

A. SERMON SCRIPTURE

Gospel Persuasion

Acts 26:15-29 (ESV)

And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 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, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 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.’

“Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 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. For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

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: 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.”

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.” But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. 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. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” 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.”

B. GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read Acts 26: Talk about all you see in this passage. What shines out to you? What is it saying to you? What other questions do you have? Where do you see Jesus?
2. Paul's first thought among people, wherever, and whenever he is among others, is: "What can I say or do to convert them to Christianity?" Is that the first thought we have when am among others? Why or why not?

3. What is wrong with evangelism that is absent of acts of care, and what is wrong with acts of care absent of evangelism? Which style are you most comfortable and why?

4. Paul gives us solid methodology for Gospel persuasion in that everywhere he went he did these 3 things:

- 1) Rational/Reasonable Argument
- 2) Personal Testimony/Emotional Appeal
- 3) Interpreting the Bible through Christ

How would these be more or less effective among different kinds of people? Which method is most practiced by you?

5. Jesus gives Paul purpose in Acts 26:18. What is the purpose, and therefore, the motivation of Paul's life? What is the difference between being forgiven, and receiving a place? How do they work together in healing us to a greater extent?

6. Prayer and praise.