



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 84 “Almost Persuaded/Express Yourself pt 2”
By Pastor Jody May 06/23/2024

Acts 26:19-32 ESV

¹⁹“Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. ²¹For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²²To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: ²³that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

²⁴ And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.” ²⁵ But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. ²⁶ For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” ²⁸ And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” ²⁹ And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”

³⁰ Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them. ³¹ And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, “This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment.” ³² And Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

[READ THE TEXT]

Pastor – “People of God, this is the Word of God.”

People – “Thanks be to God.”

[PRAY]



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[INTRO. & BACKGROUND]

Well as we start out this week, this is a part 2 of a ‘dissecting’ of Paul’s personal testimony that we find in the book of Acts. As we are nearing the end of our adventure in this story, of the beginnings of the 1st century church, the author, Luke the physician/historian, has taken a two-year stint of Paul’s imprisonment in Jerusalem and has highlighted for us Paul’s story of Salvation. **He paints the picture of God’s Gospel along with Paul’s personal testimony.** That’s important for us because we said last week as we near the end of this historical book, for the Christians that read it, **we are asked this:** Are we prepared to give an answer for the hope that is in us, can we share the Gospel in a way that expresses how Jesus has changed us as well?

MP:

The invitation to share the Gospel comes with the need to verbally EXPRESS what has happened to you.

Every time Paul has given his testimony it is never just about the things that just happened on the outside of Paul, (where, when, and whom) but the things that happened within his soul. We just taught the students before they left this week on how to share the Gospel and how **people need to hear how Jesus changed your life.** How He showed you your sin, showed you how He was saving you, and how you are now different. **Today’s sermon will be a continuation on how to express oneself when one gives an account of the Gospel in their life.**

The whole theme for the book of Acts has been, **“Can I get a witness?”** I hope by now you have seen that means that the **HS is with you**, as it has been with all the preachers, evangelists, prophets, and Apostles In this book. I pray that you have learned the fact that **God is always with us** in the person and work of the **HS**, empowering us to give our story to cause people to believe through our testimony! We all have a role in evangelizing with this body, not just the elders/preachers, to give the story of how Christ changed us to others, as a hope to be believed! This is everyone’s honor and responsibility.



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Quickly these are the main points we learned from Paul’s example last week:

- 1. Express Mutual Respect for all people. (1-3)**
- 2. Express one’s own lack of belief. (4-11)**
- 3. Express that Salvation is dependent on Jesus alone. (12-15)**
- 4. Express everyone’s need for the Gospel. (16-18)**

Then this week here is what we are adding to that list:

- 5. Express the power of the cross and resurrection and the need for repentance. (19-23)**
- 6. Express your need for dependency on God. (22 & 29)**
- 7. Express your desire for them to accept truth while accepting their ridicule. (24-28)**

- 5. Express the power of the cross/resurrection and the need for repentance.**

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²¹For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²²To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: ²³that the **Christ must suffer** and that, by being the **first to rise from the dead**, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

At the end of our personal testimony, **we see here where all our stories need to go.** When God opens the door with you to share your faith you can’t just stop with where you failed, you can’t stop at your belief that Jesus was a man and he was God, you can’t just even stop at everyone’s need for the Gospel. Yes, that was all good news, but now you have to get to the meat of the



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Gospel, you have to **EXPRESS** the power in the **Regality of the Cross**, the **Vindication of the Resurrection**, and the **Requirements for Repentance**.

Paul says that the Christ must suffer, well who is this **Christ that suffers** (v.23)?

Proclaim the Regality in the Power of the **Cross**.

Isaiah 53:7-12 ESV

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.
⁸By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?
⁹And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.
¹⁰Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;

he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.
¹¹Out of the **anguish of his soul** he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall **bear their iniquities.**
¹²**Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,**
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because **he poured out his soul to death**
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.



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The Regality of the Cross means Jesus, as the Christ, was a chosen sacrifice as the rightful [King of humanity](#) to die ([Isaiah 9:6-7](#)). That is why He is able to in v.12 **divide His portion** with the many. A King, as the top representative of power and people, is able to give as He sees fit. **If a Divine King does not die you have no divine granting of pardon.** You see a Divine Kings can deliver justice because He can absorb payment of the guilty while at the same deliver justice for the condemned, and there has only been one king in history that could do that fully, Jesus the Christ.

