

Paul the Prisoner

Acts 21:15 - 26:32



Paul suffered much for the sake of the Gospel.



The Story

Scott was walking home one day with some boys from school. They passed by the house of an elderly man who was having trouble raking the leaves in his yard. When the other boys saw the old man moving slowly they laughed, made fun of him and kicked more leaves onto the grass. Scott didn't laugh or do this. 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, and they were sinning by doing this. The other boys made fun of Scott and walked away. Scott was hurt, but then 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 for Jerusalem, his friends warned him that he would be in great danger if he went to Jerusalem. They didn't want him to go. But, Paul told them that he was ready to suffer and even die, if necessary, to tell people about Jesus. His friends saw that they could not keep him from going, so they said, "The will of the Lord be done", and Paul left.

At Jerusalem, Paul was welcomed by his fellow Christians. He told them about all the great things that God had

done through his preaching of the Gospel. When they heard of all these things, they praised God.

One day, as Paul was worshiping in the Temple, some Jews were there who hated him because he preached about Jesus. They stirred up the crowd against Paul. They grabbed him 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. All the while the crowd followed shouting, "Away with him!"

Paul asked the captain to let him speak to the crowd. Paul stood there on the stairs and spoke to the people. He 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, and how he'd heard the voice from Heaven. He told them how he now believed in Jesus, and that Jesus had sent him to tell people everywhere about the Gospel.

The crowd listened for a little while, but they would not listen any more when he talked about preaching to the Gentiles, and they began to shout again. So, the captain had Paul put in prison. He told his soldiers to torture Paul. But 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 had treated a Roman citizen wrongly and they could get it trouble for doing that. Now they wanted to find out why the Jews hated Paul so much.

The next day, Paul was brought before the whole Jewish council, called

the 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 Paul free. Others Sadducees wanted to put him to death. Their arguing began to get violent, so the Roman commander sent his soldiers to rescue Paul. That night, the Lord appeared to Paul and 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 by night to another city, Caesarea, where governor Felix was. 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, secretly hoping to kill him. None of their charges could be proven. Festus encouraged Paul to go back to Jerusalem to be tried. But, 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, and 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 and that his 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 replied that, no, he would not become a Christian. Paul was sent back to prison.

All who were there 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."

The Lord used Paul and uses us to advance His Kingdom.

Activity One - Answer these questions about the lesson.

1. Why didn't Paul's friends want him to go to Jerusalem?
2. Why wasn't Paul afraid to go?
3. What did his friends say when they couldn't keep Paul from going to Jerusalem?
4. Why did Paul's enemies (the Jews) hate him?
5. How was Paul rescued from the crowd of angry Jews?
6. When the Lord appeared to Paul in prison, what did He tell Paul?
7. Why did the soldiers move Paul to a different city (Caesarea)?
8. How long was Paul in prison in Caesarea?
9. What did Paul tell King Agrippa?
10. Why wasn't Paul set free?
11. How was the will of the Lord being accomplished?

Activity Two - Find the underline words from the Bible passage hidden in the WORD SEARCH below.

Psalm 50:15 - CALL UPON ME IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE; I WILL DELIVER YOU, AND YOU SHALL GLORIFY ME."

A Y G Y O U T
D E L I V E R
U P O N S K O
C C R W H D U
A V I D A Y B
L G F F L J L
L S Y X L M E

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

LORD

earth

help

heaven

name

Our _____ is in the _____ of the _____,
who made _____ and _____. Psalm 124:8

all

Casting

you

cares

Him

_____ your care upon
_____, for He _____ for _____. 1 Peter 5:7

Hymn & Prayer - TLH #511 v. 4, 6

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.

Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honors to our King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud Amen. Amen.