
A SUBMITTED LIFE

Acts 26:1–14

Paul's testimony before King Agrippa
and the call to a life submitted to God

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THE SETTING

- 01 Paul has been held in Caesarea for two years
- 02 Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sought his death
- 03 Governor Felix delayed justice, seeking a bribe
- 04 Festus replaces Felix; the Jews still press for death
- 05 King Agrippa arrives and grants Paul a hearing

THE HEART OF THE TEXT

Acts 26:14

*"It is hard for you
to kick against the goads."*

The risen Jesus confronts Saul on the Damascus road
with a vivid picture of resistance and submission.

TODAY'S OUTLINE

I. Paul's Pre-Christian Testimony

Acts 26:1–11

II. The Mystery of God's Sovereign Providence

Goats, resistance, and grace

III. A Life Submitted to the Lord

From kicking to surrender

PAUL'S PRE-CHRISTIAN TESTIMONY

Acts 26:1–5

Respect & Deference

He stretches out his hand—a rhetorical gesture of the educated. He speaks with honor to Agrippa despite knowing the man's character.

Thankful Opportunity

A submissive heart sees providence. Basic manners open doors that rudeness closes.

Raised a Pharisee

From youth in Jerusalem, in the strictest sect of Judaism. His life can be examined; his Jewish credentials are solid.

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

Acts 26:6–8

Paul is on trial for believing what every faithful Jew claimed to hope for—the promised Messiah.

The Promise

From Abraham through the prophets: God would send the Savior.

The Irony

He is treated as evil because he believes Jesus fulfills that hope.

The Heart

The resurrection of Jesus. Jesus. Why is it incredible that God raises the dead?

AN ENEMY OF “THE NAME”

Acts 26:9–11

Paul determined in his own mind that he “had to do many things hostile” to the followers of Jesus.

- Locked believers in prison
- Voted for their execution
- Hunted them in synagogues
- Tried to force them to blaspheme
- Chased them to foreign cities

WHAT IS A GOAD?

A pointed stick used by a farmer or driver to urge stubborn oxen forward.

Not for the obedient

Used only when the animal resists the yoke or stops moving.

Painful but purposeful

The master will move the animal as he wishes; resistance only increases the pain.

A picture of God's work

God was prodding Paul through the testimonies of the very people he persecuted.

THE MYSTERY OF PROVIDENCE

Galatians 1:15 — God set Paul apart before he was born.

Even while Saul was resisting, God was driving him toward Christ.

Our Actions

Our will, decisions, and actions are truly ours. We are responsible for them.

God's Purpose

Yet those same actions are under the sovereign purposes of God. Salvation is from the Lord.

THE GATEWAY

A simple illustration of divine sovereignty and human responsibility

OUTSIDE THE GATE

"Whosoever wishes may come."

The invitation is genuine. The call is real.
Will you enter?

INSIDE THE GATE

"You were chosen by God before the foundation of the world."

Looking back, every step was ordered and
ordained by the One who called you.

KICKING AGAINST THE GOADS

Scripture is full of those who resisted God's clear direction

Pharaoh

Exodus

Hardened his heart through plague after plague until destruction fell.

Nadab & Abihu

Leviticus 10

Knew the requirements of priestly worship yet offered strange fire.

Israel in the Wilderness

Numbers 14

Ten times they refused to listen. Sickness and death followed.

The Conscience

Romans 2

Even Gentiles have the law written on their hearts—yet many silence it.

THERE IS A WAY THAT SEEMS RIGHT

Proverbs 14:12

*"There is a way which seems right to a man,
But its end is the way of death."*

1. You demand your own way and call life unfair.
2. You were pointed to Christ, yet chose another path.
3. Or you never heard the gospel—yet still followed what felt right.
4. The outcome of a life of resistance is shame and death.

FROM RESISTANCE TO SUBMISSION

Paul's story is a living picture of grace

Aggressive Opposition

A hatred with no limitations—hunting, imprisoning, and consenting to death.

Transformed Heart

Encountered by the risen Lord. Blinded by glory, he finally stopped kicking.

A Submitted Life

Walking humbly in the way of the Lord—no longer fighting God, but gladly obeying Him.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SUBMIT?

Philippians 2:3–4

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

- 01** Humble yourself — distance from selfishness and conceit
- 02** Regard others as more important than yourself
- 03** Look out for the interests of others, not only your own

BENEDICTION

*May the God of peace Himself make you holy
through and through.
May your body, soul and spirit be kept blameless
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
For the One who calls you to Himself is faithful
and He will accomplish it.*

Amen