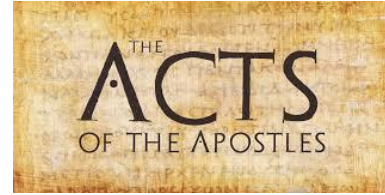


It's good to have a testimony for Christ. As a matter of fact, everyone does have a testimony.



I can think of 3 classes of testimonies people have with regard to their Christian walk:

1. The unregenerate- testimony, don't believe  
(not yet anyway)
2. Carnal believer – testimony, it's not important
3. Faithful believer – testimony, I reflect love for Christ in my life

The Apostle Paul actually had two of these types of testimonies. #1 and #3.

1 as an unbeliever

3 as a serious follower

We all had #1, but let's hope for #3.

We noted last time we were together the opposition that Paul faced from the religious people. They were antagonistic to the Gospel of Grace.

Well,

In Acts 22, the opposition continues.

At the end of Acts 21, a riot broke out against Paul In Jerusalem for the people accused him of betraying Judaism and leading people away from the Law.

Roman soldiers stepped in and the commanded rescued Paul from being beaten by the people.

He thought Paul was someone else, an Egyptian revolutionary.

When they discovered Paul was a Roman, they repented of that act quickly. It was illegal to whip a Roman citizen.

Paul wanted to say some words to the crowd and the Roman commander allowed him to do so.

Paul is going to give his testimony of going from #1 an unbeliever to #3 a serious follower of Christ.

**Acts 22:1** *"Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer to you."*

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

**v.2** *And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he \*said,*

**v.3** *"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.*

He went on explaining how he persecuted Christians, men, women and children. He had them arrested and sometimes killed for being followers of Christ.

He was on his way to Damascus to hunt down Christians when suddenly a bright light from heaven knocked him down and blinded him.

**v.7** *I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'*

**v.8** *"And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?'*

Unlike Stephen, who saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God when he was being stoned and Pau/Saul was actually looking on, Paul did not recognize Jesua at this time.

You see,

When you walk with Him, you find Him in your life, but when you don't, He is a stranger, even a mystery.

*And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.'*

This incident is actually recorded in Acts 9 and Acts 22 is his testimony about it.

**v.9** *And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me.*

I wonder if Paul/Saul had been contemplating this new Christian Way; After all,

- He saw Stephen with a glowing face as he was being stoned
- He prayed those stoning him would be forgiven
- Paul must have wondered about the temperament of the Christians, who spoke no evil though persecuted.

I wonder if his inquisitiveness opened him up to received Christ.

The other men traveling with him did not have the same experience.

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

I really believe that if someone want to know Christ, He will reveal Himself to them.

But if they do no, He won't.

At this point, Paul surrendered to Jesus.

**v.10** *And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.'*

Do you think true conversion results in true surrender?

Doesn't conversion mean to change?

People have converted:

- A garage into a family room
- A fire station into a restaurant
- A bus into an RV
- Themselves into a Christ follower

So,

A conversion experience is a change in one's life and that change leads to surrendering to Jesus Christ.

Paul was not only knocked down but he was blinded.

**v.11** *But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus.*

Now,

We're going to meet a man named Ananias, who was really in touch with God and he had no fear of Paul, the persecutor.

**v.12** *A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,*

Apparently,

He knew the value of having a good testimony

**v.13** *came to me, and standing near said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very time I looked up at him.*

Another apparently:

God spoke to Ananias and told him about Paul.

Ananias told him that God had a 4-fold mission for him:

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

**v.14** *"And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth.*

**v.15** *'For you will be a witness for Him to all me*

1. To know His will
2. To see Jesus Christ (The Righteous One)
3. To hear God speak to him
4. To be a witness for Him

After this stirring testimony, do you know what the people did?

**v.22** *They listened to him up to this statement, and then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!"*

**v.23** *And as they were crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air,*

Talk about hard hearts.

The point is:

If you are going to receive Christ, you must give up your religion.

As Jesus said;

You cannot sew a new patch on an old garment, the garment will tear.

You cannot put new wine in an old wineskin, the wineskin will burst.

The key to Paul's life, I believe,

Is that he surrendered to Christ because he wanted to know.