

Journey Through the New Testament

Acts 21 – 25

“Great Awakening Tour”

6-9-19

Introduction

This week’s reading began with Paul setting sail for Jerusalem. Upon his arrival he reported to the church leaders all that God had been doing in his ministry among the Gentiles. New accusations arose against Paul and the ruckus soon spread to the whole city and culminated with Paul being arrested. Paul offered his defense beginning with his religious credentials and his history as a persecutor of the “followers of the Way.” Paul’s speech was a powerful witness as he told of his dramatic conversion story. The tensions grew worse but Paul was spared further torture by proclaiming his rights as a Roman citizen. He was moved to Caesarea where he once again told his powerful story and faced two trials before sailing to Rome.

Group Sharing

1. What did you discover about Paul’s experience that was new for you?
2. Are there other insights from reading scripture this week that you would like to share?

Opening Prayer

O, God we give thanks that the story of your love has reached to us. Make us bold and able to be your witnesses in all that we do and say. In Christ we pray. Amen.

Bible Study Acts 22:1-25 (CEB)

What?

1. Paul never missed an opportunity to share his amazing story of Christ, even speaking to the wild crowds who opposed him. What points did Paul make about his background as he told his personal story? (v. 3-5)
2. Why would this information have been important to his hearers?
3. What did he tell the crowd next? (v. 6-16)
4. What was the crowd’s response to his dramatic experience? (v. 21-25)
5. What fact prompted the action of the Roman commander? (v. 29)

Lesson Notes:

Paul was then taken before the Sanhedrin, a plot to kill him emerged and he was taken to trial. Rome, however, could find no cause for execution. As a Roman citizen, Paul was entitled to appeal to Caesar. (Acts 25) This led to another

opportunity for him to tell the salvation story, this time to Festus and Agrippa. Note how the message of the gospel was spreading even in Paul's arrest.

So What?

1. What assets and experience did Paul possess that made him capable of connecting to people from various cultures, religions, and languages?
2. What part of your personal life/faith story could help you connect with other people and their experiences?
3. In what way was Paul's personal story part of a bigger story—God's story?

Now What?

1. Most people find it difficult to share their faith with others. Why do you think this is so intimidating?
2. What would help you be more confident in sharing your faith?

Lesson Notes: Most of us do not have a dramatic, Damascus Road, blinding light kind of faith story, but we do have a story. Do not underestimate the importance of your experience. Whatever the details, we can be better prepared to share our faith if we have summarized and practiced, which makes it easier for us to share it when the opportunity arises.

Use the following questions to help you share your story of coming to faith in Christ.

How did you learn about God's love for you?

When did God become real for you?

What has helped you grow closer to God and deeper in your faith?

How has your faith in God shaped your life—priorities, behavior, meaning, etc.

Give it a try. Gather into groups of two or three and share your answers. For further reflection and practice, write out your story using the above guide then practice telling it in less than five minutes. Remember: your story is part of a bigger story. You have influence and ability to help others in their faith.

Closing

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. (St. Francis of Assisi)