

Acts 22 – Paul’s Story

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

Suppose someone took note of your life – attitude, words, choices, lifestyle and they asked if you were a Christian. Not in a bad way but in a curious way. You could tell that they simply wanted to understand Christianity and why you are a Christian when there are so many other options.

What would you say?

In Acts 22, when Paul shares his faith story, he gives us three things to say. This is the gospel wrapped around Paul’s story. The way Paul does this is to present Jesus by telling his story. He does so in such a way that he gives us a model for telling our story.

Life before Jesus
How he met Jesus
Life with Jesus

When Paul tells of his old life, he gives enough detail to help us understand his life but not so much detail that we focus more on him than on Jesus. Don’t get lost in the details, just keep it simple. Your story is a way to point to Jesus.

It’s fascinating that in these first five verses, Paul has said nothing about God. He doesn’t quote the Bible. He doesn’t denounce the Jews. He doesn’t promote himself. He’s just telling his story.

One of the things he seems intent on accomplishing is establishing common ground with his audience. This will require some skill but skill can be acquired through experience. Paul let’s his Jewish audience know that he is Jewish. Paul is a Jewish scholar.

In the section about how he met Jesus, Paul again gives enough detail to help his audience understand but not so much detail that they miss the point. Paul, a Jewish scholar who had persecuted Christians, met the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul doesn’t get to finish the section about life with Jesus because his audience riots when they hear him say he’s been sent to the Gentiles.

To be clear: ***The centerpiece of the gospel is Jesus.*** There’s nothing in the conversion section of Paul’s story about keeping the law, being religious, doing good things or not doing bad things. Paul met Jesus. Paul responded to Jesus. Paul becomes a witness for Jesus.

That’s a complete picture of the gospel in someone’s life:

Paul met Jesus – the centerpiece of the gospel.

Paul responded to Jesus – It’s not enough to know of Jesus, need to respond to God’s offer of life in Jesus.

Paul became a witness for Jesus – You may have noticed that people don’t die and go to heaven upon conversion to Christ. People are left here in order to tell other people about Jesus.

The gospel is the story about Jesus and can be summarized in four words:

God - People - Jesus - Response

Home Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read Acts 22:1-29 and share some of your thoughts and observations about this passage.
2. Read John 3:16. Discuss and talk through Pastor Karl's suggested outline of the gospel in four words. See how much of this you can discuss without notes. (Go beyond recalling the four words – describe what those words mean.)
3. What do you think helped Paul be ready to tell his story in this way and at this time?
4. What do you think would help you to be ready to share your story with someone?
What are the challenges that come to your mind when you think about the possibility of sharing your faith story with someone?
5. Read 1 Peter 3:15. If someone were to ask you why you are a Christian, what would you say?

Note: If you have not been baptized as a follower of Jesus Christ, please consider doing so as an act of obedience (Mt 28:18-20) and as a means to sharing a piece of your story. The next time we have scheduled baptisms is on Sunday July 1. If you are interested, contact the Church office or one of the pastors.