

Journey Through Acts
“Never Forget!”
Acts 22:1-30

Introduction:

1. A Christian’s Testimony:
 - Is A Powerful Thing!
 - One Of The Longest-Running Radio Dramas In History:
 - Verifies This!
 - Each Week - “Unshackled” - A 30 Minute Program Still Produced By The Pacific Garden Mission In Chicago:
 - Tells A Dramatic & Dramatized Story Of Someone Who Has Been Touched & Transformed By:
 - The Gospel Of Jesus Christ!
 - Because - A Christian’s Testimony:
 - Is A Powerful Thing:
 - That God Can Use To Further His Own Purposes:
 - In This World!
2. And This Is What We Will See Tonight:
 - As We Continue Our ***Journey Through Acts***:
 - And Head Back To The City Of Jerusalem:
 - In Acts 22 - Were Paul Was Left:
 - Standing On The Steps Between The Temple Grounds & The Roman Fortress Which Overlooked Them!
 - **Here Is A Model** Of What It Might Have Looked Like - Though According To The Historical Writings Of Josephus - The Antonia Fortress May Have Been Much, Much Larger!
 - And - If You Recall From Acts 21:
 - Which We Looked At Last Sunday Night:
 - Paul Had Been Arrested:
 - Because He Had Been Spotted In The Temple:
 - And Was Falsely Accused Of Bringing A Gentile Into The Temple!
 - The Accusation Can Be Found:
 - In 21:28 - When Some Jews From Asia Cried Out:
 - “Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place!”
3. Well - In The Midst Of That Violent Mob:
 - Paul Asked For The Opportunity:
 - To Speak With His Fellow Jews!
 - And He Was Granted His Request!
 - And Then - He Presents:
 - His Testimony!
 - Of When He Found Jesus On The Road To Damascus! Or - Rather - When Jesus Found & Saved Him!
 - It Was Something He Never Forgot!
 - More Than Likely - About 20 Years Have Gone By:
 - But He Still - Never Forgot!
 - And So - I Would Like For Us To Read Through Acts 22 Together:
 - And Remember The Time When The Apostle Paul Himself Became - “Unshackled!”
4. In Acts 22:1-5 - Paul Recalls God’s Gracious Providence In His Past!
 - “Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. / 2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) / 3 ¶ I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. / 4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. / 5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and

went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished!”

- Now - We All Have A Past Life Before We Trusted In Christ! Some Of Those Pasts May Not Be Remembered, If You Were Graciously Saved When You Were Young! But - If You Remember That Past - You Can Likely See The Providence Of God Moving In Your Past - To Bring You To Christ!

5. In Acts 22:6-16 - Paul Recalls Gods Gracious Provision For His Salvation! When God Interrupted Paul’s Plans & Paul’s Life!

- “And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. / 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? / 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. / 9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. / 10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. / 11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. / 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, / 13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. / 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. / 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. / 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord!”

- Now - We’ve Already Heard About This - Since We Too Were On That Road - Back In Acts 9! But - This Is The First Time We Hear It From Paul’s Own Lips! It Was Something He Never Forgot! But Then:

6. In Acts 22:17-21 - Paul Recalls God’s Gracious Plan For Him! To Save Him From The Jews & To Send Him To The Gentiles - Even Though Paul Felt Like - Through His Testimony - He Could Convince His Own People That Jesus Was *Their* Christ & *Their* Messiah! Paul Sought To Show His Fellow Jews That - As A Christian - He Was Both A *Faithful* & A *Fulfilled* Jew! And - They Could Be Too!

- “And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; / 18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. / 19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: / 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. / 21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles!”

- At This Point - Paul’s Testimony Comes To An Abrupt End! Because - As We Will See - The Jews Didn’t Want To Hear Him Any More! It Is True - That A Christian’s Testimony Is A Powerful Thing! But It Doesn’t Mean That It Is Always A Persuasive Thing! Because Then:

7. In Acts 22:22-33 - *Luke* Now Recalls God’s Gracious Protection For Paul! Protection From Both The Jewish Mob As Well As The Roman Flog!

- “And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. / 23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, / 24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. / 25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? / 26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. / 27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. / 28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. / 29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. / 30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them!”

- For The Second Time In Acts - Paul Claims His Right As A Roman Citizen - To Avoid The “Interrogation By Torture” Of The Infamous Roman Flagellum - Or - Cat Of Nine Tails!

