

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

1st Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 48

Paul's Trial

Paul's Trial

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will show the power of a believer's testimony by looking at Paul's defense before Agrippa in Acts 26.

Key Verses

Acts 25:23-26:32—Main Teaching Passage

Acts 23:1-25:22 (Context)

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

Memory Verse - 2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Philippians 1:21.

Share with the students a brief summery of how you came to know Jesus. Be sure to make the story age-appropriate and do not feel pressured to share more than you feel comfortable sharing. Emphasize what you were like before you knew Jesus and how He has changed you.

In today's story, Paul is going to share his Jesus story in front of some powerful men.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Some important events transpired between last week's story and today's. Paul had been imprisoned for two years and went on trial before two different governors. At the second trial, Paul told governor Festus that he wanted to exercise his right as a Roman citizen to appear before Caesar, the ruler of Roman Empire. However, Festus did not understand what exactly Paul was being accused of, so he invited King Agrippa, who had a greater knowledge of Judaism, to hear Paul's case.

Agrippa brought his wife and the prominent men of the city to hear Paul. After Festus explained the situation, Agrippa allowed Paul to speak. Paul expressed how grateful he was to be able to present his case before Agrippa and started by explaining how he became a Christian. He told Agrippa how he used to be a Pharisee, passionate for the law, and how he persecuted Christians. Then he recounted how on the road to Damascus, Jesus met him and asked why Paul was persecuting Him. Jesus then told Paul that he would be sent to preach the good news to the Gentiles. After that, Paul reported that he went everywhere telling people about Jesus and explained that Jesus's death and resurrection was predicted by the prophets. When Festus heard all of this, he thought Paul was crazy, but Paul insisted that he knew Agrippa believed in the prophets and stated that he wanted all these men to become Christians like him. In the end, Agrippa privately told Festus that Paul would have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.

LOOK

When Paul stood before Festus and Agrippa, he could have tried a number of strategies to defend himself. He could have lied and said that he had never done the things the Jews had accused him of. He could have argued that he had not broken the law and was innocent. He also could have begged for mercy, or even given up and denied Jesus. But instead, Paul made Festus and Agrippa's salvation rather than his own freedom the priority, and he told his testimony.

Christians use the word "testimony" to refer to the story of how someone became a Christian. It is a testimony of what God has done in our lives and how he has changed us. For Paul, he started by looking at his life before He knew Jesus. Paul was far from God then. In fact, not only did he not know Jesus, but he actually persecuted those who did. But when he met Jesus, his life was totally transformed. Instead of trying to stop Jesus, he made it his life's mission to tell everyone about him, all over the world. As a result, tons of people came to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

God had taken someone who was the worst of sinners (see how Paul describes himself in 1 Corinthians 15:9-10) and turned him into the greatest missionary who had ever lived.

What is powerful about our testimonies as Christians is that it is the one thing nobody can deny about Jesus. We could spend all day arguing with non-Christians about why the Bible is true or debating about creation and evolution, but no one can argue with your testimony. Festus and Agrippa may have doubted whether or not Jesus had risen from the dead, but the transformation in Paul's life was undeniable. The same way, when you tell the story of how you were once lost in your sins, yet Jesus turned your life around and brought you from living for yourself to following him, no one can deny that knowing and following Jesus has changed your life.

Now as a first grader, you may not have a story like Paul's, but that doesn't mean your testimony isn't powerful. Whether someone has persecuted Christians or was mean to his brother, we all were lost in our sins, and when we were saved, Jesus changed all of that. Jesus brought us from death to life. That's incredible whether it happened when you were 6 or 60 years old. Of course, all of this is true only if you have made Jesus your Lord and Savior. If you have not done that, today is a great opportunity to trust in Jesus' death and resurrection and ask Him for forgiveness. If you do that, you too will see how Jesus will change your life.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Have the class make a list of ways Jesus has changed their lives. Then think of unsaved friends and family members that you can share your testimony with.

Pray: Praise God for the work He has done in changing all of your lives. Pray for the salvation of any friends and family who don't know Jesus.

Parent question: How can I use my testimony to serve Jesus?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Acts 25:23-26:32 by David Guzik

2. ([Act 25:23-27](#)) Festus makes an opening statement at the hearing of Paul before Agrippa.

So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in. And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him."

a. **When Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp:** In the midst of all the pomp and pageantry, remember just who is on trial here! Really, Festus, Agrippa, Bernice and the rest are all on trial before the God who Paul preaches; Paul is not on trial before them.

i. Voltaire, the famous French infidel, called Paul a "ugly little Jew." Perhaps that was an accurate *physical* description of the man; but he is the one with the authority and dignity here.

ii. "All these very important people would have been greatly surprised, and not a little scandalized, could they have foreseen the relative estimates that later generations would form of them and of the prisoner who now stood before them to state his case." (Bruce)

b. **So that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write:** Festus will use this trial to prepare an official brief for Paul's upcoming trial before Caesar.

