

March 3, 2019

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Paul In Chains*

Lesson Objective:

Today we come to a close on the life of Paul, his final visit in Jerusalem, and his defense of himself in the courts of Felix, Festus, before King Agrippa and finally an appeal to Caesar. This lesson covers a lot of ground (almost eight chapters in Acts), so it's highly suggested to work with props or teaching aids to help tell the story. The main thrust of the lesson is to remind the kids that all of Paul's bad, terrible experiences, his goal, and his wish for Christians was to finish well (2 Timothy 4:7). Paul wanted to live a life worthy of Christ and his hope was that other Christians would as well.

Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- God has promised to always be with His people. He is with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- The Church is growing, but also experiencing persecution. Because of the persecution, followers of Jesus scatter.
- The scattered Church takes the Good News and tells others about Jesus.
- Paul is called to Jerusalem to report all that he has seen God doing. While he is there, Jewish leaders spread lies about him.
- Paul is accused of taking non-Jewish friends into the inner-Temple. This causes a riot among the Jews.
- Paul is rescued by the chief captain and Roman soldiers. Paul is given a chance to defend himself but makes the Jews even more angry.
- Paul is set to be punished but states he is a Roman citizen, and this sets off a chain of events.
- Paul appeals to three different leaders in front of his accusers, the Jewish leaders. Each time the rulers find Paul innocent.
- Paul finally wants to appeal to Caesar, the ruler of the Roman Empire. Paul goes to Rome and waits for two years to talk to Caesar. While waiting, Paul preaches the Good News and encourages other Christians.

Scripture: Acts 22-28

Story: *Vos Child's Study Bible*, Pages 364-371; *The Gospel Story Bible*, Pages 278-279

Scripture Memory for March: Acts 17:26-27 (ESV)

God made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth...that they should seek Him.

Craft: Paul Makes His Appeal

Supplies: Blue paper on black cardstock, stickers – 2 emojis, 1 cross, verse sticker, magnet, glue

Instructions: 1. Place one sticker under each flap.
2. Place verse sticker on blue paper
3. Place magnet on back.



If child has already done craft first hour, have them work on a coloring sheet

Story

Transition

Boys and girls, today we finish the story of Paul, the great missionary who traveled to lots of places telling others about Jesus. In our story we learn about a big riot, Paul's defense in court, lots of kings, and a shipwreck! Let's find out how Paul's story ends...

The Church Is Growing

The Church was growing. The Bible tells us every day more and more people believed the Good News! They believed that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue us from our sins and He rose from the dead! This was called the Good News. More and more people believed in Jesus and the Church was growing!

Followers of Jesus went to tell others about the Good News. The Good News was spreading far and wide. Some people, however, did not teach the right things. But the Apostles taught that good works were a result of believing the Good News.

Paul traveled to many places telling others about Jesus. He encouraged those in different cities that followed Jesus to keep trusting Jesus and following Him. Eventually Paul would go back to Jerusalem. The elders in Jerusalem wanted to hear about Paul's journeys. Paul arrived and told them all the Lord was doing. Paul told the elders how people were trusting and following Jesus, how God was using Paul to cure the sick, and about the hard times he experienced, like when he was beaten and thrown in jail.

Paul Is in Trouble

As Paul was in Jerusalem, some Jews decided to make trouble for him. They accused Paul of taking some non-Jewish friends into the Temple. There was a rule that only certain parts of the Temple were for Jews. Of course, this was a lie to get Paul hurt! The Jews started to shout the lie out loud, "Paul took his friends into inner-Temple! That's only for us and not for them!" A large crowd rushed at Paul and started to beat him up. Next to the Temple was a Roman fortress. Someone ran to the fortress and told the chief captain what was going on. The chief captain took soldiers to the Temple to see what was happening. No one told the chief captain the truth though! The chief captain decided to take Paul to the fortress to question him. But before he did, Paul asked the chief captain if he could talk to the crowd. Paul told the angry crowd his story. How he once studied under a famous scribe, Gamaliel, and how he, Paul, became a Christian on the Damascus Road. Then Paul said that the Lord had sent him to preach to the non-Jew. This made the crowd very angry. The Jews thought God cared only about them and was supposed to save them, not other people! The Jews became more and more angry. The chief captain ordered Paul taken into the fortress and beaten. As the soldiers were about to beat Paul, he asked them a question, "Is it okay for you to beat a Roman citizen?"

