

▼ **Are You Bringing Good News Or Only Good Advice? - Part 1**

Rocklyn Clarke Sr. - Sunday March 6, 2022

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• **Read the Passage: Acts 25:23 - 26:32**

The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high ranking officers and the leading men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. Festus said: "King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome. But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. For I think it is unreasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him."

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

"The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me. Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

"I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.

"On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

"Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'

"'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

“So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen — that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”

At this point Festus interrupted Paul’s defense. “You are out of your mind, Paul!” he shouted. “Your great learning is driving you insane.”

“I am not insane, most excellent Festus,” Paul replied. “What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.”

Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”

Paul replied, “Short time or long — I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”

The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. They left the room, and while talking with one another, they said, “This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment.”

Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

▼ **Sermon’s Purpose (what listeners should know and do)**

- **Understand the context: Acts 25:23 - 26:8 - Paul before Agrippa**
- Share your life before Christ.
- Share how you realized you needed to follow Christ.
- Share how you began following Christ.
- Share your life in Christ.

▼ **Understand the context; Acts 25:23 - 26:8 - Paul before Agrippa**

▼ The Audience

- Festus, as an outsider, has to evaluate Paul from his own pagan perspective.
- Festus invites King Agrippa and Bernice to help him evaluate Paul. They are more familiar with the Jewish world.
- High ranking military offices and other prominent men, most if not all of whom are also outsiders, are in the audience as well. They will be looking at Paul through their own most likely pagan lenses.

- Paul addresses this mixed but mostly pagan audience, including Festus, King Agrippa and Bernice.
- ▼ Their Perspective
 - Paul is a Jew.
 - The Jews strangely believe in only one god.
 - Jews have a strange practice of not working one day a week.
 - Jews don't eat certain foods.
 - Jews have various controversies.
- ▼ Paul's perspective:
 - He was and is a faithful Jew.
 - He continues to hope in what God promised their ancestors.
 - Paul identifies with the Jewish hope of the resurrection of the dead.
 - Paul did not convert from Judaism - he has embraced the fulfillment of Judaism.
- ▼ How the world views us:
 - People of faith.
 - Keep the faith.
 - Christianity is about going to heaven.
 - The purpose of church is to give good advice.
- ▼ What's our response?
 - We are people who have faith in Jesus - God's appointed King.
 - Faith in what or whom? Faith always has an object.
 - Christianity is about following Jesus as a disciple.
 - ▼ We are first and foremost proclaimers of good news - not merely good advice!
 - We have been entrusted with a message: The Kingdom of God is here!
 - Our structures and systems affect how we understand that message.
- ▼ What do our structures say?
 - ▼ Good advice or good news?
 - College classroom
 - Fire department
 - Police department
 - Construction crew
 - In the world of exercise, you can't achieve aerobic results without involving the body's largest muscles: the leg muscles.

- In the world of ministry, you can't achieve a "good news" orientation without involving the largest component of your ministry system - typically the Sunday morning service.
- ▼ Structure with good news in mind!
 - We must train believers to be "good news" people.
 - ▼ We must impart the skills to do the following:
 - Be good news.
 - Do good news.
 - Proclaim good news.
 - We must "be good news" by having a transformative impact on the world around us.
 - Build up the church - [Ephesians 4:1-16](#)

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
- ▼ Every part of our ministry must serve this goal - this includes Sunday morning.
 - Life groups are the basic environment in which discipleship will take place. A life group is a group of 3 - 15 believers who come together weekly outside of the church building for evangelism, community, and spiritual growth with the goal of making disciples who make disciples.
 - Some churches use small groups in order to build up the Sunday service.
 - We are going to use our Sunday service to build up the life groups and support them in their task of outreach, evangelism, discipleship, and service.

▼ **Let the Good News Transformation Begin!**

▼ **Word**

- What do the non-Christians who know you actually think you believe? Have you ever asked them? Discuss.
- Look through our Life Group Goals. Share your questions and ideas.

▼ **Witness**

- Whom can you be good news to this coming week? Can someone from your life group partner with you in this?
- Choose a partner from your life group to pray with and work with this week.

▼ **Life Group Meeting**

▼ **Welcome (5 - 10 minutes)**

- [Icebreaker](#)

• **Worship (optional for life group meetings during Sunday service)**

▼ **Word**

▼ **Discussion Questions**

For each question, spend 1 – 2 minutes in silence before you begin to respond.

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- Witness



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Sunday March 6, 2022



Our Passage – Acts 25:23 – 26:3 (1 of 5)

The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high ranking officers and the leading men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. Festus said: “King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome. But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. For I think it is unreasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him.”

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Our Passage – Acts 26:4-11 (2 of 5)

“The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me. Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

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Our Passage – Acts 26:12-18 (3 of 5)

“On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

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“‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’



Our Passage – Acts 26:19-24 (4 of 5)

“So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen — that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”

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Our Passage – Acts 26:25-32 (5 of 5)

“I am not insane, most excellent Festus,” Paul replied. “What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.”

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Overview:

Understand the context: Acts 25:23 - 26:8 - Paul before Agrippa

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Share how you realized you needed to follow Christ.

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Share your life in Christ.



Context: The Audience

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How The World Views Us

- People of faith.Keep the faith.
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- The purpose of church is to give good advice.



What's Our Response?

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- We are first and foremost proclaimers of good news - not merely good advice!
 - We have been entrusted with a message: The Kingdom of God is here!
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What Do Our Structures Say?

- Good advice or good news?
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 - Fire department
 - Police department
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Structure With Good News In Mind!

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- Build up the church - [Ephesians 4:1-16](#)



Build Up The Church – Ephesians 4:1-16

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Witness

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Announcements, Close, Breakouts

Announcements

Review Life Group Notes

Benediction

Breakout Rooms

Leave Service From Breakout Rooms



Life Group Meeting

Welcome (5 - 10 minutes)

Worship (optional for life group meetings during Sunday service)

Word

Witness



Life Group Meeting

Welcome (5-10 minutes)

- [Icebreaker](#)

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Word - Discussion Questions

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