Paul's Defense Before King Agrippa

A. Paul on trial before King Agrippa (continued).

1. ([Act 26:1-3](#)) Paul's introductory words.

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently."

a. **Then Agrippa said to Paul:** Remember Paul stands before the man whose great-grandfather had tried to kill Jesus as a baby; his grandfather had John the Baptist beheaded; his father had martyred the first apostle, James. This was a man whose family history made him unlikely to receive Paul warmly!

b. **I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you:** Paul is **happy** to speak before Agrippa. First, because he is pleased to have the evidence of his case examined closely by the highest officials, but also because he is pleased to preach the gospel to kings!

i. This was a partial fulfillment of what the Lord promised Paul at his conversion: *Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.* ([Acts 9:15](#))

2. ([Act 26:4-11](#)) Paul describes his life before his conversion.

"My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. To this *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead? Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against *them*. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted *them* even to foreign cities."

a. **According to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee:** Paul states his credentials as a faithful Jew before his conversion to Jesus Christ, and reminds Agrippa that he is still walking in faithful fulfillment of the **promise made by God to our fathers**.

b. Agrippa was an *expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews* ([Acts 26:3](#)), yet he did not believe that God could, or would, raise the dead. Paul boldly exposes the foolishness of limiting God this way, by saying to Agrippa: **Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?**

i. **Why should it be thought incredible** that God can do anything? We must stop putting God in a small box, and realize that the only thing that limits God is His own Word, because He will always honor His word ([Psalm 138:2](#)).

c. **I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth:** Paul also described his hatred of Christianity before his conversion, and his energetic persecution of Christians.

d. **I cast my vote against them** clearly implies that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin, having a vote against Christians who were tried before the Sanhedrin (like Stephen in [Acts 7](#)).

i. If Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin, it also means that at that time he was married, because it was required for all members of the Sanhedrin. Since as a Christian, he was single ([1 Corinthians 7:7-9](#)), it may mean that Paul's wife either died or deserted him when he became a Christian.

3. ([Act 26:12-20](#)) Paul describes his conversion and its aftermath.

"While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*' So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance."

a. **As I journeyed to Damascus:** Here Paul gives the fullest account yet of his experience on the Damascus road, detailing the fact that he was made aware of his commission to the Gentiles even at that time.

i. The commission was clear: **For I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness.** Paul was commissioned to be two things. First, **a minister**, which means he was to be a *servant of the things which* he had **seen, and of the things which** Jesus would **yet reveal** to him. The commission of the Christian is not to make the message or his testimony serve him; he is called to *serve* the message. Second, Paul was called to be **a witness** of those **things**. The commission of the Christian is not to create experience or create the message, but to **witness** it and experience it.

ii. Right now, as he stands before Agrippa, Paul is being obedient to this command of Jesus. Paul knew the significance of telling others what Jesus had done in his life. He knew how to present the gospel not only in words, but also by his life story, presenting the truth that once he was lost, now he was found

b. **But rise and stand on your feet:** Jesus called Paul up to his feet. This was not because his humility wasn't proper, but because he was sent to go somewhere, and he had to **rise and stand on his feet** if he was going to go anywhere!

c. **That they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance:** This is a neat summary of Paul's message.

4. ([Act 26:21-23](#)) Paul summarizes his defense.

"For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill *me*. Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come; that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles."

a. **For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me:** Paul plainly states the truth of the case. It is only because he sought to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles that the Jews **seized** him and **tried to kill** him. It wasn't because he was a political revolutionary or because he offended the sanctity of the temple.

b. **Saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come:** Paul also states his unswerving commitment to the same gospel, because that gospel is based solidly on the Word of God (**the prophets and Moses**) not on the traditions or spiritual experiences of man.

c. **That the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.** These were the three main points to Paul's preaching: Jesus' death, resurrection, and the preaching of gospel to the whole world, without respect to either Jew or Gentile.

B. Agrippa's response to Paul's defense.

1. ([Act 26:24-26](#)) Agrippa asserts Paul is mad, and Paul responds.

Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner."

a. **Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!** The gospel, when properly presented, will make some people think we are crazy. Paul put it this way: *the message of the cross is foolishness to those*

who are perishing ([1 Corinthians 1:18](#)).

b. **I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason:** Yet, Paul knows that not only is his gospel *true*, it is also *reasonable*. Our God may sometimes act *above* reason, but never *contrary* to reason.

c. Paul's gospel was characterized by **truth** and **reason**, because it was based on *historical events* (such as the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus), things which were **not done in a corner**, but open to examination.

