

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. We hope you are well and discovering new ways to relate to God and His Word.*

**"GOD GAVE YOU A STORY TO GIVE AWAY" | ACTS 22: 1-29 | PASTOR BRIAN**

## **WARM-UP QUESTION:**

What was the most memorable speech you've ever heard? What made it memorable?

## **"My Story" - (Acts 22: 1-5)**

Paul is honest about his past in his story. What makes it hard for people today to be authentic like Paul?

## **"His Story" - (Acts 22: 6-16)**

Paul shares how Jesus grabbed his attention and changed his life. How does Jesus get people's attention today and change their lives?

## **"Our Story" - (Acts 22: 17-29)**

Paul tells how God has led him to evangelize the gentiles even though it would upset the crowd. What part of your journey with Jesus have caused awkward or negative reactions? How do you handle that?

## **REFLECTION QUESTION:**

Jesus gave his life for us. When he rescued us, we gained a powerful story that we are supposed to give away. When was the last time you prayed for an opportunity to share your testimony with someone? Are you willing to let God lead you in conversations this week?

## God Gave You a Story to Give Away

### I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-7 Andrew: Calv Kids. Online. Xmas Eve Service. Sun times. Men's Breakfast. Office Closed. MP Nesting Dolls. Wed Night.
- B. Slide8 Congratulations to my daughter Mical & her husband Tyler. They had a little boy, Julian Clarke Andrews. 6 lbs. 14 oz. 20" long. [what a great week to celebrate a special baby]
- C. Prayer:

### II. Slide9 Intro: God Gave You a Story to Give Away

- A. Slide10 We left Paul at the top of the steps of the *Antonia fortress*. Let's get him off those stairs, since he's been up there for a week now.
- B. Slide11a Our reading this morning is not a sermon, but *Paul's story/personal testimony*.
- C. **Your story** is *unique, one of a kind, distinct, and special*.
  1. *You are fearfully & wonderfully made...* & so is your **salvation story**.
  2. Think about all that God did in **investing in you** to *hear, understand, & respond* to Him and His call.
- D. This is not about a **technique**...but to ingrain in us a **way of life**.
  1. Sharing your story is about helping your *non-believing friends* take *one step closer* to **Jesus**. Focus on your **availability** rather than your **ability**.
- E. And since our unbelieving world is made up of a **variety** of people: *Young/old. Rich/poor. Educated/uneducated. Urban/rural. All w/diff races, personalities, values, politics & religious backgrounds...* So it's going to take *more than 1 style of evangelism* to reach such a diverse population. So what is your style? Or which is needed?
  1. Slide11b **Style: Confrontational** (Peter's 1st sermon, *you killed Jesus*).  
**Intellectual** (Paul/Mars Hill). **Testimonial** (*I was blind, now I see*).  
**Relational** (former demoniac told his family/friends).  
**Invitational** (woman @ well). **Serving** (Dorcas, impacted city by kind deeds)

2. Slide11c 1 Thes.2:8 *nlt* We loved you so much that we shared with you not only **God's Good News** but **our own lives**, too.

F. Slide12 Outline: **My Story** (*no one will know it unless you share it*. It could be a gradual conversion or a major event). **His Story** (*what was it about Jesus that touched you?* Forgiveness, love, grace, relationship *rather than religion?*). **Our Story** (*what happened as a result of following Jesus?* Maybe living for his glory?).

III. Slide13a **MY STORY (1-5)** *actually Paul's Story. **pre-conversion. We all have a past***

A. Slide13b Start with **similar** before you move to **dissimilar**.

1. He was **similar** in birth (Jews), in training (at the feet of Gamaliel), in conviction (zealous towards God).
2. He was **dissimilar** because of **his conversion** & **his commission**.
  - a) We need to learn how to **dwell with** and **differ from** our fellow man... **In love**.

B. Slide13c I love how Paul is simply **real** about his past life. [beatings, binding, delivering, murdering]

1. Being **real** about my **past mistakes** makes my story **relatable**.
2. People can't relate to those who say, "*I just pulled myself up, got my stuff together and that's why I am an awesome person today!*"
3. Paul seems to say, *I thought I had it all together, but I didn't.*
4. **Everyone has a past**. Whether you were **a bad-sinner** or **a sinner-light** trying to earn your salvation. [now he points to **Jesus**]

IV. Slide14a **HIS STORY (6-16)** **conversion. It's about Jesus.**

A. Paul saw a great light from heaven. He heard a voice from above. He talked with Jesus. He was blinded by the light. Led by Ananias. Then he told me what to do.

1. This was **Jesus** beginning to end.

B. Slide14b Being **clear** about what **Jesus** did, gives my story hope.

1. Paul is not the hero. **Jesus** had to break into his story (& our story).

2. We need to point people to **Jesus**.
3. **Jesus** is the only person to *change a life*, that can *change a nation*, that can *change the world*.

