



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Acts 13 – 26 Sermon Series

Supports Session 12: Respond

Sermon Title: “What’s Your Story?” (Acts 26:9-18)

Connection to Session 12

In Acts 26, Paul shares his testimony. In his encounter with Jesus, he was given the task of taking the gospel to the Gentiles.

Introduction/Opening

Have you ever heard a good fishing story? You know, the kind that started once with a small fish and has gotten bigger and bigger until it took on a life of its own . . . that kind of fishing story. Unfortunately, some Christians seem to think that their story needs to be dramatic for it to be effective. But the truth is, your story in Christ is enough. It needs to be clear and concise, but most of all, it must be truthful!

We see this in Paul’s story. Before Agrippa, Paul had the opportunity to share his testimony of being lost, hearing the gospel, surrendering his life, and being changed forever for a purpose. Let’s look at Paul’s example and see how we can apply it to our own lives.

Outline

1. Realize your lostness (Acts 26:9-11)

- a. Paul stated that he was lost.
 - i. Paul was raised a Pharisee, trained by Gamaliel, cast votes to execute Christians, held coats at the stoning of Steven, persecuted and punished Christians publicly in front of people in the synagogues, tortured Christians so they would deny Christ, chased them to Roman and Greek cities, and sent by the chief priests to Damascus.
 - ii. Christ was an insult to a legalist-filled man like Paul.
- b. In the same way, you were lost in your sins.
 - i. People rebel against Christ every day. People are natural idolators.
 - ii. We sin because we are sinners.
 1. We inherited that sin nature from Adam (Rom. 5:11-14; 1 Cor. 15:21-22).
 2. This results in sinful behavior: arguments, stress, hatred, anger, lying, stealing, fornication, and killing (Rom. 3:10,23; 6:23; Jas. 4:1-3).

- iii. The first part of your story in Christ is admitting you are a sinner, lost in your sins.

2. **Hear the truth of the gospel (Acts 26:12-15)**

- a. Paul's story.
 - i. Paul had traveled towards Damascus to harm the church and Jesus intervened.
 - ii. Paul literally saw the light. And then he heard the voice of Jesus.
- b. What is your story?
 - i. You may be doing your own thing, but God begins to speak to you through the preaching of His Word.
 - ii. There are at least two types of people that God saves.
 - 1. Those who are missing the mark. They claim to be spiritual, but they are not following God's truth.
 - 2. Those who are off the mark. They reject God's witness, choosing a life of rebellious pleasure.
 - 3. Neither road leads to eternal life with Christ.
 - iii. That is, unless one thing happens: you surrender your life to Jesus.
 - iv. What is your story? Does your faith story match up with God's Word? Have you accepted the gospel message?

3. **Surrender your life (Acts 26:16a)**

- a. Jesus called Paul to stand: "But get up and stand on your feet . . ." (v. 16).
 - i. God calls people to respond to His invitation.
 - ii. Yes, you were lost and heading for Hell. But stand!
 - iii. As God had powerfully risen His Son from the dead, so He can give you a new life (Rom. 6:4)!
- b. When did you surrender your life to Jesus Christ?
 - i. Admit your sin, believe in Christ, and commit to follow Him.
 - ii. It is a moment that changes you forever.

4. **Be changed for a purpose (Acts 26:16b-18)**

- a. Tell everyone.
 - i. Paul's purpose was to open the eyes of the Gentiles "so that they may turn from darkness to light" (v. 18).
 - ii. In the same way, we are called to share the gospel with everyone (Matt. 28:19-20).
- b. Tell with passion.
 - i. Be changed for a purpose.
 - 1. Your priorities will change. Your purpose and mission will change.
 - 2. Your church will change, because it will be influenced by you.
 - ii. Be sold out on the gospel.
 - 1. As Paul was changed, so should you. Welcome discomfort for the sake of the gospel.
 - 2. You won't worry so much about comfort and convenience, but instead, you'll worry about carrying on the gospel work.
 - a. You may need to change your methods to reach the lost (Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 9:22).

3. In Christ, you have a new purpose: to share His good news with as many people as you can.
4. Be changed and change the world!

Conclusion

Today, you are being challenged. Look at your life and see what story you have. Does it match the truth of the gospel? If not, make this change today. But don't stop there. Your story has just begun as you reach people with the gospel. Go and tell!

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