2. ([Act 26:27-29](#)) Agrippa is *almost* persuaded to become a Christian.

"King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe." Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

a. **King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe:** Paul brought the challenge home with a shot to the heart: **do you believe?**

i. Any faithful presentation of the gospel knows when it is appropriate to press the challenge home, and how to press it. Paul knew that this was the time.

b. **You almost persuade me to become a Christian:** The literal idea behind **almost** is "in a little, you seek to persuade me to act a Christian." The meaning of *little* could be "in a short time" or it could mean "there is little distance between me and Christianity".

i. If the sense is "almost," Agrippa's reply is especially sorry. Of course, **almost** being a Christian means that you **almost** have eternal life and will **almost** be delivered from the judgment of hell; but **almost** isn't enough.

ii. Far from being admired for how far he did come, Agrippa condemned himself even more by admitting how close he has come to the gospel and how clearly he has understood it, while still rejecting it.

c. **To become a Christian:** What in fact is a Christian? What had Agrippa **almost** become? [Acts 26:18](#) describes five things that happened to Paul when he became a Christian. A Christian has their eyes opened. A Christian has turned from darkness to light. A Christian has turned from the power of Satan to God. A Christian has received forgiveness of sins. And a Christian has an inheritance among those set apart to God.

d. What stopped Agrippa short? Why did he only **almost** become a Christian?

i. Why was Agrippa only **almost** persuaded? One answer is the person sitting next to him - Bernice. She was a sinful, immoral companion, and he may have rightly realized that becoming a Christian would mean losing her and his other immoral friends. He was unwilling to make that sacrifice!

ii. On the other side of Agrippa sat Festus - a man's man, a no-nonsense man, a man who thought Paul was crazy. Perhaps Agrippa thought, "I can't become a Christian! Festus will think I'm crazy too!" And because he wanted the praise of men, he rejected Jesus. "Alas, how many are influenced by fear of men! Oh, you cowards, will you be damned out of fear? Will you sooner let your souls perish than show your manhood by telling a poor mortal that you defy his scorn? Dare you not follow the right through all men in the world should call you to do the wrong? Oh, you cowards! You cowards! How you deserve to perish who have not enough soul to call your souls your own, but cower down before the sneers of fools!" (Spurgeon)

iii. In front of Agrippa is Paul - a strong man, a noble man, and man of wisdom and character - but a man in chains. Does Agrippa say, "Well, if I became a Christian, I might end up in chains like Paul! Or at least, I would

have to associate with him! We can't have that - I'm an important person!" "O that men were wise enough to see that suffering for Christ is honour, that loss for truth is gain, that the truest dignity rests in wearing the chain upon the arm rather than endure the chain upon the soul." (Spurgeon)

e. **I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains:** Paul declares his continued trust in the gospel of Jesus Christ. He has not retreated from his stand one inch, despite his long imprisonment for the sake of the gospel.

f. **Except for these chains:** With a dramatic gesture, Paul shows that even though he is in chains, he has more freedom in Jesus than any of the royalty listening have.

i. "O that men were wise enough to see that suffering for Christ is honour, that loss for truth is gain, that the truest dignity rests in wearing the chain upon the arm rather than endure the chain upon the soul." (Spurgeon)

3. ([Act 26:30-32](#)) Agrippa admits Paul's innocence, yet forwards him to Caesar.

When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

a. **This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains:** Agrippa also sees there is no *evidence* offered to support the accusations against Paul, and he respects Paul's great integrity, even while rejecting Paul's gospel. So, Agrippa and the others pronounced a "not guilty" verdict.

b. **This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar:** Yet, Paul cannot be **set free**, because he has **appealed to Caesar**. It seems that once an appeal was made, it could not be retracted.

c. It seems that Paul might have been set free here if he had not appealed to Caesar. So, was Paul's appeal to Caesar a good thing or a bad thing?

i. Some people believe it was a bad thing, and that Paul was trusting in the power of the Roman legal system instead of in the power of God. They say that Paul might have been set free by Agrippa if he had not appealed to Caesar.

ii. However, we should see the fulfillment of God's plan through all these events. By his appeal to Caesar, Paul will have the opportunity to preach to the Roman Emperor the way he had to Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, thus fulfilling the promise that Paul would *bear My name before ... kings* ([Acts 9:15](#)).

iii. The appeal to Caesar, and his subsequent journey to Rome at the Empire's expense, were also the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit's purpose that Paul go to Rome ([Acts 19:21](#), [23:11](#)). This also answered a long-standing desire in the heart of Paul to visit the already present Christian community there ([Romans 1:9-13](#)).