

ACTS 42 – **Do you have a Testimony? - Acts 22:1-24**

I'd like to start in **1Pet Ch 3** - Let's turn there -
This is a good vs to **MARK** in your Bible

Peter is talking about **SUFFERING** for Doing **GOOD** as a Christian
in **v.14**, he says ***“Don't Worry or be Afraid of people's THREATS”***

& then in 1Pet 3:15 he says (ESV)

15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

Peter says - Don't worry about people's Threats or Intimidation
Just **HONOR** Christ as **HOLY** in your heart . . .

& be **READY** to ***“Make a Defense”*** to anyone who asks you
for a **REASON** for the **HOPE** that is in you

The word translated ***“Make a DEFENSE”*** is **AP-O-LO-GEE-A**

from which we get the term - **APOLOGETICS**
meaning - ***“A Defense of the Faith”***

& **THAT** is exactly what we're going to see Paul do today -
He is going to make a **DEFENSE** of his **FAITH**

But notice - **1Pet 3:15** says - Be ready to make a defense
“For the REASON for the HOPE that is in YOU”

Much of **“Apologetics”** today is all about Logic & Reason
& well crafted Convincing Arguments (& that's all fine)

But I want you to know today

The best REASON (Defense) that YOU have
for the HOPE that is in YOU . . .

Is the TESTIMONY of YOUR Own Transformed LIFE !!

Now - I love Apologetics as much as the next Guy
I love studying all the Logical Reasons we have to believe

But what I've found - more often than not
is that GOOD Logic can be DEBATED with BAD logic

& if you're giving a REASON for your Faith - with GOOD Logic
& the person you're talking to is HOLDING to their BAD Logic . .
often you just End Up in a battle of "Logics"

But if you Simply Share How Jesus Christ has TRANSFORMED
YOUR Life - & you do it "With gentleness & respect" (1Pet 3:15)

Then . . . they May still respond POORLY
But they CANNOT REFUTE the LOGIC - of your Transformed Life !!

Your Personal Testimony - - what God has Done in YOUR Life
is your greatest DEFENSE of the Gospel . . .

& it's the Greatest REASON you can give
for the HOPE you have within you

That's what we're going to see Paul do today
& THAT is what each of us can do - in our own lives

Let's Pray

In our **last message** (Pick Your Battles) - We saw **Paul** try to get to a place where he could share Christ with the Jews by agreeing to go along with a Nazarite Vow Ceremony

Well that didn't work - **AT ALL**

The **trouble makers** stirred up the Jews up - They **Seized** Paul, **Dragged** him out of the Temple - & started **Beating** him

& they probably would've **KILLED** him if the **Roman Commander** hadn't stepped in & **ARRESTED** Paul

In **Acts 21:37** - as Paul was about to be taken inside the Roman Fortress - Which was on the edge of the Temple Area

Paul asks the Roman Commander in **GREEK** if he could speak to the crowd that was trying to **KILL** him

The **Commander** is Surprised - because he thought **Paul** was an **Egyptian** Trouble-Maker who had **disappeared** some time ago

But in **V.39** - Paul explains he's a Jew **AND** a citizen of **Tarsus**, & so the Commander **AGREES** to allow Paul to stop & speak

& so we read in Acts 21:40 (esv)

40 And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language,

After speaking **GREEK** to the **Commander** to get **HIS** attention

Now Paul speaks **HEBREW** (Or a Hebrew Dialect of **ARAMAIC**)

In order to get the **Jewish** crowds **attention**

& he says in Acts 22:1 (esv)

saying: 1 “Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.”

There’s our Word - **AP-O-LO-GEE-A**

Hear my Defense - my **REASON** - for the **HOPE** that is in me

& Acts 22:2 says (esv)

2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet.

So - after just trying to **BEAT** him to **DEATH**

Suddenly the crowd is **INTERESTED** in what Paul has to say

But Paul is **NOT** going to debate with them about

Great Theological Truths - which he could’ve very easily Done

Instead - Paul is going to do **EXACTLY** what you & I can do

He is going to Share with them - **How God Transformed his Life**

This is a **Critical Moment** - & since they’re trying to **Kill** Paul -

It’s important that he **CHOOSE** what he says - **Carefully**

So he **Chooses** to share something that **CANNOT** be **REFUTED**

He **Chooses** to share - what God has **DONE** in **HIS** Life, personally

& when you & I are in a **critical moment** like this

Prayerfully **WE** can do the same thing (**1Pet 3:15**)

“Be ready to give a REASON for the HOPE that is in you”

& the Best **Reason** you can give - for the **Hope** you have

is **because** of what God has done in **YOUR** life, personally

So Paul starts - with a Critically Important Fact

Acts 22:3 (esv)

And he said: 3 “I am a Jew (I’m one of you), born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.

