



ACCM

Bible Study: Thursday, April 20 2017.

Topic: Acts 26

INTRODUCTION: In Chapter 25, we find that King Agrippa and Bernice have agreed to listen to Paul and they therefore came with the 'high and mighty' in the city. As soon as Paul was permitted to speak by King Agrippa, he began by giving a description of his childhood and his upbringing as a Pharisee. Paul said he is being judged for the hope of the promise made by God to the Jews which is the hope of resurrection.

He made Agrippa to know that he also behaved like these Jews in the time past when he persecuted the Christians even to foreign cities.

Paul told his conversion story exactly the way it happened. He went further to state his mission as sent by God after his conversion. He did not shy away from mentioning that God sent him to change men from darkness to light and from Satan to God. He therefore through his testimony, made it clear to Agrippa and all present that repentance from sin generates God's forgiveness and thus guarantees an inheritance amongst the saints. All these I believe he said so Agrippa, Bernice, Festus and those who were with them so they will hear and consider repentance.

Paul said that repentance was not enough but that the regenerated person should do works befitting repentance. He then went ahead and told everyone including King Agrippa that it was his obedience to the heavenly vision that made the Jews want to kill him. He also said that having been delivered by God, he is witnessing to both small and great. In other words, he was telling Agrippa that what he was saying was not just a legal defence but a ministration that they the listeners to him there should be saved.

As Paul continued with his ministration which looked like a defence, Festus was definitely convicted and instead of surrendering his life to Jesus, he screamed out that that Paul has lost his mind and that too much learning

has made Paul mad. A statement to which Paul responded that he was not mad but speaking the words of truth and reason. Paul went further and boxed King Agrippa to the corner knowing fully well that Agrippa was very knowledgeable about Jewish matters. He asked a question and answered for him. He said King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe." Agrippa responded firmly that he was almost persuaded by the words of Paul to become a Christian. Paul's statement in verse 29 and his response to King Agrippa affirms that he was actually ministering and not in defence of himself.

After these things, the King, the Governor, Bernice and all those who were with them stood up and conferred among themselves that Paul has done nothing deserving of death. However, since he has appealed to Caesar, they were bound under the law to send him to Rome.

Paul's Early Life

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself."

So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: ²"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, ³especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

⁴"My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. ⁵They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. ⁶And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. ⁷To 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. ⁸Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

Stretching out your hands was a common trait of orators in Paul's days. From Paul's comments, he was saying these people are being hypocritical.

The resurrection of the dead was not an occurrence that the Jews were not unaware of as the bible has many records of such occurrences. So, it could

not be incredible to King Agrippa to hear about the resurrection of the dead. John 11:39, 1 Kings 17:17–24, 2 Kings 4:18–37.

Some bible scholars say that the comment was more to the others than to King Agrippa.

⁹“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰This 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*.¹¹And 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.

Paul Recounts His Conversion

¹²“While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, ¹³at 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. ¹⁴And 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.*’ ¹⁵So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶But 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. ¹⁷I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, ¹⁸to 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.’

Paul’s story showed the difference between the time of his ignorance and the time his eyes of understanding was enlightened.

Fanny Crosby wrote the Hymn This is my story, this is my song and Phoebe Knapp made it into a song. Every Salvation is anchored by or with a story; It might be as dramatic as Paul’s or as unknown as Timothy’s. You are the best narrator of your salvation story. Acts 26:12-18, Acts 22:6, 2 Tim 1:4-6

What is your Salvation story? Are you prepared to tell it to the glory of God?

Your salvation story might just be good enough to bring salvation to another person. It should be able to show a turning point or a point of realization in your life.

Your testimony is the easiest way to preach a message: For your testimony to be able to draw people to God. It must be good. Matthew 5:16.

Your testimony or story must not just showcase Jesus, it must bring Glory to Him I Cor 2:2, Gal 6:14, Phil 3:8, I Cor 2:4

What is witnessing and evangelism? II Cor 4:5, I John 1:1-3, John 1:14, II Pet 1:16

Do you have a testimony?

According to Paul what is the purpose of the Gospel? Rom 1:16-17,

Paul's Post-Conversion Life

¹⁹“Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ 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. ²¹For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill *me*.²²Therefore, 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— ²³that 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.”

What was Paul declaring? Mark 16:15, Matt 28:19.

Let's place some emphasis on Verse 20b i.e. that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.

What is the effect of good works in the ministry? James 2:14-16, Gal 6:9, Matthew 5:16.

But never substitute good works for salvation: Eph 2:8-10, Acts 26:22, Rom 1:17.

How long should you wait as a believer before you can begin to speak to others about Christ? II Tim 1:8, Mark 8:38

Agrippa Parries Paul's Challenge

²⁴Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

²⁵But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. ²⁶For 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. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

²⁸Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

²⁹And 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."

³⁰When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; ³¹and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains."

³²Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

What made Festus to scream out with a loud voice: "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" (Conviction) Acts 16:30-31, Luke 4:41.

Speaking the words with truth and reason: What does this mean to you? (These things are verifiable and logical). Matthew 7:29, I Peter 3:15, Acts 6:10. These things cannot happen with poor knowledge. That explains why a believer must acquire knowledge.

What is your purpose for witnessing? Vs 28-29,

Was Paul's speech to the house a waste as no one declared for God there?

Ecc 11:6, 9:10, II Tim 4:2.

CONCLUSION:

Again, God has proven to everyone through this happenings to Apostle Paul, that all things work together for good to them that love God and to them that are the called according to His purpose. Paul was here, given a tremendous opportunity to do what he really loves to do and that is to declare the word of God. This he was able to declare to people across the spectrum of life. People might have seen Paul in bondage but in his heart, he was completely free and was doing what he loves to do. The way you perceive yourself determines how happy or depressed you will be in any situation. If you throw yourself into a well of pity you are likely to find yourself soaked in the water of depression but if you see all that is happening to you as the will of God concerning you at that time, your spirit will definitely come alive to achieve the purpose God has set for your on earth. We always err when we define success in this world by mundane things and by Mammon. Life is more than these things.