



SERIES: ACTS - WHEN THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN
MESSAGE TITLE: "CHAINS AROUND YOUR NECK"

SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS
DATE: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2020

MESSAGE SUMMARY

BIBLICAL TEXT(S): *Acts 26:1-32*

In Acts 26, Paul is called to present his case, his testimony, before two officials: the newly-appointed Roman governor Festus and the Jewish King Agrippa (along with his sister, Bernice). The reactions to the gospel of these three powerful people—and the reaction of the Jews to Paul’s message—are good examples of three ways that people often respond to the gospel: with fear, spiritual numbness, or a lukewarm malaise. Though Paul stands before them in literal chains, his accusers and judges all wear unseen chains, their own ambitions and the expectations of others among them. These “chains” limit their spiritual responses as surely as Paul’s shackles curb his physical movements.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker’s message. These can help your group understand and apply the teaching more profitably

LEAN IN

These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What was your biggest obstacle to Christianity before you were a Christian? Or, if you grew up in church, what was your biggest struggle as you sought to make your faith your own?
2. Is there a person in your life that just “gets you”? Who is this person and how did you meet?
3. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday’s sermon? Why was it significant to you?
4. What is one thing that you’re looking forward to this week? What’s one thing that you are dreading?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what’s been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. Why did Paul want to share his testimony with King Agrippa? What did he ask the king to do as he began his speech?
2. Where did Paul say his hope came from? How was his hope similar or different from what the Jews who were accusing him believed, according to the passage?
3. How did Festus respond to Paul?

cont.

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4. How did Agrippa respond to Paul?
5. What was Paul's wish for Festus and Agrippa and all who heard him, according to this passage?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. Paul wanted to speak before King Agrippa because Agrippa understood the religion of the Jews. Paul knew he would understand the message of the gospel. What groups or people in today's world might be in a similar position?
2. Pastor Brad says that the Jews responded to the message of the Gospel out of fear, a dread that God was different than what they expected him to be. The God of the Gospel made them uncomfortable. How have you seen people react to the Gospel in the same way today?
3. Festus responds to Paul by saying that he's crazy. He's so focused on his career and the physical world, he doesn't have space in his life for anything spiritual. He's spiritually numb. How have you seen people react in a similar manner today?
4. King Agrippa knows and believes in a spiritual reality, but he also wants to advance his career and be successful. He believes in what Paul is saying, but he doesn't want to have to change his life. How have you seen people respond to the Gospel in a similar way in today's world?
5. Who do you know (or know of) that has a passion like Paul for helping others to come to know and love Jesus?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. Who in your life might be ready to hear the gospel message?
2. Have you ever found yourself responding to the message of the Gospel (or to God) in fear and discomfort? What happened?
3. Have you ever found yourself so focused on the physical world that you've become spiritually numb? How did things change for you?
4. Have you ever been in a lukewarm position like King Agrippa, torn between spiritual realities and your own comfort, goals, etc? How were you able to move forward?

cont.

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5. Of the three reactions to the gospel presented in this passage/sermon, which one best describes where you are right now?

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. If God brought to mind the name of a person he wants you to share the message of the Gospel with, spend some time this week praying for that person and asking God to give you an opportunity to share. Ask a friend, family member, or fellow small group member to pray for you and this person by name.
2. How has this message/passage encouraged and/or challenged you? What's one thing you could do this week to try to live out what you've learned?

Thanks to Ashleigh Rich and the Adult Discipleship Team for this week's notes and questions.