WHAT a Start !! Paul says - Not only am I a Jew
But I was **BROUGHT UP** right here in Jerusalem

AND - I was also educated at the Feet **GAMALIEL** (a famous Rabbi)
According to the **Strict Manner** of the Law of **OUR** Fathers

We call this “**Bridge Building**”

Paul is trying to **convince** these Jews - that he is **ONE** of **THEM**

& not just an **ordinary Jew** - but he was **educated** at the feet
of one of the **FAMED** Teachers of the Law - **Gamaliel**

& then - to top it off - **Paul** says

“I was just as zealous for God AS ALL OF YOU ARE today”

I **KNOW** how you **FEEL** - Cause I was **LIKE YOU**

In fact - in Vs’s 4–5 Paul says (Acts 22 (esv))

***4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women,
5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.***

Paul's explaining that He **UNDERSTANDS** their **ZEAL**
in **wanting** to Kill Him - Because **he's done** the exact **same** thing

& then he **tells** the crowd - he even received **APPROVAL**
from the **High Priest** & **Elders** - - to go **Persecute** Christians

& **NONE of this is REFUTABLE** - Paul's just **explaining** to them
WHO he was, **WHERE** he'd come from, & he was **Just Like** them

& Guys - **THAT** should be **OUR** First "**Step**"
in **sharing** what God has done in **OUR** life

But **NOTICE** a Very **Critical POINT** here
Paul **SEES** himself **Exactly the SAME** as them !

& we need to **SEE** ourselves **Exactly the SAME**
as **the people** we are sharing with

Eph Ch 2 says **YOU** were once **DEAD** in **YOUR Sins** - **But God,**
Because of His **Great Love** - Made you **ALIVE** together with **Christ**

The **ONLY** Difference between **US** . . . **is GOD'S GRACE**

HOWEVER - let me just **say** One Other **Thing** here

If you **don't** have a terrible, **horrible PAST** that God **Saved** you from
DON'T Feel **Slighted** By God for that - Feel **BLESSED** !!

We need to be careful **NOT** to **Glorify** **WHATEVER Past** we've had -
whether it was **GOOD or BAD**

No matter **WHERE** or **WHAT** you come from - God **WILL** give you
OPPORTUNITY - to talk to **people** with a **SIMILAR** Past as you

You **WATCH** for it - & you'll **SEE** that it's **TRUE** !!

So - **FIRST** Paul **RECOUNTS** his **PAST**
THEN HE moves to the Most **IMPORTANT** moment in his **LIFE**

The moment that Jesus Christ was **REVEALED** to him

Acts 22:6–8 (esv)

6 “As I was on my way (to persecute Christians) and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me.

7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’

8 And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’

Now **this** is what we **call** - a Moment of **REVELATION**

AT THIS moment - Paul **TRULY BELIEVED**
that **Jesus Christ IS** who He says He **IS**

& this is a **moment** that each of us - **MUST** Have -
Because we **Don’t** want to be like **the guys** in the **next Vs**

Acts 22:9 (esv)

9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me.

You **DON’T** want to be like **THOSE GUYS** !!

& then in V.10 - we see the Beginning of the Evidence
that Proved - Paul had SURRENDERED his life to the Lord

Acts 22:10-11 (esv)

*10 And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me,
‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is
appointed for you to do.’*

*11 And 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.*

THIS - Was Paul’s Moment of SALVATION

& it COULD NOT be REFUTED by those who were Listening

They could choose to either BELIEVE or NOT BELIEVE

But they Can’t REFUTE it with Religious (or Worldly) LOGIC

& it is THE SAME when WE share that same moment in OUR LIFE

Now - You don’t have to have a moment quite that - DRAMATIC

But - It is very important - that you CONSIDER - WHEN it WAS
that YOU Fully Surrendered YOUR Life - to Jesus Christ