- And - As Paul Put It Back In 22:28 - He Had Been “Free Born!” This Means That He Was Roman By Birth - Perhaps Because His Father Or A Grandfather Obtained Roman Citizenship!

- But - God Used This Political Right To Further His Own Work - And To Eventually Fulfill His Own Prophecy - As He Said To Ananias Back In 9:15-16 - That Paul Was - “A Chosen Vessel Unto Me, To Bear My Name Before The Gentiles, And Kings, And The Children Of Israel: For I Will Show Him How Great Things He Must Suffer For My Name’s Sake!” (9:15-16)

8. Yes - Paul’s Testimony Was A Powerful Thing!

- So Powerful - It Moved A Mob:
 - And Led To His Arrest:
 - And His Eventual Imprisonment In Rome!
 - I Wonder - If We Knew That Our Testimony Had *This* Kind Of Power:
 - Would We Still Share It?
 - But - Paul Knew What His Testimony Would Do!
 - Remember What Paul Said To The Ephesian Elders Back In Miletus - In 20:22-24 - “And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: / Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. / But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God!”
 - Paul Was Willing To Testify:
 - No Matter What!
 - Because - Even Though - Through The Gospel - He Had Been “Unshackled” From His Sin:
 - He Was Now “Shackled” To His Savior!
 - And He Was “Bound In The Spirit” To Go To The Place Where He Was Now Standing In A Roman Military Garrison!
9. But - Paul Was Willing To Give His Life For His Lord:
- Because - He Never Forgot:
 - What His Lord Had Done For Him!
 - Is This Your Testimony Tonight?
 - Do You Still Remember God’s Work Of Grace In Your Life!
 - Even Though Your Conversion To Christ May Not Have Been As *Dramatic* As Paul’s:
 - It Is - Nonetheless - Just As *Miraculous*!
 - So - Let’s Look Back A Bit More At Paul’s Testimony:
 - And Remember What God Has Done For You As Well!
 - We First See:

1. *A Testimony Of God’s Confrontation!*

- Back In 22:6 - “And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me!”
 - God Confronted Paul:
 - In A Dramatic Fashion!
 - But - No Matter Who You Are - When You Receive Christ As Your Savior:
 - It Begins With A Confrontation From God!
 - You See - Apart From God Entering Into Your Life:
 - And Shining His Light Into Your Heart:
 - You & I Would Remain In Darkness Forever!
 - In 2 Corinthians 4:6 - Paul Writes This To All Believers:
 - “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!”
 - It Is The Shining Of God’s Own Light:
 - Into Your Heart - That Gives You:
 - The Knowledge Of The Glory Of God In The Face Of Jesus Christ!
 - And - What Happened To Paul:
 - From Heaven:
 - God Did In Your *Heart*:
 - To Bring You From Darkness Into Light!
 - This Is The Lord’s Doing!
 - Based On *His* Intervention & *His* Initiation! And - “It Is Marvelous In Our Eyes!”
 - And He Alone Deserves The Glory!
 - Do You Remember The Time:
 - When God Confronted You:
 - Of Your Own Heart Of Darkness?
 - Never Forget!
 - Then - We Also See:

2. *A Testimony Of God’s Conviction!*

- In 22:7-8 - Paul Remembers - “And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? / And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest!”
 - God Convicted Paul:
 - Of His Own Crimes & Sins:
 - Against The Lord!
 - And This Too Is What Must Take Place In A Christian’s Testimony!
- You See - Paul Thought He Was Right:
 - As He Was Chasing Down Those Christians:
 - Even All The Way To Damascus!
 - But - The Lord Had To Convict Paul:
 - That He Was Wrong!
 - And This Is What The Holy Spirit:
 - Was Sent To Do In Your Own Heart:
 - And To Reveal That You Are Wrong!
- That Your Ways Are Not Better Than God’s Ways!
 - In Fact - “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away!” (Isaiah 64:6) - And:
- That Your Thoughts Are Not Better Than God’s Thoughts!
 - In Fact - “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually!” (Genesis 6:5)
- This Is The Reality Of Who We Are & Who We Were:
 - Apart From Christ!
 - And Apart From His Conviction:
 - You & I Will Never *Know* This!
 - And You & I Will Never *Repent* From This!
- But - After God Convicted Paul Of His Own:
 - Self-Righteous Attitudes & Actions:
 - Paul *Never Forgot* Just How Sinful & Criminal He Was!
 - 1 Corinthians 15:9 - “For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God!”
 - Romans 7:24 - “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”
- Do You Remember The Time:
 - When God Convicted You:
 - Of Your Own Sin & Even Self-Righteousness?
 - Never Forget!
 - Then - We Also See:

