

Devoted and Unshaken: The Book of Acts
“Courage To Testify” (#29) Acts 25-26
Cornerstone Church of Poway
Pastor Ed Turley
November 9th, 2025

Sermon Notes

Big Idea: God gives us courage to share our story—no matter the audience.

1. See Every Circumstance as a Mission Field (Acts 25:23–26:3)

²³ The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high ranking officers and the leading men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. ²⁴ Festus said: "King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. ²⁵ I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome. ²⁶ But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. ²⁷ For I think it is unreasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him." **Acts 25:23-27 (NIV)**

¹ Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: ² "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, ³ and especially so because you are **well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies**. Therefore, I beg you to **listen to me patiently**. **Acts 26:1-3 (NIV)**

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2. Share Your Story with Humility and Hope (Acts 26:4–23)

⁴ "The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. ⁵ They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. ⁶ And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today.

⁷ This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me. ⁸ Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead? ⁹ "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. ¹² "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³ About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. ¹⁴ We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' ¹⁵ "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' "'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. ¹⁶ 'Now get up and

stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you.¹⁷ I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them¹⁸ to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'¹⁹ **"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven."**²⁰ First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.²¹ That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me.²² But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen--²³ that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles." **Acts 26:4-23 (NIV)**

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3. Share What Is True And Reasonable (Acts 26:24–32)

²⁴ At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."²⁵ "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable."²⁶ The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."²⁸ Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"²⁹ **Paul replied, "Short time or long--I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."**³⁰ The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them.³¹ They left the room, and while talking with one another, they said, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment."³² Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." **Acts 26:24-32 (NIV)**

Some Notable Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled By Jesus

- ✓ Born in Bethlehem – Micah 5:2 → Matthew 2:1
- ✓ Descendant of David – Jeremiah 23:5 → Matthew 1:1
- ✓ Performed miracles – Isaiah 35:5–6 → Matthew 11:4–5
- ✓ Entered Jerusalem on a donkey – Zechariah 9:9 → Matthew 21:5
- ✓ Betrayed by a friend for 30 pieces of silver – Zechariah 11:12 → Matthew 26:15
- ✓ Hands and feet pierced – Psalm 22:16 → John 20:25–27
- ✓ Gambling for His garments – Psalm 22:18 → John 19:23–24
- ✓ Rise from the dead – Psalm 16:10 → Acts 2:31

- **Who is someone who needs to hear your story?**

My Next Right Steps, I Will:

- [] Share my story with grace and hope
- [] Investigate the truth of Messianic prophecies fulfilled in Jesus
- [] Accept Jesus as My Savior and Lord
- [] Be baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ



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Talk It Over

Big Idea: God gives us courage to share our story—no matter the audience.

Icebreaker – “Your Story in 60 Seconds”

If someone asked you to describe your journey of faith in one minute, what would you say?
(Don't overthink it—just the key turning point that changed your life.)

Courage To Testify

1. See Every Circumstance as a Mission Field (Read Acts 25:23–26:3)

Paul's audience included political leaders, skeptics, and spectators. He didn't see them as enemies but as people who needed Jesus.

Why do you think Paul could stand confidently before such powerful people?

What “platforms” has God given you—at home, work, or school—where you can reflect His truth?

What often keeps us from recognizing those moments as opportunities?

Takeaway: Every place you stand is a potential platform for God's message.

2. Share Your Story with Humility and Hope (Read Acts 26:4–23)

Paul shares his personal story—his past, encounter with Christ, and new mission. His goal is not to impress but to invite people into a relationship with Jesus.

What do you notice about the way Paul tells his story?

Why is humility such an important posture when we share our faith?

How can we make sure our story points to God's grace instead of our goodness?

Takeaway: Our story isn't about our perfection but God's power to transform.

3. Share What Is True And Reasonable (Read Acts 26:24–32)

When Festus mocks and Agrippa resists, Paul doesn't panic. The Holy Spirit empowers him to respond with calm courage and compassion.

Have you ever felt nervous to share your faith? How did God help you?

What does trusting the Holy Spirit look like in real conversations?

How might courage look different from being pushy or argumentative?

Review and Discuss These Notable Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled By Jesus

- ✓ Born in Bethlehem – Micah 5:2 → Matthew 2:1
- ✓ Descendant of David – Jeremiah 23:5 → Matthew 1:1
- ✓ Performed miracles – Isaiah 35:5–6 → Matthew 11:4–5
- ✓ Entered Jerusalem on a donkey – Zechariah 9:9 → Matthew 21:5
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Takeaway: You don't need a perfect script—just a willing heart and the Spirit's help.

Group Reflection:

Who is your “Agrippa”—someone in your life who needs to hear your story?

What step of courage is God asking you to take this week?

Next Steps:

Pray daily: “Lord, open my eyes to the people You've placed in my path.”

Ask the Spirit to give you one open door this week to share your faith story.

Memorize Acts 26:29 — “Short time or long, I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today **may become what I am**, except for these chains.”