



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Acts 13 – 26 Sermon Series

Supports Session 11: Witness

Sermon Title: “A Reminder is Always Needed” (Acts 23:1-11)

Connection to Session 11

Paul’s testimony of his conversion served as a witness to the Jerusalem mob and the Roman soldiers present. His testimony was met with an uproar when he mentioned the need to share the gospel with the Gentiles.

Introduction/Opening

How does a teenager learn how to drive? One word: carefully! With an adult in the car, the teen puts on the seat belt, places the key in the ignition, turns the key, presses the brake, and looks around before moving the car. After a few years and much more experience, these steps are done almost without thinking!

This is how the principles we will study today should be. They should be done without thinking. Yet, it can be easy to miss the mark and take things for granted. As we consider the contrast between Paul and Ananias the high priest, we see that a reminder is always needed.

Outline

1. Walk in the Word (Acts 23:1-5)

- a. There’s a sharp contrast between Paul and Ananias:
 - i. Ananias was trained in the Word of God.
 1. But knowledge does not equal obedience.
 2. This is a picture of being religious but missing the relationship.
 - ii. Paul, on the other hand, had a clear understanding of the Word.
 1. He was obedient to the Word.
 - a. Throughout these last few chapters in Acts, Paul shared of how he was saved in Christ.
 - b. He was saved, radically saved, and was now being pressed to do something radical because of that salvation.
 2. What a contrast!
- b. There is always a temptation to hold on to the status quo.
 - i. Do not be led to anything contrary to the Word.
 1. Do not be tempted to focus on comfort, entertainment, or even a selfish “Me” attitude.
 2. Heed the warning given by Paul in 2 Timothy 4:3-4. There will come a time when people won’t listen to sound teaching.
 3. Stand firm to do what is right in God’s eyes and ignore your fears.

- ii. Charles Spurgeon said, “Faith laughs at that which fear weeps over.”¹
- iii. Don’t be like Ananias, be like Paul. Let God press you to walk in His Word.

2. Focus on the Gospel (Acts 23:6-11)

- a. Everything should be about the gospel.
 - i. Paul realized that he was addressing the high priest, so he turned it to the gospel. He mentioned two things:
 - 1. He was a Pharisee.
 - 2. He mentioned the resurrection of the dead. This led to a dispute between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
 - a. The Sadducees didn’t believe in this concept.
 - b. While this group was arguing about religious things, Paul was able to remain focused on the main thing—the gospel.
 - 3. Another contrast: They were distracted, but Paul was focused.
- b. Make changes to be about the gospel.
 - i. In no way is the gospel second to religious activity.
 - ii. So how do YOU get on mission with God? Get in the Word, yes, but make sure that you have focused your life on the gospel.
 - iii. Jesus made this plain when He stood next to Paul in the barracks and spoke to him (v. 11).
 - 1. What did he say? Jesus said Paul would be His witness in Rome as well.
 - 2. This meant major changes for Paul and his life.
 - 3. Be on the lookout to make changes that will advance His Kingdom and glorify His name.

Conclusion

These principles are very simple: walk in the Word and focus on the gospel. Though easy to say, these are difficult to do, and again, this is why we need a reminder! It is truly about obedience. The Lord spoke through Paul because Paul was obedient. We have seen the same thing throughout the Bible with Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Malachi, and others. And He can speak through you! As you walk in the Word and focus on His gospel, let me encourage you to examine your life and make adjustments so people can see Jesus through you.

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¹ Spurgeon, C. H. *A Singular Title and a Special Favor*. 1874. <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/a-singular-title-and-a-special-favor/>