



YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Winter 2018 Midweek / Sermon Starter

Unit 1: You on Mission

Sermon Series Title: The Heart of a Disciple-Maker

Sermon 1: Cry of a Disciple-Maker

Bible Passage: Acts 26:15-16; 19-20; 28-29

Background/Context

In Acts 26, King Agrippa invited Paul to tell his story. Paul recounted his life as a Pharisee and his mindset toward Christians; how he hated and persecuted them. Then he shared his conversion on the road to Damascus when Jesus Himself appeared. Paul told them of his appointment by God to preach repentance and forgiveness of sin to the Gentiles, but his mission was not without hardship. In spite of the terrible persecution, Paul faithfully obeyed the message of his heavenly vision.

Festus argued that Paul was mad, but Paul replied that his message was truth. After the verbal conversation, Agrippa and Festus agreed that Paul could have been set free—had he not appealed to Caesar. Yet, during the exchange Paul demonstrated the cry of a disciple-maker when he revealed to King Agrippa and Festus that he wanted every person to be saved just as he was saved. This cry, salvation of the lost, should be on the lips of every Christian. Every saint should be ready to share Christ's message of grace and be eager for unsaved men and women to come to faith in Him.

A. God's Will
(Acts 26:15-16)

Paul knew God's desire. He shared with a young preacher that God's desire is to have all people saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). He desires all people to come out of darkness into the marvelous light.

Peter echoed this same truth when he gave a defense for God's delay in coming back to receive His children. He said, "The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay; but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but to all come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). The Lord wants His creation to accept Him as their Lord and Savior. Because Paul's heart was knit to the heart of God, he wanted what God wanted. In verse 29, he said, "I wish before God . . . not only you, but all . . . might become as I am." In light of this, Paul was willing to face trouble, endure weakness and pain, and even death to fulfill the will of God. He said that he would be weak to gain the weak and to save some people (1 Cor. 9:22). His heart's desire became his prayer for his countrymen (Rom. 10:1). He wanted sinners to be saved.

Application Point: In life we find ourselves in difficult situations. In the midst of these trying times, what are you willing to endure so that people can be saved? What are some things that have stopped you from fulfilling God's desire for the lost? Pray for change in your heart.

B. God's Word (Acts 26:19-20)

Paul had a desire for the lost but they needed more than his desire. They needed God's message of redemption. Paul knew that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). He made it his practice to share his salvation testimony whenever possible. He reasoned with the people of the city of Jerusalem about the transforming power of the Lord Jesus (Acts 22:1-21). Paul also made it his practice to share God's Word everywhere he went. He taught the Word in the cities of Corinth, Thessalonica, Galatia, and Ephesus. Paul also reasoned with Felix concerning faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 24:24). In Acts 26:19-20, Paul shared with King Agrippa the message that he preached. The message was to repent (turn) from sin and turn to God by doing works that showed that they had repented. Paul knew that sharing God's Word made a difference in Damascus, Jerusalem, along the coast of Judea, and to the Gentiles, and he wanted it to change the king as well. Paul's cry was to share God's Word, which is able to change fools to followers of Christ, backbiters to believers, criminals to Christians, and the depraved to disciples.

Application Point: Paul made it his practice to share God's message because he had confidence in the message and the Originator of the message. What is the confidence you have in the Word of God? Why do some Christians seem to minimize the Word and maximize what the television, the web, actors, or artists say?

C. God's Work (Acts 26:28-29)

Paul wanted the Lord to work in the hearts of those that heard God's message of grace. In verse 29, he stated, "I wish before God...that whether easily or with difficulty, not only you but all who listen to me today might become as I am—except for these chains." In this verse, the apostle was not satisfied with men and women just hearing the message, but he wanted their lives to change as his did on the Damascus road.

So, who is Paul now? Paul is now a new creature in Christ Jesus. His old life has passed away and now all things are new in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul's old life as Saul passed away. He stopped being a persecutor of the church and became a promoter of the church. Paul became a preacher, teacher, and apostle of Christ. He became a child of the King, which makes him an heir of God and joint heir with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Christ's riches are now the believer's riches. His resources are the believer's resources. His righteousness is the believer's righteousness. His privileges are the saint's privileges. His power is now the follower's power. His position is now the disciple's position.

Application Point: What work has God done in your life since you came to know Him? Name a specific part of your life that you can use to help share the transforming power of God. Craft that

part of your life into a testimony to use in witnessing (what you were, what God did, and how you are today). Your testimony is a powerful witness as to Whom God is!