

Sermon Title: Paul's Testimony

Sermon Series: My Story

Scripture: Acts 22:1-22

Speaker: Pastor Ian Bonthron



“If you have been saved, you have a story.”

—Dave Earley, *Everyday Evangelism*

Acts 22

1. What Paul's life was like _____ Christ

Acts 22:1-4 ESV

“Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.” 2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said: 3 “I am a Jew, 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. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women,

Acts 8:1-3 ESV

And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Acts 22:5 ESV

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.

Acts 22:6-9 ESV

6 “As I was on my way 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.’ 9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me.

2. How Paul _____ Christ as Savior

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.

Acts 22:12-16 ESV

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

3. How Christ _____ Paul's life

Acts 22:17-22 ESV

17 “When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw him 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.’ 21 And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

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.”

“The apostle Paul was a highly educated intellectual who was well schooled in Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and Latin. He was an expert on the Old Testament law and also was current with the great philosophers and poets of his day. Yet when given audiences with persons of great power such as the Roman political leaders, Paul did not debate theological or philosophical issues. He simply gave his testimony. He told them how he came to know Jesus as his Lord. He shared about his life before Christ, how he met Christ, and of his life since meeting Christ.”

—Dave Earley, Everyday Evangelism

Before Christ – Meeting Christ – Change Since Christ

“Being a witness—not arguing the case, proving the truth, or pressing for a verdict as much as simply reporting what happened to you.”

—Dave Earley, Everyday Evangelism

“You are not the star of this story; Jesus is.”

—Dave Earley, *Everyday Evangelism*

“My Story”

What my life was like before Christ

How I met Christ as Savior

How Christ changed my life

“My Story” – “My Story” is actually _____ story of rescuing me

Discussion Questions:

Getting to know you Questions:

What is “the story” you tell at parties or with close friends?

Dave Earley said “If You Have Been Saved, You Have a Story” and “You are not the star of this story; Jesus is.” What are your thoughts on these statements?

Into the Bible Questions:

Everyone who has trusted Christ has a “my story”

What my life was like before Christ

How I met Christ as Savior

How Christ changed my life

Read Acts 26:4-23

4 “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. 5 They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, 7 to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! 8 Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

9 “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

12 “In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 13 At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. 14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ 15 And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

19 “Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. 21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. 22 To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: 23 that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

1. Using the three steps above, how did Paul describe his “my story”?

2. “Being a witness—not arguing the case, proving the truth, or pressing for a verdict as much as simply reporting what happened to you.” - Dave Earley - How do you see this quote being true in Paul’s life?

3. If you are a follower of Jesus, is this true for you?

4. What is the Gospel? 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Acts 26:17b-18

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 ESV

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

Acts 26:17b-18 ESV

to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

5. Dave Earley, in his book *Everyday Evangelism* (p. 244), shares six benefits of sharing your testimony. Please read the following benefits and consider which one surprised you, was new to you, or impacted you the most. Why?

- a. Sharing your salvation story builds a relationship bridge of understanding that Jesus can walk across into the heart of a lost person.
- b. Sharing your testimony is a convenient and effective way to bypass intellectual defenses. It is difficult to argue with the evidence of a changed life.
- c. Sharing your story often holds the hearer's interest longer than if you were quoting the words of great theologians. People will listen to you because instead of being a professional salesman, you are a satisfied customer.
- d. Sharing your story can be done in any time span you are given, from a minute to an hour.
- e. Sharing your story is not reserved for the highly educated or spiritually mature. It can be done by a newly saved believer.
- f. Sharing your story makes evangelism personal and relational.

For Extra Study, Read Acts 26:24-32

24 And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind." 25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. 26 For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." 28 And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?" 29 And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains."

30 Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them. 31 And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment." 32 And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

From this passage, what were the responses to Paul's testimony?

What does this passage imply about your responsibility in sharing what Jesus has done? What is not your responsibility?

What comfort does this passage bring to your life?

What needs to change in your life so that you can live this out?

Jot down any insights, questions, or key observations.

Application Questions

What is your "my story"? Using the 3 steps.

Who are three people you could share this with?

When could you share it with them?

How can our group pray for you about this?

For further help with sharing the gospel:

<https://www.namb.net/evangelism/life-on-mission-app/>

For Group Curriculum and training - Contact the office for a copy of the 6 week - 3 Circles Curriculum