



October 29, 2023

“My Story for God’s Glory”

Acts 26

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Life is full of twists and turns that may sometimes catch us by surprise, but God is never caught off-guard. And some of those twists and turns are intended as “divine detours.” The Lord desires to use Believers to share their testimony so others can hear about a life-changing relationship with Christ, and God will bring people along our path so that they can learn the good news of Jesus. In the book of Acts, we see this scenario play out in Paul’s life. During his imprisonment in Caesarea, God brought Paul five influential leaders so those leaders could hear Paul testify of Jesus. It is a good reminder that we should be looking for those “divine detours”—times when God will bring people along our path to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May we be faithful to share our story for God’s glory!

1. Jesus spoke words of encouragement to Paul while he was in prison
 - a. **Acts 23:11** – *“But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, ‘Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.’”*
 - i. The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Paul for teaching that salvation was through faith in Jesus Christ rather than obedience to the law
 1. **John 1:17** – *“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”*
 - ii. The Roman garrison arrested Paul and placed him in prison for his protection
 - iii. Jesus appeared to Paul to encourage him and give him an assignment
 - b. Paul would ultimately get out of prison, but Jesus did not say how quickly or by what means
 - i. Paul would be transferred to another prison in Caesarea, stand trial multiple times, endure a shipwreck, be bit by a poisonous snake, and more
 - ii. God wanted Paul to share the Gospel with people he met along the way
 1. Governor Felix and his wife Drusilla

2. Governor Porcius Festus
3. King Agrippa II and his sister Bernice

2. **Acts 26** – *“Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You are permitted to speak for yourself.’ So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: ‘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. 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. 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. 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, in order 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. 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!’ 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.’ 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 deserving of death or chains.’ Then Agrippa said to Festus, ‘This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.’”

- a. God did not immediately rescue Paul from his circumstances, but instead sent him to places where He wanted him to share the Gospel
 - i. God does not always give us all the details regarding the future but provides grace for each situation as it comes
- b. He often takes us down paths we might not have chosen for ourselves because He wants us to prepare and look for divine appointments to share the good news of Jesus with others
 - i. **1 Peter 3:15b** - *“Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.”*

3. Divine detours

- a. Success in God’s eyes is not measured by results but by our obedience
 - i. None of the people Paul shared the Gospel with is recorded as having accepted Christ
 - ii. Paul was successful in sharing his testimony
 - iii. We must leave the results with the Lord
 1. **1 Corinthians 3:6-7** - *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.”*
- b. God opens doors so that we can open our mouths
 - i. We must tell people the good news of Jesus
 1. **Acts 1:8** - *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* (1984 NIV)
- c. Every Christian has a testimony worth sharing
 - i. Tell your story for His glory

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Acts 23:11 and Acts 26](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. What was the assignment Jesus gave to Paul? (See #1a above)
3. Discuss some of the challenges Paul faced. How might you feel in these circumstances? (See #1b-i above)
4. Why did God allow Paul to endure these hardships? (See #1b-ii above)
5. Why can we take comfort when facing unexpected detours in our own lives? (See #2a-i above)
6. Read [1 Peter 3:15b](#). How can we “be ready” for opportunities to share the good news of Jesus? (See 2b-i above)
7. Read [1 Corinthians 3:6-7](#). How does God measure success? (See #3a above)
8. Read [Acts 1:8](#). Why does God open specific doors in our lives? How should this affect our thoughts, attitudes, and actions? (See #3b above)
9. How might you use your story for His glory? (See #3c above)
10. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)