

Discussion Questions

July 23, 2023

B.L.E.S.S. - Sharing God's Story Through Our Own Story



1. Read Acts Chapter 26

Recount from the sermon, if you heard it, why the people Paul is speaking to - King Agrippa and Bernice - would be such a difficult audience to share with. (For reference - see King Agrippa's family line in the sermon notes)

How does Paul use his own story to tell God's story in this passage? In other words, how does Paul relate the Gospel message to them in an accessible way?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

What does it look like for us today to become "all things to all people so that by all means we can save some" as said in verse 22?

3. Discuss in what ways we make assumptions about who is open to hearing God's story and those who are not.

Discuss what it looks like to assume that God is already at work in their life, and to be part of helping them see Jesus a little more clearly than before.

4. Share some of your fears/insecurities/avoidances in regards to actually sharing God's story, the Gospel, with others.

How this can become a more natural part of conversation, rather than an intimidating/awkward thing that can make people feel uncomfortable.

5. Have each person share according to their own circumstances:

If the top person on your prayer list were to ask you the question, "Why are you a Christian?", how could you respond, including a piece of your own story, as you share God's story in 90 seconds or less.

Romans 10:13–15 (NLT)

For “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”

"Preach the gospel at all times, and if necessary use words "

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

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.

Acts 1:8 (NLT)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 25:13–14 (NLT)

A few days later King Agrippa arrived with his sister, Bernice, to pay their respects to Festus. During their stay of several days, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. "There is a prisoner here," he told him, "whose case was left for me by Felix."

- Felix: Roman Governor who imprisons Paul
- Festus: Next Roman Governor
- King Agrippa the 2nd: King of Galilee region
- Bernice: King Agrippa's "Sister "

Acts 25:19–20 (NLT)

Instead, it was something about their religion and a dead man named Jesus, who Paul insists is alive. I was at a loss to know how to investigate these things,

Acts 25:22-25 (NLT)

"I'd like to hear the man myself," Agrippa said. And Festus replied, "You will - tomorrow!" So the next day Agrippa and Bernice arrived at the auditorium with great pomp, accompanied by military officers and prominent men of the city. Festus ordered that Paul be brought in. Then Festus said, "King Agrippa and all who are here, this is the man whose death is demanded by all the Jews, both here and in Jerusalem. But in my opinion he has done nothing deserving death."

Acts 26:1–3 (NLT)

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You may speak in your defense." So Paul, gesturing with his hand, started his defense: "I am fortunate, King Agrippa, that you are the one hearing my defense today against all these accusations made by the Jewish leaders, for I know you are an expert on all Jewish customs and controversies. Now please listen to me patiently!"

King Agrippa the 2nd

Grandfather is Harold the Great

- slaughtered the infants at Jesus' birth

Father is King Agrippa the 1st

- Arrested John
- Beheaded James
- Struck down by God and eaten by worms.

Siblings

- 3rd born: Bernice
- 5th born: Drusilla, married to Roman Governor Felix

Acts 26:4–11 (NLT)

As the Jewish leaders are well aware, I was given a thorough Jewish training from my earliest childhood among my own people and in Jerusalem. If they would admit it, they know that I have been a member of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion. Now I am on trial because of my hope in the fulfillment of God's promise made to our ancestors. In fact, that is why the twelve tribes of Israel zealously worship God night and day, and they share the same hope I have. Yet, Your Majesty, they accuse me for having this hope! Why does it seem incredible to any of you that God can raise the dead? I used to believe that I ought to do everything I could to oppose the very name of Jesus the Nazarene. Indeed, I did just that in Jerusalem. Authorized by the leading priests, I caused many believers there to be sent to prison. And I cast my vote against them when they were condemned to death. Many times I had them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus. I was so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in foreign cities.

1 Corinthians 9:19–23 (NLT)

Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.

Acts 26:28-29 (NLT)

"Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so quickly?" Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that both you and everyone here in this audience might become the same as I am, except for these chains."