

South Bay Church Plant Sabbath School

13 – Witnessing Through Your Personal Testimony

Introduction

Paul finishes his missionary journey and heads to Jerusalem, where he will end up being arrested and imprisoned. During this time, he has an opportunity to share his faith with Jewish and Gentile leaders. Even though Paul can no longer plant churches, he lives out his faith in every circumstance, taking an opportunity to share his personal story and gospel convictions with all who will listen.

What makes it hard for you to share your faith with others? How can you be more intentional in sharing?

Paul in Jerusalem

On his arrival in Jerusalem, Paul speaks to James (the brother of Jesus) and the other elders of the church. While praising God for his work among the Gentiles, the elders are concerned that Paul is perceived as preaching against the law of Moses. They urge Paul to demonstrate his fidelity to the law of Moses by sponsoring four men in their Nazarite vows and participating with them in the rituals of purification. Instead of placating the Jews, this action stirs up a mob and a Roman commander has to step in to keep the peace. Paul asks for permission to address the crowd of Jewish leaders and angry people.

Acts 22:1-5

What are some of the ways in which Paul connects with his audience? Why is it important to begin your personal testimony in his way?

Dale Carnegie in his book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, gives this maxim: “The royal road to a person's heart is to talk about the things he or she treasures most.” Have you had an experience where this happened to you? What happened that made a difference?

Notice also how Paul surprises them with the first part of his story. How could we begin sharing our personal testimonies in surprising ways?

Acts 22:6-11

Paul's description of meeting Jesus is vivid. There's sight, sound, and dialogue. The telling of our testimony will captivate people when we give specific and vivid details.

What emotions do you think Paul experienced on the road to Damascus, and why do you think he experienced these emotions?

Acts 22:12-16

What would have likely gone through Paul's mind during his journey to Damascus? How would his perspective have changed on meeting Ananias and hearing his prophecy and counsel?

As Paul develops his story, he gradually solves the dilemma he gave his audience at the beginning. He explains how he moved from being antagonistic to the Christian faith to embracing it. If this was a Facebook or Instagram Reel, what tagline would you put at the top of the video?

Acts 22:17-21

In what ways has Paul's life changed since meeting Jesus?

How has your life changed since surrendering to Jesus?

Acts 22:22-23

Why do you think the Jews are so mad at what Paul has said? Do you think there was a more winsome way for Paul to speak to the Jews? Why or why not?

Paul Before Agrippa

Following more controversy, Paul is sent to Felix the governor, who keeps him imprisoned under house arrest for two years. When Felix is replaced by Festus, he has another trial and Paul appeals to Caesar. Later, King Agrippa and his sister/wife come to town. He expresses an interest in hearing Paul. Festus arranges for Paul to be brought before them. Once again, Paul gets to share his testimony.

Acts 26:1-3

How does Paul appeal to King Agrippa?

Acts 26:4-11

What was it like for Paul to be a Pharisee? Paul is not describing his life as a non-religious person, but as a religious person who misunderstood God. How might this describe portions of your life?

Acts 26:12-18

Notice the much greater detail in this testimony. What stands out to you in Paul's testimony of meeting Jesus?

How would you describe how you came to understand the gospel and fully surrender to Jesus? Sometimes it is not a single moment, but a gradual realization that happens over time.

Acts 26:19-23

How was Paul's life different after his dramatic conversion? How did his experience and calling give him purpose?

In what ways has Jesus changed your life? How would you share that experience with others?

Acts 26:24-32

Agrippa's statement to Paul shows that Paul almost persuaded him to accept Jesus (verse 28). What do you think was the most compelling part of Paul's testimony for Agrippa? Think of someone of you would like to share Jesus with. How could you connect with them and share your story in a compelling way?

Conclusion

Paul's sharing of his testimony followed a familiar strategy. He (1) connected with his audience, (2) talked about his life before meeting Jesus, (3) how he met Jesus, and then (4) his life after meeting Jesus. How can you follow this same strategy in sharing your faith story with others? You can also take a look at the supplemental material on *How to Witness Anywhere*.