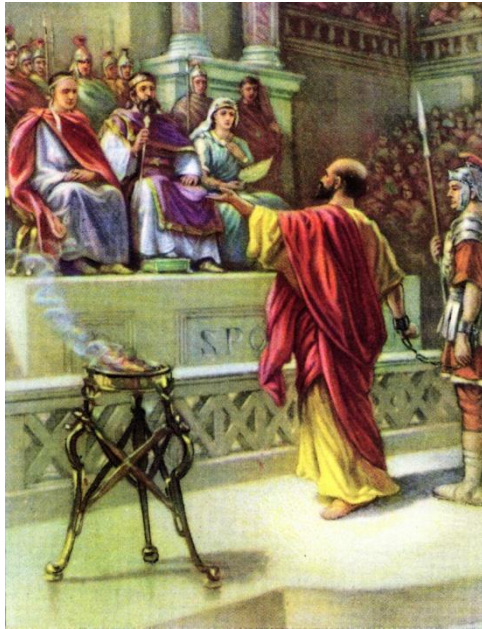


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 10



PAUL WITNESSES BEFORE AGRIPPA

Scripture Text: Acts 26:1-32

Paul was a minister and a witness. These two areas of service were combined in Paul, as they are in many, yet they are not the same. When a restaurant waiter gives a list of the menu, he is a witness. If he describes the qualities of the food and tells of his enjoyment of it, he is still a witness. But when he brings and serves the food, he is a minister.

Paul went from place to place witnessing to the promises, power, and love of God. He told of Jesus' death and Resurrection. He told his experience. That was witnessing. Then he told the people how to repent and put faith in Jesus. That was ministering. He was serving them with the blessings of God. Because many received him, Paul left a group of saints in every town he visited. He witnessed to Festus and Agrippa and desired to minister to them, but they did not receive him.

MEMORY VERSE: *Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.*

—Acts 26:19

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—**Matthew 23:25-33** Cleansing the inside.
- Tue.—**1 John 3:11-24** Assurance in the heart.
- Wed.—**Romans 8:1-25** Living in the Spirit.
- Thu.—**2 Timothy 1** Using the power of the Spirit.
- Fri.—**Galatians 5:13-26** Walking in the Spirit.

Devotional Reading: Psalm 51 Seeking a clean heart.

Paul Is Accused for the Hope of Israel

Acts 26:1-8 Paul stood a prisoner in chains before a people arrayed in their splendor, sitting to judge him. He waited until given permission to speak. Then he **stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself**. He spoke of his pleasure at being allowed to testify before Agrippa. Guilty people are not happy to recount their actions. He commended the king's knowledge of Jewish customs and beliefs. He told of the sincerity of his own early life. **Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers**. What promise? The promise of a Redeemer which is all through the Old Testament. (Read **Job 19:25; Isaiah 49:6; Isaiah 59:20; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Daniel 7:13-14; Zechariah 13:1; all of Isaiah 53**.) The devout ones of the twelve tribes of Israel looked forward with hope to its fulfillment. But most Jews did not recognize the fulfillment when it came in the person of Jesus Christ. Because Paul preached Christ as the promised Redeemer, the Jews accused and tried to kill him. The Jews refused to believe in Christ's Resurrection which proved Him to be the One sent from God. Paul asked Agrippa a question, "Why do you think it incredible that God should raise the dead?" Our God can do anything!

Paul tells of His Commission

Acts 26:9-21 Paul could understand unbelief. He once thought he **ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus**. He told Agrippa how he persecuted saints, imprisoning them, compelling them to blaspheme, or

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to deny Jesus. He told how God saved and changed him. When Jesus appeared to him, he knew He was alive and was the Son of God. Then he was ready to do anything Jesus asked of him.

At that time Jesus had told Paul His purpose for Paul's life. Paul was to be a minister and a witness, both of what he had seen and of what he would see. God would send Paul to the Gentiles and protect him from them. Paul's work was (1) **to open their eyes**, (2) **to turn them from darkness to light**, (3) **from the power of Satan unto God**, (4) **that they might receive forgiveness of sins**, (5) and inherit the blessings to be given those **sanctified by faith that is in me**—Jesus.

Consider these goals of Paul's work among the Gentiles. Are not these the goals that every preacher should set as the purpose of his life? Are they not the purpose of all saints in all church work? Yes. We should not give place to any activity that does not directly or indirectly further this purpose.

Paul Was Obedient to the Commission

Acts 26:22-26 Paul obeyed God's will (**verse 19**). He preached to all repentance, turning to God, and holy living. He did not work in his own strength. He **obtained help of God**. His preaching agreed with what **the prophets and Moses** (the Old Testament) had prophesied. These said **Christ should suffer and should rise from the dead**, the first one to have a glorified, deathless body. He would be a **light unto the people, and to the Gentiles**.

When Paul reached this point, his zeal and the Spirit of God so animated him that it glowed in his face and very being. Festus said loudly, **Paul, thou art beside thyself**—insane. He blamed it on Paul's studies—**much learning . . . I am not mad . . . The king knoweth of these things . . . for this thing** (Jesus' life, death and Resurrection) **was not done in a corner**.

Jesus came to earth in a quiet, humble manner. His work was done in the same way. Yet the living force of it would not allow it to remain unknown. All the country marveled at Jesus' miracles and teaching. All knew of His death and Resurrection. Witnessing does not always require talking. It does not require noise and show and worldly attractions, but rather, the Spirit's power in lives, a zeal in each to put the Lord's work first, and use of every right means to reach the most people. We must lift up the Gospel. The Lord has a work for all He saves; it is to take the Gospel to others.

Conviction Visits King Agrippa

Acts 26:27-32 Turning quickly to the king, Paul asked, **King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?** Earnestly studying his face, Paul saw belief, conviction, written there. **I know that thou believest**. Agrippa said he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. Paul wished the king and all present to be altogether such as he except for his imprisonment. But Agrippa, like Felix, stopped short. So near, but yet so far from peace, they slipped away. Conviction is not enough. We must respond in commitment.

The king, the governor, and others talked privately and agreed that Paul was innocent. Agrippa would have set Paul free **if he had not appealed unto Caesar**.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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