That is exactly what all people need to hear. God has provided a way to get rid of sin/iniquities, that which keeps us from reuniting with God, our Father. Sin is about people doing what they want to do contrary to what God wants them to do.

If they are having a hard time seeing it, share with them the story that Luke provided for Gentiles to help in seeing that. Go to [Luke 23:32-49](#); and relate to them they have only two choices on how to view the crucifixion. One option is they make it out to be about power, as the one criminal tempts Jesus to say if you are so powerful then get us down. That means they may see their behavior not as rebellion and that power is to be used to escape consequences. The other thief saw himself as deserving condemnation, and saw Jesus as a King, “remember me as you come into your **kingdom**”. He saw Jesus as a person that could forgive the wrongs of a guilty soul. Don’t let people squirm out of that dilemma, **ask them which one are you?** Proclaim the Regality of the Cross, and ask them which opinion they have of have of Jesus?

Proclaim the Vindication of the Resurrection.

V. 23 Paul said along with the Christ suffering that through that, **Christ was the first to rise from the dead**, now why should we talk about that?

Colossians 1:18 ESV

And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the **firstborn from the dead**, that in everything he might be preeminent.



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Christ being the first to rise from the dead shows a way **to escape eternal damnation and death** for those in the church. Jesus rose because the resurrection vindicated His claims to be the High God-King and that there was no sin in Him. And again, if He is King, if He can take your sin, and give you righteousness, cannot He give you His reward for that as well? I say He can and so did Paul!

1 Thessalonians 4:16 ESV

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the **dead in Christ will rise first.**

His vindication is our vindication, in Him **we not only gain the pardon of sin we gain the entrance into Heaven!** Friends again I know it seems a little weird sometimes but life after death is a BIG promise of Christianity, and your belief in that fact should show in your excitement when you express it! The King has said you will rise again, believe that friends for all His promises have always come true!

If indeed that is what we want, if that person you are sharing with wants that as well, then here is the third part of the meat of this Gospel expression you must get across. If you look back at v.20 Paul describes the person that accepts these truths: **“repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.”**

Proclaim the Requirements of Repentance.

1st, Recognize it is a requirement for Salvation:

Jesus said, “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” **Mat. 4:17** – Paul’s constant message for repentance is because it was Jesus’ constant call throughout the Gospels. **Metanoeo**, means to change one’s mind to turn from what you were once thinking.¹ When we accept the regal suffering servant, His payment on the cross, for our iniquities, to receive His vindication of eternal life, you CANNOT keep to your worldly ways. There must be a turning

¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3340/esv/mgnt/0-1/>



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away from what you relied on, and a turning to a full and complete reliance on Jesus for all of life.

2nd, Recognize that true repentance will also produce real fruit:

“Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.” **Mat. 3:8 ESV**

“so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;” **Colossians 1:10 ESV**

Expressing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, one must ultimately get to the meat, the center - Cross, Resurrection, Repentance, the lost need to hear the truth of these things. There are thousands of people who think they are Christians because they have said a prayer, they have walked an aisle, they filled out a card, and they talked to a pastor BUT many of those same people are lost if they know not the reason why or how they were saved. That just means they were made aware of sin at some point, but they were never given the good news and called to believe in the saving work of Jesus. Family, let us be a people that give all people the full meaning of the Gospel, it took a God-man to become King, to pay for our sin, to give to us His righteousness, to earn for us resurrection, and who calls us to believe it, repenting and living a life that reflects those things in our hearts.

Now this takes us to our next expression of the Gospel which means you will have to admit your dependency on God.

6. Express your dependency on God. (22 & 29)

²²To this day I have **had the help that comes from God**, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but **what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass**:

Rely on God’s Word to find your answers.

When it gets down to it, we rely on what we are saying because it is the truth, that is made clear by the Spirit. Paul says I have said nothing but what the prophets said would come to pass. All he has said is what the Bible told him to say. When you give the story of the Gospel you are going to get more



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stares of disbelief, more laughs of derision, and the only thing you will have is, **the Bible tells me so**, and family – that’s enough! You don’t unhitch from anything in the Bible, the OT all the way from Adam describes why we need a Savior, it tells of man’s eternal struggle to fulfill it, and it all points to Jesus who came and did it. This is why we as a church prescribe to a reading plan every year that gets us through the Bible. That’s not because we are a strict bunch of hillbilly fundamentalist believers, it is because every Christian should read the Bible, so they understand how all the Bible points to the need of Christ!