Have you HAD that Moment? - When it wasn’t about RELIGION,
& it wasn’t about CHURCH, & it wasn’t about HABIT

It became about TRULY KNOWING

that Jesus Christ IS who HE says He IS

& truly Surrendering to Him - as your LORD

Each of us MUST have that Moment of Conversion in our Life

H.A. IRONSIDE tells the story of a **Preacher** who had **someone** in his congregation **ask him** to teach on the **CONVERSION** experience

That **preacher agreed** - & went to **work** on the sermon

First - he came up with a **Great Outline**:

The **WHAT**, **WHEN**, **WHERE** & **HOW** of Conversion

So he **sat down** to write - - - & the **WHAT** came pretty easy to him

Conversion is recognizing your **need** for a **Savior** - & **turning wholeheartedly** to Christ for **Salvation** from sin, & **Direction** in life

That went **pretty easy** - - Now - the **WHEN**

The preacher knew you could be Converted any time - from Young to Old - For instance - he thought about **WHEN** he himself was Converted

But he couldn't quite remember - so he went on to the **WHERE**

He knew you could be Converted in ANY place, at home, in church, or any place else - so he thought about **WHERE** he himself was Converted to Christ . . .

But again - he couldn't really put his finger on it -
so he moved on, thinking he'd come back to it

Finally - he got to the **HOW** - -

HOW is a person Converted, & given New Life in Christ

& he thought again - well, **HOW** was I converted -

& he thought, & thought, & thought - & he couldn't remember

& suddenly it hit him like a ton of bricks

I don't know **WHEN** I was Converted

I don't know **WHERE** I was Converted

I don't know **HOW** I was Converted . . .

I've **been preaching** the Bible all these years

But I've **NEVER** been **PERSONALLY CONVERTED** by Jesus Christ

So he **fell** to his **knees** & **CRIED** out to God -

Finally put his **Trust Completely** in Jesus **Christ** as Savior & Lord

& from **THAT** Moment on - that Preacher was **NEVER the same** again

So - I'm **NOT saying** you have to have an **experience** as **Dramatic**
as Paul's **Damascus Road** Experience

But I **AM saying** you've got to make sure

that you have been **TRULY CONVERTED**

That you Have **Turned** From **Self** Rule to **God** Rule

That you Have **Repented** From your **Sin** - &

That you Have **Truly Put** your Full **Faith** in Jesus Christ - **Personally**

Because the Moment you do **THAT**

Your life **WILL indeed BE - CONVERTED**

And When **THAT** Happens -

There will be **EVIDENCE** in our Life - that is **IRREFUTABLE**

& that Evidence is what we call - the NOW PART of our Testimony

FIRST - it's Who I WAS (a sinner just like everyone else)

THEN - it's Jesus Christ CAME into my life

THEN - it's the EVIDENCE that's He IS ALIVE in my life

& THAT is what Paul begins to explain Next
as he continues his Irrefutable Testimony

Acts 22:12–15 (esv)

12 “And (after he was led into Damascus) one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,

13 came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. (That is miraculous evidence)

14 And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth;

15 for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. (That is prophetic evidence)

& so the EVIDENCE Begins - For Paul - -

& then - Ananias calls Paul to a Public Display of EVIDENCE

Acts 22:16 (esv)

16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’

This is a HUGE Evidence of Paul's Conversion - because it was at the Public Baptism that Persecution often started

& we just did that for some people yesterday at the Picnic

& So - as we go - Paul CONTINUES to relate to the Jews
the EVIDENCE of God BEING REAL in his life

It's NOT Logic - It's NOT Theology

It's EVIDENCE of Jesus Christ being ALIVE in Paul's Life

Acts 22:17-20 (esv)

17 "When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance

18 and saw him (Jesus) saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'

19 And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you.

20 And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.'

NOTICE the subject matter Paul CHOOSES here

Paul chooses an INTERACTION with the Lord
that is Very APPLICABLE to his current situation

He's reminding these Jews that want to KILL him
that he ALSO was a Jew wanting to KILL Christians

He again reminds them - that he's been RIGHT where they're AT
& he's Done EXACTLY what they're doing

& he retells his Role - in the very first Killing of a Christian

But in the MIDST of all that - He's also telling HOW Jesus Christ
has TRANSFORMED his life !!

