



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Paul's Testimony

Lesson Text: Acts 26:11-29

Focus Verses: Acts 26:16-18 - ¹⁶But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; ¹⁷Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, ¹⁸To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Truth About Covenant: Being in covenant with God gives us a testimony to share with our world.

Covenant Context: Near the end of the apostle Paul's teaching and preaching, he was arrested on false charges and put on trial. During the trial, he appealed to have his case heard in Rome, giving him an opportunity to share his testimony with Caesar himself. Paul believed the gospel was powerful enough to invite the most powerful man in the world into covenant with God. No one is beyond His reach.

We often associate the word trial with difficult seasons and circumstances, like loss, sickness, or grief. In Acts 26 we witness Paul on trial for his preaching. Paul was being questioned about an accusation, and had an opportunity to bear witness of the gospel. When we are tested by troubles, troublesome people, or tense situations, it often feels as if our faith is being interrogated. At times our testimony can seem insignificant or ineffective, almost persuading others instead of fully persuading them. However, our testimony contributes to the slow, progressive work of calling and transformation in the lives of others. Our voice joins in harmony with the voice of the Spirit and a host of believers to call others to a new life in Christ. **Like the apostle Paul, our sermon will not always succeed, but the reach of our trial and our testimony is far beyond the moment.**

Paul's message to Agrippa and Festus emphasized that the resurrection of Jesus was the natural conclusion of the Jewish Scriptures, not a contradiction to them. Instead of being judged for real crimes against the Jews, Paul stated, *"I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God, unto our fathers"* (Acts 26:6). Paul's gospel message was biblically-grounded, not self-invented. Then Paul gave an altar call to Herod Agrippa II, hoping he would put all his faith in Jesus Christ. However, Agrippa hesitated and sadly confessed: *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"* (Acts 26:28).

Paul's transformation is when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. Though his lifestyle was completely opposed to his calling, his encounter with Jesus brought him into alignment with God's purpose. Paul's authority to preach the gospel did not come from his personal connections; it came from a genuine transformational encounter with Jesus. **He could not change his past, but he could and did surrender his past to God's great mercy.**

The message of salvation is about forgiveness of sin and repentance. Sin is the failure to align with God's intended purpose for us. We sin when we transgress God's high moral standard. It is a universal problem (Romans 3:23). Repentance involves confessing our sins, but it does not end with a verbal acknowledgment of sin. It is more than an apology; it is a revolution of the heart. **Without true repentance, we have no testimony of transformation to share, and our witness can come across as false advertising.**

Many people are afraid to share their testimony, silencing themselves because they aren't sure how their words will be received. We do not have to be cured of our nervousness to be an effective witness. It becomes easier to speak when we share stories and words that belong to us rather than leaning on someone else's formula. No one else can replicate your voice, and no one else can tell your story of God's grace like you can. **With the help of the Holy Spirit, the meekest and weakest among us can be the greatest proclaimers.**

Testifying about God's grace starts with sharing our story of transformation. Although we once knew shame, now we see God's glory. Our new lifestyle of holiness confirms what we have witnessed. We then connect our stories to the story of Scripture, pointing to the fulfillment of God's Word in our lives, and we invite others to obey the gospel by teaching them about the new birth.