

Paul's Testimonial (Acts 21:37-22:11)

Today's verse is about how a persecutor became a follower of Jesus. On the way to Damascus, he heard the voice of Jesus.

Salvation / Gospel/ Evangelism & Missions Believe that, we sinners are saved by the blood of Jesus. **For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile (Romans 1:16)** Church's mission is testifying the Gospel which results in salvation and life for us. What is salvation? it means freedom from sin, bondage, judgement and death when we meet Jesus. **"the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 1:2-4)**

The Gospel means Jesus Christ because he is the only way to an eternal life, who solves our problem of sin, **"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'" (John 11:25-26)** When we testify Jesus, we could save a dying person/people which is the most valuable thing **"What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? (Matthew 16:26)** What is the most important thing to glorify God? Saving others; evangelism and missions.

Paul's Testimonial After first, second and the third mission trip, Paul arrived in Jerusalem compelled by the Holy Spirit, even opposition of believers, where prison and hardships faced him. Some Jews in Jerusalem stirred up the whole crowd and seized him. The people dragged him from the temple - beating. However, commander of the Roman troops stopped and Paul asked permission to identify, defend himself. **"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today." I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me? 'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied (Acts 21:40-22:1-8)** Apostle Paul begins testimonial from his birth, background of discipline, traditional law under Gamaliel and zealousness for God against follower of Jesus. However, Meeting Jesus was so special to Apostle Paul. He heard voice of Jesus in person. The way of accepting Jesus would vary but assurance of firm salvation is same either by Words or spiritual experience.

Paul met Jesus personally. **"My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me (Acts 22:9)** Salvation is personal. Apostle Paul never shake his mission for God even in hunger, suffering and the risk of his life because he remembered personal voice of Jesus in whole life. Paul asked what shall do when he met Jesus. **"What shall I do, Lord?" I asked. "'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do (Acts 22:10)**

Purpose from God / Faith / Words of God Everyone is born with a purpose from God. We could find out our purpose when we meet Jesus. We should live focusing on Jesus. What is Faith? It is to look forward to God in what we do not see. Look to Words of God not our surroundings in daily life. We should check our faith everyday because God does not give us at once but after refining and training. God gives us daily bread to experience God everyday. It is because of Faith in God means belief in Words of God. It might be belief in own thoughts or emotion only if we do not believe whole Bible itself - even if we say we believe in God. Do we believe in God? We should believe and show faith in believing the Bible.

Assurance Worries is expression of unbelief, what is belief? Assurance of God who will protect, guide us in all circumstances **"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them (Matthew 6:31-32)** Paul faced severe suffering (prison, shipwrecked, beaten, hunger, pelted with stone.) but never fell off and he overcame because he had assurance of God's strong hands. The most rich, capable one is who has God in him. Our fight is how we are fulfilled by God in our life.

Confessions of Faith in Old and New testament. First, by David **"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. (Psalms 23:1)** Second one is by Apostle Paul **"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)** These confessions show that Jesus resides in us and we do not fear anything because Jesus is everything. In all things, God works for the good. What made Apostle Paul devote to God? First, he met living God in Damascus. Second, he experienced the grace of God. Our dedication to God should be rooted in grace. It is not dedication that matter but receiving grace. As much as we receive grace, we could devote more. All of us face suffering(test), some overcomes, some fall down. Who would overcome? The one who received grace of God because it is our power to endure and win in all circumstances.