Expressing your dependency on God, in your Gospel proclamation may simply be, keep reading the Bible and seek to know it better, and express that to people for that is exactly how they will keep learning. As well, if someone has questions for you about the Gospel don’t be afraid to say I don’t know but tell them you will look it up in the Bible to get them an answer. Then seek help, seek prayer, and go searching and you will find out this great truth, that all of God’s Word is **profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness** ([2 Tim 3:16-17](#)).

Rely on the Holy Spirit to make convictions of the heart.

²⁹ And Paul said, “Whether short or long, **I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me** this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”

When confronted by Agrippa about Paul’s intention, **would you persuade me to be a Christian**, Paul makes no bones about what he wants, he wants Agrippa to be saved. Not just Agrippa but all that hear the Gospel, is that your desire? I pray that it is, but just like Paul we need to keep in mind that **no one comes to the Father without the intervention of the HS.**

1 Corinthians 12:3 ESV

Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” **except in the Holy Spirit.**



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In expressing our Faith to others along with Relying on God’s Word we need to rely on God’s Spirit for the clarification and acceptance of what is being taught. That means two things for us here right now.

First, before you ever try to talk to someone **make sure you are prayed up**. Pray that God will not only help you to communicate but yes pray against the will of the person you are talking to, pray that God works against their heart, pray that God would show them Grace, and pray as you should that you want to see Jesus glorified.

Second, let those you are talking to **know that you care about them**. Your desire is not to make them another notch on your evangelism belt but that you actually care about their eternal existence. Pray for them, pray for God’s intervention, and pray they are delivered out of darkness into light.

This brings us to our last expression which may or may not get the results you want, but that’s ok for we do this for the audience of God not man.

7. Express your desire for them to accept the truth WHILE accepting their ridicule. (24-28)

²⁴ And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.” ²⁵ But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. ²⁶ For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” ²⁸ And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?”

At the end of our evangelizing, expressing the magnificence of the Gospel and how it saved us, you may get a thank you, you may get a no thanks, and you may be called crazy! None of that, not one word, justifies who you are and if you did a good enough job, for any kind of answer at all means you were faithful to your calling of be a proclaimer of the mighty works of God.



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1 Peter 4:14 ESV

If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

At least for Paul he knew that he was getting the point across. Festus, the new ruler in town, is in shock for what can he write to Caesar now? Festus has found a man in which his intelligence led him to believe in the unseeable God and who has put his faith in the life of a man that is claimed to have come back from the dead?! Agrippa is confronted with the truth of all the stories he has ever heard from his grandfather, who tried to kill this Messiah, to his dad, who tried to kill the church, and now he is faced not with judgment for his ancestors' actions he is confronted by Grace! Paul is offering him Salvation, Agrippa is not judged by his ancestors, no reparations were demanded of him, just the offer to believe in a true king.

Both rulers stop the meeting, it's too much, and they both come to the conclusion, if Paul had not appealed to Caesar, he would be free to go. Even in their denial of the Gospel, these rulers see that the Gospel is not a threat to men, it is a blessing.

Family today, I believe for everyone in here there is someone in your heart that you need to go through these steps with. There is someone that needs to hear the Gospel and your story of how it saved you. They need for you to work it all the way through even up and through the point of the Cross, the resurrection, and the need for true repentance. I believe HCC will become the church that practices what is preached, that their job is to proclaim the Gospel. Let us pray together now for our chance to share and for those that God is laying on our hearts.

[PRAYER]

[CALL TO OBEY]

Elder – Read John 14:23 – Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him...”



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[COMMUNION]

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder – “Christians, what do you believe?”

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

[OFFERING+LAST SONG] –



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[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, Maker of all things, and the provider of the way back to Him, His Son.

Go in the name of the Son, the only begotten of the Father who suffered, died, and rose again, giving life and liberty to all who believe.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, the giver of life, who causes the blind to see and the deaf to hear, now go and trust Him in the work of your proclamation.