

Paul the Prisoner

Acts 21:15 - 26:32



Paul suffered much for the sake of the Gospel.



The Story

Scott was walking home from school one day. He was with some boys. They passed by the house of an elderly man. He was having trouble raking the leaves in his yard. When the other boys saw the old man moving slowly, they laughed at him. They made fun of him and kicked more leaves onto his yard. Scott didn't join in or even laugh at the boys. He knew what they were doing was wrong, but was scared to say anything.

Then he remembered what he learned at church. Many times doing the things God wants us to do is hard, but that is a way to tell people about God. So, Scott went up to the boys and told them they should leave the old man alone. He said that God wanted us to help people. He said that they were sinning by doing this. Now, the other boys made fun of Scott and walked away. Scott was hurt, but then he went to help the old man with the raking. The man looked at Scott in surprise. He asked Scott why he hadn't also made fun of him? Scott looked at him and said that as Christians, we are to do what God wants, even if it means we are hurt by others.

Throughout history, many people have been hurt and killed because they stood up for God. Paul was one of them. Paul suffered much as he preached God's Word.

Before Paul left to go to Jerusalem, his friends warned him that he would be in great danger there. They didn't want him to go. Paul said that he was ready to suffer and even die, if he had to. He wanted to tell people about Jesus. His

friends saw that they could not keep him from going. So they said to him, "The will of the Lord be done." Then Paul left.

At Jerusalem, Paul was welcomed by his fellow Christians. Paul told them about all the great things that God had done. When they heard of all these things, they praised God.

One day Paul was worshiping in the Temple. Some Jews, who hated Paul, were there also. They hated him because he preached the Gospel of Jesus. These Jews stirred up the crowd against Paul. The crowd grabbed Paul and dragged him out of the Temple. They wanted to kill him.

Someone told the Roman captain about what was happening. The captain came with soldiers and took Paul away from the angry Jews. The soldiers carried Paul away, up the stairs to the castle prison. The crowd followed shouting, "Away with him!"

Paul asked the captain to let him speak to the crowd before he left. Paul told the people how he used to hate the believers in Jesus, too. He told them how he used to persecute them. He told them about the bright light he'd seen on the way to Damascus. He also told them about the voice from Heaven. He told them how he now believed in Jesus. Finally, he told them that Jesus had sent him to tell people everywhere about the Gospel.

The crowd listened for a little while. Then they would not listen any more. The Jews especially didn't like it when Paul talked about preaching to the Gentiles. They began to shout again. So, the captain had Paul put in prison. He told his soldiers to torture Paul. Paul asked them, "Is

it lawful for you to beat a man who is a Roman citizen who has done nothing wrong?"

The Romans were afraid when they heard this. They were not allowed to hurt a citizen this way. They decided to try to find out why the Jews hated Paul so much.

The next day, Paul was brought before the whole Jewish council. (Sanhedrin) While Paul spoke, the chief captain saw that even the Jewish rulers could not agree about what to do with Paul. Some (Pharisees) wished to set him free. Others (Sadducees) wanted to put him to death. Their arguing began to get violent. To protect Paul, the Roman commander sent his soldiers to rescue Paul again.

That night, the Lord appeared to Paul. He said, "Keep up your courage! As you have told the truth about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also tell it in Rome!"

The enemies of Paul were not content to have him in prison. They wanted to have him killed. To keep Paul safe, the soldiers took Paul secretly at night, to another city called Caesarea. Governor Felix lived and ruled there. The governor had Paul put in prison, but he was kind to Paul. He let friends visit Paul and hoped that they would offer him money to set Paul free. Paul was in prison for two years. Then a new governor, Festus, came to take the place of Felix .

The Jewish leaders came to Festus and made many charges against Paul. They hoped to have Paul killed. None of their charges could be proven. Festus encouraged Paul to go back to Jerusalem to be tried. Paul asked to be given a trial before Caesar in Rome. Festus granted his request.

A little while later, King Agrippa came down to Caesarea to welcome Festus. Festus told King Agrippa about Paul. He told him how the Jews wanted to have Paul put to death and how Paul had requested to have Caesar decide his case. Then King Agrippa wanted to hear Paul's case himself.

The next day, King Agrippa came to the governor's palace. Governor Festus called for Paul. Paul stood before the king and was not afraid. He told how he had lived as a Pharisee, persecuting the Christians. He told about his conversion on the road to Damascus, and how the Lord had told him to tell people everywhere about Jesus. He told King Agrippa the wonderful news that Jesus was the fulfillment of all the writings of Moses and the prophets. Paul also told him that Christ's death and resurrection was for the salvation of all people on the earth.

King Agrippa said, "You almost make me want to be a Christian."

Paul answered that he wished that everyone there would become Christians. King Agrippa shook his head and said, "No, I will not become a Christian." Paul was sent back to prison.

All who were present realized that Paul had not done anything for which he deserved to die or be in prison. King Agrippa told Festus, "This man could be free if he had not appealed to Caesar. But he wants to go to Caesar, and you must send him to Caesar."

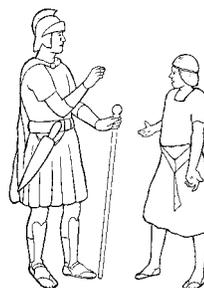
Activity One - Draw a line to match the picture with the sentence. Then color the pictures.

1. Paul was taken to prison.

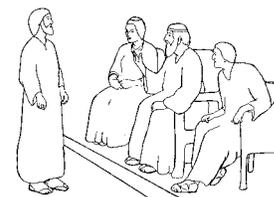


"I APPEAL UNTO CAESAR."

2. Paul preached to the people from the steps.



3. The crowd started to fight over what to do with Paul.

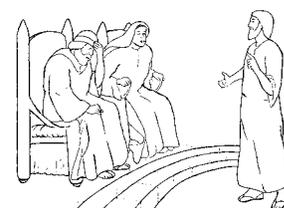


"ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST."

4. Paul asked to go before Caesar.



5. Paul appears before Festus.



6. Paul preaches to King Agrippa.



Activity Two - Answer these questions about the lesson.

1. Where was Paul going at the beginning of the story?
2. Why did his friends not want him to go?
3. Why did Paul go anyway?
4. What happened when they went to the temple?
5. How was Paul rescued?
6. Why was Paul put in prison?
7. How long was Paul in prison at Caesarea?
8. What did God tell Paul while he was in prison?
9. What did Paul say to Agrippa?
10. Why did God have Paul go through all these troubles?(see sentence below)

The Lord used Paul and He uses us to spread His Kingdom.

Passage - Use the words in the box to finish the Bible Passage.

LORD

earth

help

heaven

"Our h _____ is in the name of the L _____, who
made h _____ and e _____." Psalm 124:8

Hymn & Prayer - TLH #511 v. 4

Blessings abound where'er He reigns;
The pris'ner leaps, unloosed his chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest. Amen.