

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 22

Spreading the Gospel by Testimony

Lesson Verse: 1 Peter 3:15,16

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."

I. Introduction

- A. Most people think that to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ requires a person to have had years of Bible College and Seminary training, and years of experience in public speaking!
1. But God says that all that is required is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, which will result in us having a testimony of what God has done for each of us. This includes how God changed lives and attitudes, and feelings, where we had only tried and failed before.
 2. People need to see real people who have *experienced* what they are talking about. This kind of Gospel presentation is the most effective!
 - a. Advertisements use it. "*Let's see how Mrs. Jones reacts to Johnny's muddy pants now that she has tried new Gravel laundry detergent...*"
 - b. Politicians use it. "*Let me tell you what this country means to me...*"
- B. So far we have covered:
1. Chapter 13 "God's Call to Service"
 2. Chapter 14 "Suffering While Serving"
 3. Chapter 15 "Settling New Testament Salvation"
 4. Chapter 16 "The Second Missionary Journey"
 5. Chapter 17 "Searching the Scriptures"
 6. Chapter 18 "Spiritual Overdrive"
 7. Chapter 19 "The Securing of Ephesus"
 8. Chapter 20 "Saying Farewell"
 9. Chapter 21 "Saving the Best for Last"

II. Background

At this point in Acts, Paul is standing in front of a large crowd of very religious Jews that had just tried to kill him. Paul goes right to the most powerful means of persuasion - the testimonial. Paul was not going to waste time talking about theology, eschatology, and dispensationalism. Paul was going to present simply what God had done for him personally!

III. Lesson - "Spreading the Gospel by Testimony"

A. Paul's Testimony (22:1-21)

1. His Religious Background (22:1-5)
 - a. A purebred, pureblood - Jew of a Jew (22:1-3) - not a proselyte
 - b. Taught by the best - at the feet of Gamaliel (22:3; 5:34-40)
 - c. Zealous toward God - Or so he thought (22:3)
 - 1) I persecuted *unto death* this heretical sect (a real women's libber). Threw both men and WOMEN into prison (22:4)
 - 2) I persecuted unto the end of the earth - went out of my way to eradicate the Christians, even to Damascus (22:5).

Paul just thought that his religion was better than another, so he was on a "holy war" against the "Christian religion." Did you ever notice how that 99% of all wars are over religion - ie, one religion trying to overtake another?
2. His Salvation (22:6-10)
 - a. Found out that "religion" does not save.
 - 1) Eternal life depends upon a personal relationship with the Savior of the world (and not just a "personal encounter"), nor with "head-knowledge" (James 2:19)
 - 2) Definitions:
 - a) Religion - Trusting what *you* DO in life - a process
 - b) Salvation - Trusting what *Christ* DID - a promise!

Which is better to risk your eternal destiny upon?

- b. Paul speaks the magic word - **LORD** (22:6-10)
 - 1) This one word from the heart can seal your relationship with Jesus Christ:
 - a) Example of the thief on the cross (Lk 23:42)
 - b) Romans 10:9,10,13
 - 2) Paul dealt directly with Jesus Christ - no middle-men!
 - 3) He discovered he could not go directly to God through the priesthood, or by himself - *had to have Jesus the Messiah!*

3. His Calling (22:10-21)

- a. Paul asks Jesus first off, "What do I do now?"
 - 1) Trying to make up for his past life. Many a new-born Christian feels this same way, and OUGHT to!
 - 2) Wants to turn his energy from a sinful lifestyle into a lifestyle that God would be pleased with - and so he did!
- b. Notice that Jesus gives him only a portion of His will for his life at a time.

PRINCIPLE: If you knew everything that God wanted you to do for the next 40 years it would blow your mind! You couldn't handle it. God says, be faithful in that which is least, then he will make you faithful over many things.

4. Paul's new habits (22:12-21)

- a. He gets baptized immediately (22:16) as a step of obedience
 - 1) In those days, people got saved and baptized the very same day (Acts 2:42)
 - 2) It was not the baptism that saved, but the calling on the name of the Lord that did!
- b. He becomes a real praying man (22:17)
- c. He seeks God's will for his life
 - 1) Knows where he came from - such atrocities
 - 2) Learns where he is going - to the **Gentiles** (Isa 42:1,6; 49:6; Mal 1:11; Acts 1:8)

B. **Jerusalem's Final Rejection of the Truth** (22:22-24)

1. Just one word (Lord) can save a soul, but then again, just one word can incite a riot too (GENTILE)!
 - a. Like saying "CIA" down in Cuba
 - b. Like saying "Ian Paisley" in Dublin
2. Saying just ONE WORD can turn people off because of what they associate with that word! Forget the message, forget the point, just home-in on ONE WORD!!!
3. This crowd says a man is not fit to live if he is a Jew who goes to the Gentiles!!! All religions are racists at heart!

C. **Roman Custody** (22:25-30)

1. God protects Paul from a roman scourging (22:24-29)
2. Notice the little "nugget" phrase, "_____ BORN"

PRINCIPLE: Paul was a Roman Citizen by BIRTH, while many others had to pay great sums of money to purchase their freedom. Paul, as all Christians, are FREE BORN by BIRTH as well, citizens of HEAVEN, by the NEW BIRTH, while there are so many who think that by "paying a large sum" they can purchase "FREEDOM". It cannot be purchased!

VI. Conclusion - Review of the Principles

IV. Study Questions