

## Paul's Strength (Acts 26:24-29)

Paul did not know who he was/is until he met Jesus Christ. He thought that it was right to persecute people who believed in Jesus. He was an expert in the Law and did not realize that he was a sinner. However, after he met Jesus - following resurrection - on the way to Damascus, he confessed that he was the worst sinner (**1 Timothy 1:15**). We can experience forgiveness and resurrection only through Jesus. Paul's life changed when he met Jesus. He went to Jerusalem compelled by the Holy Spirit although he knew that prison and hardship faced him. Some Jews in Jerusalem stirred up the whole crowd and seized him when he testified Jesus. Rescued by commander of Roman troops and transferred to Caesarea by two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen. Paul was in prison for two years and tried three times (trial before Felix, Festus and king Agrippa)

**Paul's defense before king Agrippa/ Focus on Gospel** Fact is most persuasive because it has strength and power. We could spread Gospel with boldness when we experience Holy Spirit because it has power. Like Peter and John, who were commanded not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus but they said **"We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard. (Acts 4:20) "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)** When we focus on the Gospel, our life will have energy and strength. It means we are connected with heaven by power of God though we are in this world. **"Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 18:18)** We should be full of strength if we have Gospel in us. **"but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:31)**

**Paul's interpretation of suffering/ Grace of God** **"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. That is why some Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. (Acts 26:19-21)** Paul defended that reason why he was in prison because he obeyed Jesus not because of lying, fraud, stealing. Paul suffered but confessed that it is grace of God even his persecution, trial because of Jesus. He explained it is help from God that in all the times even in suffering, having chance to testify Jesus Christ. **"But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people and to the Gentiles (Acts 26:22-23)**

We should testify Jesus with our life and also by our mouth(lips) wherever and whenever we are. **"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? (Romans 10:14)** Our suffering, crisis will be God's time to work.

Paul regarded his own suffering as grace of God as long as he could spread Gospel. Paul's interpretation of suffering and blessing is different. When Paul testify in front of Festus, he was shocked. **"At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane." (Acts 26:24)** Whether accept or not, people will be shaken when truth, Gospel proclaimed because their view or knowledge will be challenged. **"I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. (Acts 26:25-26)**

**Paul's Strength/ Paul's challenge /Value of Gospel** **"King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do. "Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian? (Acts 26:27-28)** We could see Paul's strength. **Paul replied, "Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains. (Acts 26:29)** Apostle Paul challenged to be like him what he is and prayed for one who has authority, power to do trial on him. It is remarkable paradox but nothing could be compared with the value of Gospel what we have **"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. (Matthew 13:44)**

**Gospel: Vision/View is different** from worldly to God. What is the distinction of people who has life with Gospel?

**Joy.** Paul rejoiced even in prison. It will be our power if we could have joy in all circumstance. **"Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)** Likewise, it will be our power when we do with joy in all things. Joy with full of strength is our power which make us to achieve our mission with full of life.

**Thanks** True power, happiness comes from Thanks. We could give thanks in all things because all is from grace of God.

**Boldness** We could be bold when we believe God who take care of our whole life while others fear all things because they not know it. The Gospel could open our spiritual eyes, transfer us from darkness to light, under control of Satan to children of God. We will have full of strength when we have Gospel like Paul. He proclaimed that he has glorious Gospel which is everlasting while others boast of perishable things.