

Lesson 165: Paul Tells his Story

Scripture: Acts 22-28.

Memory Verse: Acts 28:31 He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

Last week, our story ended with Paul returning from his third missionary journey and preparing to go to Jerusalem, even though he knew through the Holy Spirit that he would be arrested and jailed... As soon as he arrived in Jerusalem, Paul met with the elders, and together they celebrated all the MIGHTY works God had accomplished among the Gentiles and the Jews.

Soon after that, some Jews who wanted to kill Paul, **falsely** accused him of breaking God's Laws. They hated Paul and wanted him dead. A riot soon broke out and people were in an uproar! This caught the attention of a Roman Commander, who quickly arrested Paul and put him in chains.

From this point, for the rest of his life, Paul was a prisoner. But God comforted him, telling him that even his imprisonment would result in the Good News of Jesus spreading to Rome. Even while in prison, God gave Paul many opportunities to proclaim the good news of Jesus to soldiers, religious leaders, and even Roman rulers and kings. Paul shared the gospel through sharing **his Good News Story** of how he came to know and love Jesus. Whenever he got the chance, he would tell this story:

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, and was brought up and educated here in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, a highly esteemed Pharisee. As his student, I was carefully trained in our Jewish laws and customs. I became very zealous to honor God in everything I did." (*CREATION*) Paul knew and believed that God is the creator of the universe and of him, that God is perfect.

"Though I had zeal for God, I did not believe that Jesus was who He claimed to be. So, authorized by the leading priests, I persecuted followers of Jesus. I chased them down, had them arrested, and even voted to have some put to death.

(*FALL*) "**I was an enemy of Jesus, but He sought me out.** One day on the way to Damascus, a light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me and my companions. The light was so intense, that it left me blinded for several days. We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' 'Who are you, lord?' I asked."

(*REDEMPTION*) "And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. **I am rescuing you, and appointing you to be servant and witness to my great work. I am sending you to the Jews and Gentiles to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me.**'

(*RESTORATION*) "Now I am on trial because of my hope in the fulfillment of God's promise made to our ancestors. I teach nothing except what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Messiah would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, and in this way announce God's light to Jews and Gentiles alike."

Paul knew his story of salvation and rebirth into God's family, which made him a powerful witness to God's grace and love. We all need to understand and be able to tell our story of new life in Christ, so that others who don't yet know Jesus can hear!

Paul's is much like the story of EVERY follower of Christ has, though disciples may have been born in completely different places and had a diversity of life experiences, it comes down to understanding the Gospel Story, which is that we were:

- * created by God to love and worship Him
- * broken by Sin that caused us to be separated from Him
- * rescued by Jesus through His death on the cross
- * experiencing new life in Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

While in prison, Paul continued to put his story into action by teaching these big story concepts, through sharing bits of his story through his letters to the churches. He wrote the letters Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.