So - after Testifying of:

WHO he was before he **Met** Jesus

WHAT happened when **Jesus** got a hold of his life - &

HOW Jesus has **Transformed** his life **SINCE** then

Finally - Paul is ready to **address** the issue

that he **KNOWS** is - **THE HOT BUTTON**

STILL talking about Jesus **telling him** to **LEAVE Jerusalem** . . .

Acts 22:21 says (esv)

21 And he (Jesus) said to me, 'Go (leave Jerusalem), for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' "

Man - **Paul** had done it all **correctly** here

Everything about His Testimony was **IRREFUTABLE**

Because it was all about how God had **TRANSFORMED** his **LIFE**

But **the truth** is - This word **"GENTILES"** - was a **HOT BUTTON**

& as soon as **Paul** said the **word** - everything **FELL APART**

Acts 22:22–24(A) (esv)

22 Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live."

23 And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,

24 the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks . . .

Like I Said - **HOT BUTTON** ! - & Sometimes -

When you **push** somebody's **HOT BUTTON** . . .

It **Doesn't** Matter **HOW WELL** you **approach** it - it just **GOES BAD**

So **Paul's 2nd** (& **Final**) Attempt to **reach** the Jews - is a **DISASTER**
& Paul will **never be** in this **setting** again

Now - there are **MANY** things we could **FOCUS** on in this **Text**

But what I want us to Really CONSIDER
is OUR OWN Testimony !!

FIRST of all - **DO** we **HAVE ONE** ??

Have we been **Truly CONVERTED** by Jesus Christ ??

Have our Lives Been **TRANSFORMED**

BY the **GRACE** of God - & **THRU FAITH** in Jesus ??

& if **NOT** - Please hear me when I say - You **NEED that** !!

& If you're **CONCERNED** about that . . .

If **you're** like that **Preacher** who Finally **realized**

He'd never had that **Personal Conversion** Experience

Then **SEEK GOD** for that Conversion - **TODAY**

Then cont to **SEEK God** in His **WORD**, & in **PRAYER** - Every Day

Come back to the **Discipleship table** & ask us for Scriptures,

& **ASK US** How you can **DAILY** Seek God for that

& **Ask God** to just **BOWL** you over with **His** presence

to **MEET** you **right where** you're **at** - & **CONVERT** your Life

& **IF that HAS happened** to you - **THEN** . . . → → →

Are you **READY** to give An Answer (A Defense)

For the **REASON** you have for the **HOPE** that is in you

Can you “**Put Into Words**” - what God has **DONE** in your **LIFE** ?

Are you **Ready** - at any moment

to **SHARE** how God has **TRANSFORMED YOU**

Maybe you would say - But I was **ALWAYS A CHRISTIAN** !!

That's **GREAT** !! You **DON'T** have to have a **TERRIBLE** past
& **THANK GOD** if you **DON'T**

But there **still must be** that moment

when you **SURRENDERED your life** to Jesus Christ

& the way you **KNOW IT**

is by the **REAL EVIDENCE** of the **Life of Christ** in you

HOW has God Truly **IMPACTED** your life

How has He **DIRECTED & USED** - **Your** Life for **His** Glory

Get it clear in your **Mind** the **Great things** God has **done** -

& then - Be **READY** to **Share** it with Somebody

& let me tell you the **Biggest Secret** about **Sharing** your Testimony

The WAY you get **Ready** to **Share** your testimony

is by **SHARING IT** !!

You've Got to **TELL Somebody** what Jesus Christ has **DONE** for you

FIRST - you gotta **KNOW** what He's done for you
THEN - you gotta **TELL** somebody about it

& **when you do**

It will be a **Gospel Message** - that **CANNOT be Refuted**

If you're making **NOTES** - Write these **THREE STEPS** Down

- 1) **WHO** I was **BEFORE** I Gave My Life to Jesus Christ
- 2) **WHAT** happened **WHEN** I Gave My Life to Jesus Christ
- 3) **HOW** has my life changed **SINCE** I Gave My Life to Jesus Christ

Let's **MAKE SURE** we have a Testimony
about **HOW** our lives have been **Transformed** by Christ

& **THEN** . . . Let's **TELL Somebody** about it

**The Testimony of a Divinely Transformed Life
is an Irrefutable Presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ**

Let's Pray

Salvation Prayer Counselors