippa, revealing his devotion to the Gospel ministry.

While our situation is different today, we can glean much from the testimony of the faithful Apostle. Every believer ought to share the desire and commitment Paul had to the Gospel. As we consider the [details](#) revealed in Paul's encounter, I pray we will be challenged to remain devoted to the Lord and the Gospel. I want to preach on: [A Witness to the Faith](#).

I. The Commitment of Paul (19-21) – In case there was any doubt regarding Paul's commitment to his calling, he wanted to assure Agrippa of his determination to continue. [V.19 – Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision](#). Paul spoke of:

A. His Ministry (20a) – [But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles](#). Paul had taken his encounter with Christ and the calling he received very seriously. He began to preach the Gospel at Damascus and then traveled to Jerusalem. Facing opposition and rejection, he then turned to the Gentiles. While this was all within the plan and purpose of God, it also reveals Paul's commitment to share the Truth with all who would listen. He had been saved by grace and commissioned to proclaim the Gospel.

- Most of us will never have the opportunity to preach to the masses like Paul or travel the globe sharing the Gospel, but we can be faithful to share with those we encounter. We need the commitment of Paul to share our faith with anyone who will listen. We must learn to view our communities and work places, or anywhere we encounter people as a mission field.

B. His Message (20b) – [\[But shewed...them\] that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance](#). As Paul encountered people, whether Jew or Gentile, his message was the

same. He called them to repent of sin, turn to God, and believe the Gospel. He challenged them to live their lives in a way that would honor God and reveal their salvation in Christ. He didn't have one message tailored for the Jews and another adjusted for the Gentiles. Everywhere Paul went, he proclaimed the need for repentance and acceptance of the Gospel.

- America has developed a culture that no longer embraces the Gospel. Believers are constantly pressured to abandon the truths of the faith and conform to the dictates of society. The world desires a watered down message of acceptance and inclusion of all, regardless of their lifestyle or commitment to the Lord. We must remain committed to the Gospel. Jesus Christ remains the sole means of salvation. Unbelievers must repent of sin and believe in the finished work of Christ for salvation. That isn't popular, but it is Truth. We dishonor the Lord and do the world an injustice if we proclaim a false gospel.

C. His Misery (21) – *For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.* I don't think Paul was seeking sympathy from Agrippa; he just wanted him to know the Jews desired to kill him because he proclaimed truth. Paul had suffered greatly for the cause of Christ. His commitment to the Gospel was the sole reason he was bound in Caesarea. (Serving the Lord often comes at a cost. You might as well prepare for, and expect, opposition. Those who reject and despise the Gospel will seek to hinder and defeat you as you serve the Lord.)

II. The Confession of Paul (22-23) – After revealing his commitment to the Gospel, Paul confessed his determination to continue, regardless of their decision. He revealed:

A. His Dependence (22a) – *Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day.* While wicked men had sought to destroy Paul, he remained able to proclaim the Gospel by the help of the Lord. In fact, he had been given the opportunity to share his faith with some of the most influential men of that time. Paul assured Agrippa that God had been faithful, and he stood before him that day through the providence of God.

- Being a witness for Christ isn't always easy. There will be seasons of discouragement and adversity. Even then we can take comfort knowing we are never alone. Those who commit to proclaiming the Gospel are assured of the help and guidance of the Lord. Like Paul, we too must depend on Him to see us through the difficult times.

B. His Confidence (22b) – *Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should*

come. Paul remained confident in his ministry and message. He was willing to share with small and great – anyone who would listen. Although he was hated by the Jews, their hatred revealed ignorance and hypocrisy. Paul declared that he preached that which was proclaimed by Moses and the prophets of old. The Jews were blinded to the Truth, but the prophets revealed that Messiah would come and Jesus had fulfilled their prophecies.

- The believer has no reason to be ashamed today. Our world denies the existence of absolute truth, but we have received it in Christ and through the written Word. We can boldly and confidently share the Gospel today, knowing the Word of God and the Holy Spirit bear witness to the message we share. The opinions of men will change and fade away, but God's Word will endure forever!

C. His Assurance (23) – *That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.* While the Jews hated and rejected Paul for his faith, he had full assurance of Christ. There was a time when he too shared the sentiment of the rebellious Jews, denying Jesus was the Christ. He doubted the resurrection and means of salvation. That all changed when he encountered the risen Christ on the Damascus Road. Paul had no doubt that Christ had died on the cross for the redemption of sin and risen triumphant from the grave, bringing justification and eternal life for all who believe. Paul was also assured of his future resurrection, regardless of the decisions of men. He was fully assured of the risen Christ and the truth of the Gospel.

- Every believer possess such confidence as well. You may not realize it, but if you are saved by grace, truth resides within. I am assured of the risen Christ and the truth of the Gospel. I am fully aware of the transformation I experienced and I have witnessed similar transformations in the lives of countless others. While the world may scoff and doubt, I am assured of salvation available in Christ and the truth of the Gospel message!

III. The Compassion of Paul (27-29) – Here we discover the evangelistic heart Paul possessed and his compassion for all. Consider:

A. His Question (27) – *King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.* Paul questioned Agrippa regarding his belief in the Word of God, the writings of the prophets. He challenged him to receive the Gospel and believe in Christ for salvation. Paul refused to avoid any opportunity to present the Gospel and urged every hearer to respond.

- I know it can be difficult to share our faith. Some possess the evangelistic gift and others are more apprehensive. Paul was willing to share his faith with the King; surely we know those with whom we can share the Gospel. Once we share, we must encourage them to respond to what they have heard.

B. His Devotion (29) – [And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.](#) Paul genuinely desired all people to have a personal relationship with Christ, including King Agrippa. He wished all could experience the joy and peace found through a fulfilling relationship with Christ. Except for the chains he was forced to wear, Paul wished all who heard him that day could be as he was.

- As believers, we need to share Paul's devotion to mankind, desiring that all would be saved and experience a fulfilling relationship with Christ. I pray the Lord will create a desire in our hearts to see others come to faith in Christ. (This is also quite convicting. Are we close enough to the Lord, walking with Him in such a way, that we could honestly say that we wished others were like us regarding a relationship with the Lord? I know there is room for improvement in my life!)

C. His Perception (29) – While Paul desired all to know Christ, he was aware that many did not. That is why he remained faithful to proclaim the Gospel. That was his reason for existence. He had committed his life to sharing the Gospel with those who had yet to be saved. He was committed to reaching all he could in the time that remained.

- We know this remains true, and it offers a sobering reminder. Paul shared his faith because many were unsaved. The world around us remains lost in sin. No doubt we encounter someone almost daily who needs to respond to the Gospel. We must not fail. We must be willing to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to a world that desperately needs to hear!

Conclusion: I hope this passage serves as an encouragement and challenge for the church to become enthusiastic in our witness. Salvation in Christ is the greatest need for humanity. We have the opportunity to share the Gospel and reach those who remain in sin. Will you join me in a committed effort to reach them before it is eternally too late?

Also, I must ask where you stand with Christ. Likely there are those present who have never responded to the Gospel. Paul urged Agrippa to respond. Consider his response in [V.28 – Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.](#) Almost a Christian is unfortunately entirely lost and undone in sin. If the Spirit has dealt with you regarding salvation, don't respond as Agrippa. Don't leave today almost a Christian. Come now and be saved today!