

Paul Goes Before Agrippa

Acts 25:13-26:32

MEMORY VERSE

ACTS 26:28

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A paper crown.

A nice looking jar with pungent contents, construction paper and markers.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Keep Your Shoes On

In our culture we are rarely ready to go anywhere without our shoes on, so in this game it is a symbol of being ready, or keeping our spiritual shoes on ("having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace"; Ephesians 6:15). Being ready to share would include knowing what to share. Ask your students what they would tell someone who does not know Jesus about the gospel. Provide some tracts for them to share with friends.

Have a shoe relay by letting the kids take off their shoes and mixing them in a pile at one end of the room. Divide into two teams. Let one child from each team go to the pile and find one of his shoes and put it on (they do not have to tie laces). Then go to the end of the line. When all the team members have both shoes on that team is finished.

LESSON TIME!

Today we are going to learn that **we should take every opportunity to tell others about Jesus.** Romans 1:16a tells us "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God's salvation to everyone who believes." Did you know that God is always placing us in situations where we can share His love with others? Maybe a friend of yours gets hurt or is going through a difficult time. These are all opportunities to tell others about Jesus. Paul was in prison and used that as an opportunity to tell a king about Jesus.

ACTS 25:13-14

And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus.

When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix,"

Paul was born to a Roman citizen who was also a Pharisee (a Jewish leader); Paul had a Jewish heritage, but he could also use his birthrights as a Roman citizen to get a fair trial. As the king and his daughter met with Festus, the new governor of the land, and all his leaders, and they began to consider the case of the Apostle Paul.

ACTS 25:15-20

"about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him.

"To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.'

"Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in.

"When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed,

"but had some questions against him about their own religion and about one, Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

“And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters.”

As the king and the governor discussed Paul's case, it had become clear that a trial would be needed. The disagreement was based on the person, Jesus, and was between the Jewish religious leaders and Paul. The governor had originally wanted to take Paul to Jerusalem to have the matter heard. But since Paul was a Roman citizen he made an appeal to go to Caesar.

ACTS 25:21-22

"But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar."

Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him."

Festus did not know where to begin looking for the truth as Jesus was crucified some 25 years earlier. Paul was unwilling to stay for a trial in Jerusalem, he requested to go all the way to the top of the Roman Empire. This account of Paul intrigued Agrippa and he called for a meeting with Paul.

Perhaps Agrippa was just curious or maybe he had heard other things about Jesus and wanted to know more. He was certainly curious about what Paul had to say. There are a lot of people in the world who are curious about Jesus. How we need to be faithful to share with them the truth of Jesus whenever we have the opportunity. **We should take every opportunity to tell others about Jesus.**

ACTS 25:23-27

So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in.

And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer.

“But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him.

“I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write.

“For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him.”

Everyone was dressed in their very best; this was a spectacular scene. Anyone who was important would hear Paul's case in this setting. They certainly wanted to communicate to one another and perhaps Paul that they were very powerful and important. The Governor gave the account of Paul's circumstances and attested that nothing could be charged against him, even though the Jews wanted him dead.

ACTS 26:1

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself.

Paul saw this opportunity to address the highest officer of the Roman Empire in this region. On this day the gospel would reach the ears of perhaps the hardest to reach in that day. **We should take every opportunity to tell others about Jesus.** God had brought about circumstances in Paul's life that would allow him to share the gospel with the highest-ranking men in all of Israel.

ACTS 26:2-3

"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,

“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.”

Paul was not guilty of anything, so he could speak with a clear conscience. He felt fortunate to be in such great audience. The king was completely acquainted with the Jewish customs so Paul knew he would understand the things that he was about to share. Paul was ready to take the opportunity that was given to him.

ACTS 26:4-7

"My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know.

"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.

"And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers.

"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."

Starting from his youth, the Jews had known Paul's family; he was raised in their land. They could tell how he was taught to keep the Law to the letter. Now he was on trial because of the hope and promises given by God to the people of Israel, more specifically the promised Messiah, Jesus.

Paul was showing these men that he had done nothing wrong. That they knew his family and how that he was faithful in all things. He was being accused of things that should have been accepted by the nation of Israel.

ACTS 26:8-11

"Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

"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.

