

PAUL'S TESTIMONY (*Acts 22:1-21*)

Paul opens with a brief history of his life (v. 1-3)

Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.”² And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said:³ “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.

Paul tells about his life before Christ (v. 4-5)

I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women,⁵ as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

Paul explains how he came to know Christ (v. 6-13)

As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me.⁷ And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”⁸ And I answered, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said to me, “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.”⁹ Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me.¹⁰ And I said, “What shall I do, Lord?” And the Lord said to me, “Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.”¹¹ And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.¹² And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,¹³ came to me, and standing by me said to me, “Brother Saul, receive your sight.” And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him.

Paul tells about his life after coming to know Christ (v. 14-18)

And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth;¹⁵ for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.¹⁶ And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’¹⁷ “When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance¹⁸ and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.

Paul closes with his obedience to Christ (v. 19-21)

And I said, “Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you.²⁰ And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.”²¹ And he said to me, “Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.”

BUILDING YOUR TESTIMONY

- Your testimony is the story of how God transformed your life through a relationship with Jesus.
- It points to God's grace, character, and power to save.
- As you share what He has done in your life, you help others see who God is and what He can do, making your testimony one of the most powerful tools for sharing the gospel.
- Being prepared for an open door to share with someone is crucial if you are going to be faithful to share the story God has given you.
- Your testimony points not to your past, but to God's grace.

BEFORE CHRIST:

1. The Opening: Describe your early interests/resistance to God (Jesus, church, religion)

- I grew up...
- What did your life revolve around (e.g. relationships, your reputation, success) that God used to help bring you to Him? Briefly illustrate how that influenced your life?

2. Your Life Before Christ: Paint a picture of what your life was like before you came to Christ. Do not dwell too much on, or brag about, past sins. Share only the details just enough to show your need for Christ. (Key Words: Lost, separated)

- I once was...
- What about my life before Christ will relate most to the non-Christians I know?
- What did my life revolve around? Where did I get my security, worth, identity, satisfaction, or happiness from? What were you looking for or escaping instead of depending on Jesus?
- How did those things begin to let me down? Why were you open to change?

ENCOUNTERED CHRIST

3. How You Came to A Relationship with Christ: Give the details about why and how you became a Christian. Briefly spell out, step-by-step, how you came to Christ so the person you are talking with, and anyone who overhears you, can understand how they can become a Christian too.

- When was the first time I heard the gospel? What were my initial reactions?
- When and why did my perspective on Christ begin to change? What about Jesus became real to you?
- What doubts or struggles did you go through before I accepted Him?
- Why did I finally decide to believe in Jesus and surrender my life? What did you know at that moment that you accepted Christ?

EXPERIENCED LIFE CHANGE

4. Your Life After Putting Your Faith in Christ: Share some of the changes that Christ has made in your life. Emphasize the changes in your character, attitude or perspective, not just changes in behavior. Be realistic. We still struggle as Christians.

- How is my life different now? List some specific changes in your character, attitude and perspective on life.
- What do you live for?
- Even though my life still is not perfect, how does knowing Christ help me deal with that fact?
- What I now know...

5. The Closing: End with a statement that summarizes your story. If you want, close with a Bible verse that relates to your experience.

- What did your life revolve around that God used to help bring you to Him?

SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY AND THE GOSPEL

The Gospel In One Minute

- A simple framework:
 - God created you.
 - Sin separated you.
 - Jesus rescued you.
 - You can respond today.

Recognize when God is leading you to share your story.

- Practice listening to and depending on the Holy Spirit. Pray for opportunities to share your faith and pay attention to who God may be placing on your heart.
- As you engage with others, be genuinely interested, listen well, ask thoughtful questions, and trust God to guide the conversation. Don't worry about having all the right words. Just start the conversation and push through any awkwardness.
- Pray for them before, during and after talking with them.

Identify your hesitations.

- Matthew 10:19-20 + Acts 4:20
- We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard

Keep it simple, open and curious.

A simple invitation can look something like this:

- "How can I pray for you?"
- "Has faith ever been part of your story?"
- "Would you ever want to hear my faith journey?"

Inviting Someone to Make a Decision to Accept Jesus

Inviting someone to follow Jesus may be the most important question you ever ask. After sharing the gospel, it gives them an opportunity to respond to what God may be doing in their heart.

- A relationship with Jesus requires a personal response. Have you made the decision to trust and follow Him? If not, what is holding you back?

If someone wants to receive Jesus with you, you could lead them through a prayer like this...

"Lord Jesus, I need you and want to know you personally. I am a sinner in need of grace. Thank you for willingly dying on the cross for my sin and defeating death through your resurrection, so I can experience full life through a restored relationship with you. I receive your free gift of forgiveness and surrender every area of my life to you. Make me more like Jesus each day. Amen."