

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 6TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

PAUL'S TESTIMONY (ACTS 22:1-10) "BROTHERS AND FATHERS"

Paul addresses the crowd with respect. He speaks in their language, and the crowd becomes quiet. Paul doesn't attack them but looks for ways to build a bridge instead.

- **Do people experience the love of Jesus in the way we talk to them? People are made in the image of God and loved by God.**

PAUL'S "IMPRESSIVE" RELIGIOUS RESUME

Paul had an impressive religious resume: raised in Jerusalem, trained under Gamaliel, educated in the law, extremely zealous for God, persecuted followers of Jesus. **Paul wasn't far from religion, but he was far from Jesus.**

- **Proximity to the things of Jesus isn't the same as a relationship with Jesus.**

JESUS CONFRONTED PAUL

Paul was traveling to Damascus when, suddenly, everything changed. Paul thought he was persecuting Christians, but Jesus tells him that he was persecuting Jesus.

- **Sometimes Jesus must confront what we believe before He can change how we live. Where might Jesus be confronting something in us right now?**

"WHAT SHOULD I DO, LORD?"

Before Damascus and his encounter with Jesus, Paul was deciding where he was going. After Jesus, his posture changes to surrender, and Jesus is now leading his life.

- **Following Jesus isn't just believing He exists. It's giving Him the right (humble surrender) to lead our lives (Jesus is Lord). Who is leading my life?**

NEW PURPOSE (ACTS 22:11-21)

PAUL'S BLINDNESS

Paul, once powerful and confident, is now blind and helpless. Paul needed other people to help him walk through what God was doing in his life. God leads Paul to Ananias.

- **Community isn't optional for a healthy follower of Jesus. We need people who will pray, encourage, correct, and walk with us. Who is walking with you?**

SAVED FOR A PURPOSE

Ananias tells Paul that God has appointed him to know His will, see Jesus, hear His voice, and be His witness. **Paul wasn't saved just to go to Heaven someday.** Jesus had a purpose for his life right now.

- **Jesus doesn't just save us from our old life. He gives us a new life, new identity, and new purpose.**

NEGOTIATING WITH GOD?

While Paul was praying in the temple, he fell into a trance, and God told him to leave Jerusalem. But Paul explains why staying makes sense.

- **Sometimes we argue with God because our plan makes more sense to us. When God makes the direction clear, our job isn't to negotiate—it's to obey.**

"I WILL SEND YOU FAR AWAY TO THE GENTILES"

Paul had his own idea of where his testimony would be more effective. Jesus had a different plan. Paul had to trust that Jesus knew where he could be used better than he did.

- **Following Jesus means being willing to go where He calls us and to love all people. Where might Jesus be asking me to go that I've been resisting?**

ANGRY CROWD (ACTS 22:22-30)

THE GOSPEL CONFRONTS OUR HEARTS

The crowd listened until Paul mentioned the Gentiles. Then everything changed. **They were willing to listen until the gospel challenged something they didn't want to surrender.**

- **People are normally open to Jesus' words until they confront areas in their lives that they hold tightly to.**

OBEDIENCE WON'T ALWAYS BE APPLAUDED

Paul obeyed Jesus. And where did obedience lead him? It led him to be arrested and threatened with flogging.

- **Sometimes obedience brings: Resistance instead of acceptance. Difficulty instead of ease. Opposition instead of applause.** Difficulty can make us question our obedience to God.

COURAGE AND WISDOM

Paul didn't use his Roman citizenship to escape his calling. He used it to continue his calling. Paul was willing to suffer for Jesus but didn't believe suffering itself was the goal.

- **Unnecessary suffering doesn't make one spiritual. Using wisdom doesn't make one selfish. Courage and wisdom can exist together.**

PAUL'S FAITHFULNESS

Paul's testimony was rejected, and the crowd wanted him dead. He was still in custody, and his future was uncertain. But God's plan wasn't finished.

- **We can't control other people's responses and decisions. Do what God has asked you to do, and trust Him with what happens next.**

YOUR STORY IS WORTH SHARING

- Paul shares his testimony: who he was, how he encountered Jesus, how Jesus changed him, and what Jesus called him to do.
- **We all have a story.** Are you sharing your story (who you were before Jesus and who you are now because of Jesus)?
- **Our stories should point people to Jesus.**

DOES FEAR OF REJECTION SILENCE US?

- Paul faithfully shared his testimony, and they still rejected him. He didn't shy away from sharing God's love for Gentiles.
- Fear of rejection can slowly change the way we share Jesus. Fear can cause us to do one of two things: we say nothing, or **we only say what we know people will accept.**

PEOPLE'S RESPONSE IS OUT OF CONTROL

- We should speak with **grace, humility, patience, and love. Love without truth isn't love. Truth without love doesn't represent Jesus well. We need both.**
- We aren't responsible for changing someone's heart. We're responsible for faithfully pointing them to Jesus. **Love people, share Jesus, and pray for them.**

WILL WE REMAIN FAITHFUL TO JESUS?

- Paul doesn't abandon Jesus because people reject him. **If people's approval determines our obedience, we will eventually compromise our obedience.**
- There will be moments when following Jesus and pleasing everyone are simply not possible. **If following Jesus costs me someone's approval, will I still obey?**