"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."

Paul explained to King Agrippa the zeal with which he had persecuted those who would follow after this Jesus of Nazareth. He cast his vote against them and even followed them to foreign cities to have them arrested. He is showing them that he used to not believe in Jesus, but one day something incredible happened in his life.

ACTS 26:12-20

"While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

“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.

“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.'

“So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

“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.

“I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,

“to open their eyes and 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.'

“Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

“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.”

Paul gave his testimony; he told the story of how he came into contact with Jesus. He explains why his entire life was turned around and what the Lord intended for him to do. **We should take every opportunity to tell others about Jesus.**

Sometimes we might wonder what we should share with others about Jesus. Do we have to know a lot about the Bible or a certain way of telling people about Jesus? So often though, it is simply just sharing with others what Jesus has done in our lives. Paul just told them how Jesus changed him forever. What has Jesus done in your life? Can you share that with others?

Felix, Festus, Agrippa, Paul

Play this fun variation of “Duck, Duck, Goose” by giving the person going around the circle a paper crown to represent the leaders before whom Paul testified and shared the gospel.

Going around the outside of the circle they may say “Felix, Festus, Agrippa” over and over as they lightly touch the heads of the children who are seated in a circle, but when they say “Paul” that person must grab the Bible you have placed in the center of the circle and then go to catch the person who called them “Paul” before they travel around the circle and sit down.

ACTS 26:21-24

"For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

“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—

“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.”

Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

Paul explained that the Jews sought his life for telling the true story of his own experience. He backed that experience up with Scripture. **We should take every opportunity to tell others about Jesus.** The response of the Roman governor is one of amazement; he accused Paul of madness.

Sometimes people might think we are crazy because we believe in Jesus. The world does not like to hear about Jesus many times. They think that Christians are crazy. But the same thing that some may think is crazy is the very thing that brings eternal life to people – the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is the power of God to salvation and that is what we need to share with people.

ACTS 26:25-28

But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.

"For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner.

"King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

Paul responded to Festus' surprise with a calm demeanor. He explained that King Agrippa would be completely familiar with all that he described. He goes on to make the boldest statement of all; if the king believes the law and the prophets, he, too, would follow Jesus. **We should take every opportunity to tell others about Jesus.**

Then Agrippa says that Paul almost convinces him to become a Christian. How sad that he was not fully convinced! We do not know if Agrippa ever believed in Jesus later in his life. But we do know that he did not believe at this time. The Holy Spirit is the one who convicts us of sin and shows us what is truth. The Holy Spirit was definitely working on King Agrippa this day. Hopefully he did remember Paul's words one day and ask Jesus into his life.

ACTS 26:29-32

And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them;

“and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, “This man is doing nothing worthy of death or chains.”

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

Paul expressed that he wished that all men would come to the peace found in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. **We should take every opportunity to tell others about Jesus.** King Agrippa found Paul completely innocent, but because he had appealed to Rome, he would have to be bound until his trial in Rome.

Paul was very bold to share his knowledge of Jesus with even the most important people of his world. He knew that no matter how important those people might seem, God is more powerful and more important. He was not afraid to share the gospel. **We should take every opportunity to tell others about Jesus.**

We need to boldly tell others about Jesus and our relationship with Him. Like Paul all we need to do is just share what Jesus has done in our lives. This is called our testimony and every one of us has one. Maybe one day soon you can write down some of the things that Jesus has done in your life to help you to remember when you have an opportunity to share with others.

Clean Out the Refrigerator

You will need to put something in a nice looking jar that is rather pungent. Explain that when we are hungry, and we go to the refrigerator to make a sandwich, we want the ingredients to be fresh and good. If you go to the refrigerator and find spoiled food, it’s not only worthless, but it is disgusting.

When someone is hungry for God to meet their needs and they come to us, they are looking for the freshness of the gospel to come out of our lives. It is important that we allow the Lord to clean out anything that is spoiled that might turn the other person away from the Lord.

Have the class make refrigerators with construction paper, markers. You can have them write the memory verse on the door to help remind them that **we should take every opportunity to tell others about Jesus.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to share the gospel whenever given the opportunity and to live lives that are a pleasing aroma to the Lord. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.