

Date : 13/9/2026
Theme : The work of the Holy Spirit in our sanctification and service
Topic : Testifying for Jesus like Paul
Passage : Acts 26
Key verse : *...Paul replied, "Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains." Acts 26:29 NIV*

Introduction

Acts 26 brings Paul before one of the most prominent audiences he would ever address. Paul was an uncondemned prisoner in Caesarea and appealed to Caesar. Festus, the Roman governor, needed a clear charge to send Paul to Rome. King Agrippa II and Bernice visited Festus, and a public hearing was arranged. Paul stood before the king, the governor, high-ranking military officers and prominent people of the city. What looked like an intimidating trial became an extraordinary opportunity for the gospel to fulfill Jesus' purpose to preach to people in power.

Paul did not merely defend himself but skillfully turned his trial to testify for Jesus. He spoke truthfully about his past, explaining his encounter with the risen Christ, and described his changed life and mission. He reasoned from the Scriptures, answered objections respectfully, and gave an invitation to Agrippa to believe. By the end, Paul was not simply the accused prisoner; he was the witness of Jesus, praying that everyone listening may become what he was, except for his chains.

Revelation 12:11 reminds us of the power of testimony: believers will overcome the devil by the word of our testimony. Our testimony does not replace the gospel, but it shows what the gospel has done in a real life. Paul gives us a framework we can use: BEFORE—who I was; DURING—how and why I came to believe; AFTER—how Jesus changed my life. Throughout Acts 26, one truth ties everything together: Jesus is alive. The resurrection explains Paul's conversion, his mission and his confidence.

1. BEFORE – My life before I believed in Jesus (Acts 26:4-11)

a. BACKGROUND – My family upbringing (v. 4)

- i. Paul began with his upbringing – His Jewish identity and he grew up in Jerusalem.
- ii. In our testimony, begin with family upbringing, and how we viewed life, let people know we are just people like anyone else.

b. RELIGIOUS – My religious background (v. 5)

- i. Paul shared that he came from a strict religious background as a Pharisee. It established credibility and showed that his faith in Jesus was not a careless or uninformed decision.
- ii. What did I believe before? Am I religious? Why?
- iii. What was my attitude towards Jesus and Christianity? Why?

- c. **PROBLEMS – My past mistakes and problems faced (that later God resolved)**
- i. Paul was honest that though he was very sincere, he was sincerely wrong. He was convinced that he should oppose Jesus of Nazareth. He imprisoned believers, approved their deaths and tried to force them to deny their faith in Jesus.
 - ii. A testimony is honest about past mistakes, wrong attitudes and problems faced. Share these if God helped you to resolve after you believed.
 - iii. For some, this may include rebellion, pride, anger or addiction; for others, sickness, poverty or emptiness.

2. DURING – How and why I believed in Jesus (Acts 26:12-18)

- a. **How did you hear about Jesus and the gospel (v. 12-14)**
- i. Paul was on the road to Damascus when his life was interrupted by a light from heaven brighter than the sun. He fell to the ground and heard Jesus spoke.
 - ii. Our stories may not be as dramatic. Perhaps a friend shared the gospel, a sermon convicted us, a crisis caused us to seek God, or we struggled for a long time. Tell honestly what happened and how God got your attention.
- b. **How did you respond and why you believed. (v15-19)**
- i. Paul knew it was the Lord, but he was confused, so he asked: “Who are you, Lord?” The answer was Jesus. There Paul realised Jesus was alive.
 - ii. Paul believed Jesus when he told King Agrippa that he was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.
 - iii. We might not believe immediately and had our doubts. Share our doubts and challenges, and how those were resolved that caused us to believe.
- c. **Share briefly the gospel. (v18-20)**
- i. Paul shared about the gospel – the problem and the solution. V18
 - The problem of people living in darkness and sin, under the power of Satan.
 - The solution is Jesus, who was sacrificed for our sins so that our sins may be forgiven; by His resurrection, overcame death, proving He is God, to give us eternal life and a place with Him in heaven.
 - ii. Paul shared about the response - to repent and turn to God and live for Him. v20

- iii. Our testimony must surface the gospel: I am a sinner; I cannot save myself; Jesus died for my sins and rose again; salvation is received by repentance and faith in Him. The reason to believe is not merely “something happened to me,” but that Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection provide the only solution to sin.

3. AFTER – How my life changed after I believed (Acts 26:19-23)

a. Change from past disobedience to obedience

- i. Paul changed from being a persecutor to become a preacher of the good news.
His entire ministry was obedience to God's command ...*I was not disobedient to the heavenly calling...* Acts 26:19.
- ii. In your testimony, connect your old life to your changed life: How has Jesus changed the sins, mistakes, attitudes, fears or problems mentioned in Point 1?

b. Change to live out Jesus' clear mission

Paul testified God, being real and powerful, helped him to carry out Jesus' mission:

- to turn people from darkness to light.
- from power of Satan to God.
- help them receive forgiveness of sins.

Share how God helped you in your life with His peace, healing, provision, reconciliation with loved ones.

How God's word acts as a light for your decisions, to do what is right and how to live, with friends in the faith.

4. Responding and inviting – Turn the conversation toward Jesus (Acts 26:24-29)

a. RESPECTFUL – Answer objections with grace (vv. 24-26)

- i. When Festus shouted that Paul was out of his mind, Paul did not become defensive. He respectfully addressed him as “most excellent Festus,” yet firmly said his message was “true and reasonable.”
- ii. Believers need not be ashamed when challenged. Paul appealed to truth, reason, public events and Scripture.

- b. **REDIRECT – Do not lose the gospel opportunity (vv. 26-27)**
 - i. Paul redirected the conversation from Festus to Agrippa, who understood Jewish customs and the prophets and asked if he believed.
 - ii. Paul moved from defence to decision.
 - iii. A good testimony can respectfully invite a response: “What do you think? Have you considered who Jesus is?”
- c. **REACH – Desire salvation for the listener (vv. 28-29)**

Agrippa's response about becoming a Christian could have ended the conversation. Instead, Paul revealed his heart: “Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.” The prisoner wanted his judges to receive the freedom he had in Christ. That is the goal of testimony—not to win an argument or merely convert someone but sincerely desiring that they receive the same hope and salvation we have received.

APPLICATION

- a. Write or update your testimony this week using the three parts:
BEFORE, DURING, AFTER.
- b. Pray for one person and plan to share your testimony this week.