C. Slide14c (14,15) *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.***

1. Here we find **God's order** for everyone who has had a real conversion with the risen Christ. **First come and see Then go and tell.**
2. It happened with **the shepherds** in Luke 2,
3. It happened when **the angels** spoke to the women at the tomb, **come and see** the place where he lay. **Then go quickly and tell** the disciples, He is risen from the dead.
4. Here in verse 14 &15 we have *the same principle*. **See the Righteous One and hear the voice of his mouth and **for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.****

## V. Slide15a **OUR STORY (17-29) post-conversion.**

A. Slide15b God calls us to *give our story away* even when it is **difficult**.

1. This is about *penetrating their mask*... We all wear one.
2. It's finding out *what is their 1 real barrier?* Is it intellectual or emotional? Is it legitimate or just a diversion?
3. When Paul brings up his calling to *the Gentiles* he knows this is a **cultural stopping point**. **He knows what's about to happen**. He knows this is going to go off like a *flash-bang grenade*.
4. **Jesus** calls **Paul** to *go past* the cultural norm. **And** he may ask us to do the same.

B. Paul wanted them to know that his work *among foreigners*: (a) wasn't his own choice. (b) was only undertaken after reluctance. (c) was under divine orders.

C. We've all heard of *anti-Semitism*, here we have **anti-gentilism**.

1. In their eyes **proselytism** (making Gentiles into Jews) was **fine**; **but evangelism** (making Gentiles into Christians without first making them Jews) was an **abomination**.

a) It was tantamount to saying that **Jews and Gentiles were equal**.<sup>1</sup>

D. The Romans wanted to know why this Jew was hated by other Jews. **So they simply proposed to beat the answer out of him.** [waterboarding of their day for information]

E. **Roman citizenship** was obtained by being **born a free man** of the Roman citizenry. **Or** you could **purchase it** at a high cost.

1. It was passed on from father to son which was the case with **Paul**; It could also be bought, not with a **fee** **but with a bribe to some corrupt official**, which was the case with **Claudius Lysias**.

F. **What advantages does your citizenship give you? What disadvantage?**

G. **Why this Gentile part?** maybe because remember Luke (the writer) was from **Antioch, Turkey**. **He was a Greek. He was a Gentile.** #GentileLivesMatter.

1. Jesus calls us **past** our prejudices.

H. **Slide16** Let's go back to Paul pulling out his **Roman Citizenry card**. [he didn't in Philippi, **until after** he was beaten & imprisoned] This time while he was being prepped/**stretched**.

I. **Humility is one thing, but indignity is something else entirely.** Chuck Swindoll, Acts.

1. Paul could have thought, **This suffering is God's will, I shouldn't defend myself. But he knew that being needlessly victimized is not the same as humbly suffering for Christ.** The scourgings of a **battered wife**, and **abused employee**, or a **molested child** or **not** examples of biblical submission. There is a time to claim our **rights as citizens of God's kingdom** and defend ourselves.

<sup>1</sup> John Stott, The Message of Acts, Acts 22.

2. Have you been victimized by a wrongful demand for submission that assaulted your dignity?
3. If you have been **abused**, you don't need to *silently endure it* any longer. Christ never meant *biblical submission* to be an excuse for **abuse**.
4. You have rights as a citizen of God's kingdom. *The rights of dignity, self-respect, and honor.*
5. If you're being abused, **or** someone else in your home is, take the first step towards **freedom** by *calling it what it is*.
  - a) Don't be afraid to stop **denying** it; *denial* is not your friend, it's another attacker.

J. *Slide17 End: The 2 Greatest foes of Christianity:*

1. **Standing up for the Word of God and yet denying it by your life.**
2. **Living an exemplary life and yet failing to speak up for your faith at any and every opportunity.**
  - a) **Paul** not only *stood up for* the Word of God, **but** also *spoke up for* the Word of God, **and lived out** the Word of God...daily...*Let's do likewise.*
  - b) *God Gave You a Story to Give Away*...don't hold on to it.
  - c) As the worship team comes up...

K. *Slide18 I have a Gift for you:* it's a book called *WITH*, by Skye Jethani.

1. I read & listen to a lot of books. This is the **1st book I've wanted our whole church to read**. It's an easy read **yet** pregnant w/spiritual depth.
2. It's a call to **Stop living our life Under, Over, From, and For God, and Start Living in Communion WITH Him**. *With*, lays out what it really means **to know and experience communion with God**.(with = frm Eden to Eternity. Gen to Rev)
3. Please accept my Christmas gift to you. We celebrate Jesus as *Immanuel God With Us*. Pick 1 up at the Info Booth (1 per family).

L. Keywords: Acts 22, Paul, Story, evangelism, My Story, His Story, Our Story, conversion, Roman Citizenship.