

TEXT: Acts 26:1-23

TOPIC: The Power of a Personal Testimony

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Florence, SC

Sunday night, February 10, 2013

### 1. Paul's Life Before Becoming a Christian, Acts 26:1-11

<sup>1</sup> Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: <sup>2</sup> "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, <sup>3</sup> especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently. <sup>4</sup> "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. <sup>5</sup> They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. <sup>6</sup> And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. <sup>7</sup> To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. <sup>8</sup> Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead? <sup>9</sup> "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>10</sup> This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. <sup>11</sup> And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

#### I. Your Life Before Becoming a Christian

- A. Tell where you grew up
- B. In church or not
- C. Something about your family
- D. Describe how you felt, what you believed, others will identify with your feelings, or beliefs more than your specific life

### 2. How Paul Came to Accept Jesus into His Life, Acts 26:12-18

<sup>12</sup> "While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, <sup>13</sup> at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. <sup>14</sup> And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' <sup>15</sup> So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup> But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. <sup>17</sup> I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, <sup>18</sup> to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

#### II. How You Came to Accept Christ,

- A. Tell when, where, who or what was involved in helping you come to Christ.
- B. Use your words, not churchy or Christianese
- C. Share enough of the Gospel in your testimony that the listener will understand how to be saved.

1 Cor. 15:1-4, <sup>1</sup>Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, <sup>2</sup>by which also you are saved, <sup>3</sup>For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

### 3. Paul's Life Since Becoming a Christian, Acts 26:19-23

<sup>19</sup> "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, <sup>20</sup> but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. <sup>21</sup> For these reasons the Jews

*seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come—<sup>23</sup> that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.”*

*Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

*James 2:18 - But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

### **III. Your Life Since Becoming a Christian,**

- A. Share the difference in your life now that you have received Christ
- B. Stress the fact that you have changed

*2 Cor. 5:17, What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!*

*Galatians 6:15,(NLT) What counts is whether we really have been changed into new and different people.*