

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 11TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

PERMISSION TO SPEAK (ACTS 26:1–11)

“YOU HAVE PERMISSION TO SPEAK”

The lineage of Herod was responsible for trying to kill Jesus as a baby, for beheading John the Baptizer, and for the martyrdom of the apostle James, so Paul was not likely to receive a warm reception from Agrippa II.

- Paul genuinely felt fortunate to speak before him because it was **an opportunity to fulfill the calling of preaching to kings** (Acts 9:15).

FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT

Because these individuals knew Paul so well, they had the hardest time accepting his radical transformation in Christ.

- Jesus said **a prophet has no honor in his hometown** (Matthew 13:57). It is often **the ones closest to us who have the hardest time accepting our transformation** because they knew the “old creation” so well (2 Corinthians 5:17).

BELIEVING WHAT GOD PROMISED

Paul was born in Tarsus but moved several hundred miles away to Jerusalem at a young age.

- Paul held Roman citizenship as a Jew, and he would have belonged to the strictest sect of the Pharisees. Paul made it clear that he was a faithful Jew and his trust in Jesus was born **“because of the hope in what God promised to [their] ancestors.”**

PROMISED TO HIS PEOPLE

As early as Genesis 3:15 and throughout the Prophets (Isaiah 52:13–53:12), God promised **the hope of a messiah** who would suffer and die to atone for the sins of His people.

- God also promised **the hope of a resurrection** in the OT (Daniel 12:2; Isaiah 26:19; Ezekiel 37:7–10), which NT writers built upon (Philippians 3:10; Romans 8:11; Ephesians 1:19–20; 1 Corinthians 15:20–22).

“WHY DO ANY OF YOU CONSIDER IT INCREDIBLE...?”

Paul questioned them on why they thought it incredible that God can raise from the dead.

- Jesus said that this was possible (Matthew 19:26), and so did Job: **“But I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the end he will stand on the dust. Even after my skin has been destroyed, yet I will see God in my flesh”** (Job 19:25–27).

“CONVINCED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY”

Paul imprisoning, putting to death, and causing early followers to blaspheme was permitted by those placed in authority by Agrippa II's father.

- Luke's words that Paul “was in agreement” have led some to believe that Paul had a vote in the Sanhedrin. Either way, **Paul's hand in persecuting the Church weighed heavily on him** (1 Corinthians 15:9; 1 Timothy 1:15).

“I WAS TERRIBLY ENRAGED AT THEM”

Paul admitted that before his conversion he was an angry man. His anger towards others revealed that his relationship with God was not right, despite his strict religious observance.

- If we are unable or unwilling to **view everyone as being made in the image of God**, then **that reveals a fracture in our relationship with God that must be addressed.**

CONTINUING THE MISSION (ACTS 26:12–23)

REVEALING THE IRONY

Paul pointed out that his mission of hatred and persecution towards early followers **came from the authority and commissioning of the same people who now accused him.**

- They trusted him enough to be their instrument of persecution, but they did not trust what he was saying as God's chosen instrument.**

“I HEARD A VOICE SPEAKING TO ME”

Jesus said to Paul, **“Why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”**

- In persecuting followers of Jesus, Paul was persecuting Jesus. By fighting against Jesus, **he was fighting against the God of his ancestors and resisting divine callings, bringing about worse self-inflicted pain.**

“I HAVE APPEARED TO YOU FOR THIS PURPOSE”

Paul's purpose in going to Damascus was to persecute the Church, yet upon meeting Christ, **he was given a new purpose.**

- Paul was called **to be a servant and a witness to the people who were now persecuting him.** Paul, who was once blinded for a time, was to go them “to open their eyes.”

THE EFFECTS OF HIS WITNESS

Jesus told Paul that the result of their eyes being opened would be them **turning from darkness to light, turning from the power of Satan to God, receiving forgiveness of**

sins, and **receiving an inheritance** among God's people.

- Isaiah prophesied that Jesus is the “great light” breaking through our spiritual darkness (Isaiah 9:2; Matthew 4:16).

“THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED BY FAITH IN ME

Jesus describes His people as a family, **a people sanctified** (the process of being set apart for the purposes of God and separated from sin and self) **by faith in Him.**

- The process of sanctification is not found in works, spiritual achievements, or personal goodness but in **our connection to Jesus through love and trust in Him.**

“I WAS NOT DISOBEIENT TO THE HEAVENLY VISION”

Paul was obedient and began preaching that **“they should repent and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance.”**

- Paul viewed repentance and turning to God as part of the same action because the action of **walking towards God means walking away from sin**, and then **our actions will confirm true repentance.**

“FOR THIS REASON...”

Paul said that they seized him and tried to kill him because he sought to bring the gospel to them. Though they seized him and wanted to kill him, Paul testified that **God had helped along the way.**

- Paul's thankfulness to God, despite being imprisoned and beaten, shows that **he was more concerned about telling others about Jesus than his personal freedoms.**

NOT EASILY PERSUADED (ACTS 26:24–32)

“AS HE WAS SAYING THESE THINGS...”

As Paul was speaking to Agrippa, he was interrupted by Festus, who claimed that Paul was **“out of [his] mind”** and that **“[his] study[ing] [was] driving [him] mad.”**

- Festus's views are understandable considering that here was **Paul, in chains, joyfully sharing** his encounter with Christ and his hope of a future resurrection (John 14:27; Philippians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 1:18).

“SPEAKING WORDS OF TRUTH AND GOOD JUDGMENT”

The gospel message is characterized by **truth and reason.**

- The gospel is **based on historical events.** The events surrounding Jesus' birth, crucifixion, and resurrection were **verifiable truths** then and now (1 Corinthians 15:6). It **stands to reason that there is a divine architect** (Psalm 19; Romans 1:20).

“DO YOU BELIEVE THE PROPHETS?”

Paul asked Agrippa if he believed the prophets before asking about Jesus.

- Paul wanted to meet Agrippa where he was in his understanding, connecting with him on **what he already believed** before sharing **what he should believe.** We should do the same through **genuine relationships and not impersonal proselytization.**

WHATEVER IT TAKES

Agrippa refused to be persuaded, so Paul replied that his **“wish before God”** was **“that whether easily or with difficulty”** everyone would receive the gospel.

- Paul's heart was that **God will do whatever it takes to reach someone** (“whether easily or with difficulty”) **so they can experience true freedom** (“except for these chains”).

PART OF GOD'S PLAN

Everyone stood up, claiming Paul's innocence, and Agrippa told Festus that Paul could have been released had he not appealed to Caesar.

- Though his appeal kept him in chains instead of being set free, **it was also what gave him an audience** in front of the Governor, the King, and soon the Caesar, **so we should see these events as the fulfillment of God's plan.**

FULFILLING A CALLING

- There is a **unique calling** that God has placed on each one of us. We are to steward the talents, skills, and passions God has given us.
- There is a **universal calling**, an invitation that is shared for everyone to come to know God, love others, live holy lives, and to follow Jesus.

TRANSFORMATION

- We allow God to transform our hearts and minds through a relationship with Him, meaning we **regularly pray and read His Word.**
- Transformation of our hearts and minds will lead to transformed actions.
- Walking towards Christ means we are walking away from sin.

WHATEVER IT TAKES!

- Do we want those in our lives to experience freedom in Christ by any means necessary?
- Do we trust God's methods?
- We are responsible for providing the opportunity for a response, not what that response is. We **share the gospel**, then we **trust God** to make it grow.