Paul was a citizen of Rome or a person who belonged to Rome. He was protected by its laws and had certain privileges. It was against the law to beat a Roman citizen unless he had already been tried and found guilty of some crime. The chief captain was afraid. He did not let Paul go, but kept him in the fortress under protection.

Paul's Trial

The chief captain knew Paul wasn't safe. A plot to kill Paul had been discovered and Paul needed to be moved. So, the chief captain arranged for two centurions and two hundred soldiers to take Paul to Governor Felix. Felix lived in Caesarea, and there were more Roman soldiers at Caesarea than in Jerusalem. The chief captain also sent with Paul and the soldiers a letter telling Felix what happened.

At nine o'clock at night, the two hundred soldiers and Paul left for Caesarea. Paul traveled in the middle of the soldiers so they could protect him. They arrived in Caesarea as fast as possible. After reading the letter, Felix said to Paul, "I will hear your case when the priests and elders come to accuse you."

Finally, the priests and elders arrived to accuse Paul. Felix heard the priests and elders first. They accused Paul of annoying them, causing trouble wherever he went, and taking his non-Jewish friends into the inner-Temple. Paul told Felix none of this was true, and Felix believed him. So Felix sent the priests and elders back to Jerusalem. Felix kept Paul in jail for two years. During that time, Paul would visit with Felix and tell him about Jesus. Paul's friends also came to visit him while he was in jail. Eventually Felix had to go back to Rome and was replaced by a new governor. His name was Festus.

All this time the priests and elders had not forgotten about Paul. Soon they came to Festus and complained about Paul. Festus wanted to please the Jews. He was new at being governor and did not want to cause a lot of trouble. So Festus asked if Paul would go to Jerusalem to defend himself in court instead of staying in Caesarea. Paul knew he would be in trouble if he did. The Jews would wait for him to travel and try to kill him. Paul instead asked for his case to go to the highest judge in the land – Caesar! A Roman citizen could have their case heard by Caesar and whatever Check, VACaesar said was final. Caesar ruled over the entire Roman Empire and lived in Rome. So soon Paul would travel to Rome.

Off to Rome

Paul had made his case to the chief captain, then Felix, then Festus. Paul even spoke to King Agrippa, who was another powerful leader. Both Festus and King Agrippa could not find any crime with Paul.

Paul had to sail to Rome. It was a long journey. Paul's ship crashed along the way making the journey even longer. He eventually made it to Rome. When he arrived, the centurion in charge of Paul and the other prisoners allowed Paul to stay in a house and not in prison. A soldier lived with Paul to make sure he did not escape. Friends of Paul were allowed to come and visit him freely; however, Paul had to wear a chain that was linked to the soldier. Paul lived in Rome for two years telling everyone who came to see him about Jesus. Paul also wrote letters while in Rome encouraging followers of Jesus to keep trusting Jesus. Caesar, the ruler of Rome, would eventually hear Paul's case at the end of the two years. We do not know much about Paul after the book of Acts ends, but we do know Paul died. Paul would go on to write these words, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim 4:7). Paul wanted these words to be true for all followers of Jesus.

Questions for Review with Younger Children

Have children answer "yes" or "no."

- The Church is growing – adding more and more people. (Yes)
- The Holy Spirit is growing the Church. (Yes)
- Paul did not get into trouble in Jerusalem. (No! He did with the Jewish leaders.)
- The Jewish leaders accused Paul of taking his non-Jewish friends into the inner Temple. (Yes)
- The chief captain and soldiers saved Paul from being beaten and killed. (Yes)
- The chief captain let Paul go. (No! He kept him in prison and safe from the Jewish leaders.)
- Paul had to defend himself against the lies of the Jewish leaders in court. (Yes.)
- The governor Felix listened to Paul defend himself against the lies of the Jewish leaders. (Yes)
- Another ruler named Festus also heard Paul and decided to let him go. (No, Festus did hear Paul but did not let him go.)
- Paul wanted Caesar, the ruler of Rome, to hear his case. (Yes)
- Paul went on a journey by elephant to Rome. (No! He sailed on a boat.)
- Paul stayed in Rome for two years telling others about Jesus before Caesar heard his case. (Yes)

Questions for Review with Older Children

- Name some of the people in our story today.
- Do you wonder if Paul got tired of being beaten, hurt, lied about, chained, and spending time in prison?
- What do you think Paul did as he experienced so many bad things?
- What is the Good News?