3. ***A Testimony Of God’s Comfort!***

- Now - We Aren’t Really Sure At What Point Paul Is Actually Converted - That Is - When He Believed & Was Saved! It Was At Some Point Along - Either The Path **To** Damascus Or **In** Damascus Itself! But - It Was The *Whole Process* That Was Important To Paul! You Are Never Saved In A Vacuum! You May Not Remember The *Precise Moment* You Believe - But You Can Remember The Work Of God In Your Life To Save You!
 - But - When Paul Arrived In Damascus - Blind And Probably Confused - Paul Recounts In 22:12-13 - “And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, / Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him!”
 - “Brother Saul!” - What Comforting Words To The Weary Soul Of Paul!
- And - Isn’t This What The Lord Does & Did For You:
 - When You Turned From Your Self:
 - And Trusted In Your Savior?
 - He Brought Sweet & Tender Comforts Into Your Soul!
 - In Fact - He Sent The Comforter Himself Into Your Heart - So That He Would Never Leave Thee Nor Forsake Thee! (Hebrews 12:5)
- What A Comfort It Is To Know:
 - That You Have Been Given:
 - God’s Grace In Abundance!

- The Grace Of Healing & Forgiveness!
- The Grace Of Hope & Purpose!
- The Grace Of Holiness & Sanctification!
- The Grace Of Heaven & Eternal Life!
- Do You Remember:
 - The Comfort God Gave You:
 - When You Relented From Your Rebellion:
 - And Surrendered To The Sweet Calling Of Your Savior?
 - “Calling – O Sinner, Come Home!”
 - But Even Further See:

4. *A Testimony Of God's Choice!*

- As Sweet As God's Comforts Are:
 - There Is Nothing More Comforting Than To Know:
 - That It Was Not You Who First Chose Christ:
 - But It Was Christ Who First Chose You!
 - As Jesus Says In John 15:16 - “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you!”
 - Now - This Is A Great Mystery To Us!
 - Not Just **How** God Chose You:
 - But - Especially - **Why** God Chose You!
 - But **Choose** You, He Did!
- Just Like He Chose Paul - Which He Never Forgot!
 - In 22:14-15 - “And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. / For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard!”
 - God Chose Paul - And For A Special Purpose!
 - To *Know* Christ! To *See* Christ! To *Hear* Christ! And To *Testify* Of Christ!
- And God Has Chosen You:
 - For The Same Purposes!
 - To *Know* Him & To *Testify* Of Him – *Now!*
 - And - One Day - To *See* Him & To *Hear* Him:
 - Not Just By *Faith*, But By *Sight!*
 - What A Humbling Thought:
 - That God Chose You:
 - Even “Before The Foundation Of The World!” (Ephesians 1:4)
 - Never Forget:
 - That God Chose You! We Can Also See:

5. *A Testimony Of God's Cleansing!*

- From 22:16 - When Ananias Says To Paul:
 - “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord!”
 - This Does Not Mean That:
 - Paul's Baptism Is What God Used:
 - To Wash Away His Sins!
 - No - His Baptism:
 - Was What God Used:
 - To Signify On The Outside:
 - The Spiritual Cleansing Paul Had Received:
 - On The Inside!
 - But Now - Paul Could Look Back:
 - To The Sign Of His Own Baptism:
 - As A Vivid Reminder:
 - Of All That God Had Done For Him!
- Never Forget:
 - The Cleansing That Jesus Christ:

- Did - In Your Heart & In Your Life:
 - When You Came To Faith In Him!
- Remember What Paul Wrote:
 - To The Corinthian Church Back In:
 - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, / Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. / And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God!”

Conclusion:

1. And If You Are A Christian Tonight:
 - This Is Your Testimony As Well!
 - God Confronted You!
 - God Convicted You!
 - God Comforted You!
 - God Chose You!
 - And God Cleansed You!
 - You - Like Paul:
 - Have Been Forever:
 - “Unshackled” - From That Unholy Trinity:
 - The World, Your Old Flesh, And The Devil:
 - That Would Have Kept You In The Chains Of Darkness Forever!
2. A Christian’s Testimony:
 - Is A Powerful Thing!
 - Never Forget It!

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