

Acts 26 | Jeffrey Smith

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[0:00] It's exciting to be here this morning. I'm really looking forward to just kind of sharing from God's word this morning. We're going to be in Acts. Like David said, we're at the end of Acts. Not the very end, but this is the last of the Sundays we'll be preaching on Acts.

And we'll be in Acts 26. I'm going to be jumping around a little bit. But before I do, I just want to kind of reiterate something that's been said. That here we are. It is the last Sunday of February. And when you really think about weather in St. Louis and seasons, like, man, February is one of the toughest, right?

It's got some positives, but it's got a lot of challenges as well. And I was thinking about a quote a wise man once said, and he said, If you can make it through February, you'll live another year. Have you guys ever heard that quote?

And I was doing a little bit of research into that quote, and just February in general, February in St. Louis. And I came upon a video that I thought I had to just kind of share. So if you can give me like 120 seconds here.

We're just going to revisit. February is the worst month of the year, but it's an honest month. It's a month that doesn't hold up life any better than it really is.

[1:24] I mean, look around here. These buildings, they look like they don't even have any lights in them during a work day. And something great happened here, but it's over with. And that's the way February is.

You can see it in the way people walk and how they look. Let's go just check out February. This says it all. This has a spring-like or floral pattern on it.

But somebody on this February day has abandoned it with its broken shaft. Like desperate flinging off or something that's not true anymore.

The expedition is getting desperate. People are throwing things aside. Look around downtown on a February work day. This looks like a place where people who are being punished are sent.

If you notice the way people cross the street in February is different than in the summer. Nobody is tap dancing or breaking into a Rogers and Hammerstein song. It's their lunch hour and they're just barely able to get across the street and hunger over a bowl of chili.

[2:24] Carbohydrates are big this time of year. Also, lotions because everybody is itchy and tired and irritable. Even the land is tired in February.

Most of the birds who can afford it have gone to Florida. And the trees that once cheered us, they're hard to look at this month. It's as if there is some awful truth out there in the trees.

It's hiding in the branches. Look at them. Something that's been bothering you for a long time is out there. What is it? You can almost see the shape of it when all the color is gone.

But life is stripped down to the starkness of February. To try to hide the bleakness of February, man invented Valentine's Day and also Mardi Gras.

But then February ends up back with another holiday, Ash Wednesday. What other month could host a holiday that's designed to remind us that we're all going to die?

[3:20] It's February. It is bleak. It is honest. And it just tells you the way it really is. My father used to have a saying that if you can live through February, you'll live another year.

With a whole other story, I'm Kevin Kaleem. I mean, how can we not share that video the last Sunday of February?

All right, let's go to Lord in prayer and then look at Acts 26. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for this morning. It's a beautiful day. You've created February, Lord. You've created this day, Lord. We just say thank you for it. We thank you for your word this morning. And again, just your word written many years ago, but so applicable even today. And so we just pray that you would use this, apply it to our lives.

I just pray for just the message going forth, that it would be full of truth, humility, grace, Lord. And it would just be relevant for the folks here. So thank you again for this morning and the opportunity to share.

[4:23] In your son's name, amen. Amen. So there is an acronym at our work that we will often use. And it comes from our president.

He was an ex-military guy, an army ranger. And the acronym is BLUF. B-L-U-F. And B-L-U-F stands for bottom line up front.

And so it is a great model of communication, whether you're communicating with a client, a colleague, with a manager, a subordinate, whoever it is, bottom line up front.

And I'm going to start with the bottom line up front. The bottom line up front for Acts 26, which is what we're going to look at, is the Jewish leaders want so badly to squash the message of Jesus. And in particular, want to kill Paul. Because he is outspreading this message. And so that is the heart of it.

[5:27] They want to kill Paul. And so that's what we're going to look at this morning. We're going to kind of look at the next phase of that plot. Last week, David preached on Acts 24.

And there were a couple interesting characters in that. We had the governor, Governor Felix. And we were introduced to this professional lawyer, a guy named Tertullus.

Do we have any lawyers in here? Okay, I'm going to be honest here. Tertullus was doing what lawyers do. Using very persuasive, somewhat empty speech to make his point.

I just find it so flattering when he starts off his speech by saying, Oh, Governor Felix, we've enjoyed so much peace under you. And Governor Felix was known to be one of the most violent of all governors.

It's like just immediately losing credibility. This guy is just simply trying to make a case against Paul. And then you have Felix.

[6:33] Like I said, very, very corrupt, very violent. And so much so that he, at the end of this kind of kangaroo court in Acts 24, he ends up putting Paul in prison, in jail for two years.

And he's hoping for a bribe. That never comes. Okay. So if you want to just open your Bibles and look at just a couple quick things. We're focused on Acts 26, but I have to highlight a couple things that happened in Acts 25, just to, again, give you a full picture, a full context of what's going on in Acts 26.

So in Acts 25, we have a new governor. Felix is passing the baton on to a guy named Festus. And so Festus takes over.

He's wanting to appease the people. And while he's doing that, in regards to Paul, the Jewish leaders start to come up with a plan to kill Paul.

Okay. So if you're looking at Acts 25, in verse 3, it says, asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem. So I'm sorry, just to go back.

[7:47] The chief priests are asking that they send Paul to Jerusalem because it says they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way.

Okay. So that is, that's where the plot thickens. But this is where Paul throws out the reverse card. Okay. So just hang with me here.

Going down in chapter 25 to verse 11. Paul says, There's the reverse card.

I appeal to Caesar. So he understands that there's a plot to send him to Jerusalem. And along that way, he is to be killed.

And so to thwart that plot, he says, I appeal to Caesar. They're in Judea right now. And to go to Caesar is essentially to go to Rome. Okay. That is not like an easy, just, you know, hop in the car and drive 20 minutes down the road.

[9:08] Like that is going to be a boat around an island. We'll get to that here in a second. Okay. So everybody with me so far on this? All

right.

Then there is a third character that enters this story. A guy named King Agrippa. And so King Agrippa arrives on the scene on the second half of Acts 25.

And at this point, Festus is, he's a bit confused. He's in a, he's stuck between a rock and a hard place. In a way. Because on one hand, he's trying to win the favor of his newfound contingency. But he's got this Roman citizen that has a right to say, hey, I appeal my case to Caesar. And so he has that right.

And so that means he has to deliver this. But deep down, Festus is like, I don't even see like where you're guilty. I don't even know what the charge is. But I have to deliver you to Caesar.

[10:11] I have to, I have to take you because that is what you have appealed. And so here comes King Agrippa. And Festus takes Paul to him.

Again, says, I don't have any charges to write down. Have you ever had a situation, maybe it's at work, maybe it's amongst, I don't know, here at church, wherever. And I just think, I've been in customer service before.

And it's like, someone's like, I want to speak to your manager. Okay. And maybe they say, I want to speak to your manager after you've already done everything they want. You've already given them the refund.

Maybe you've gone above and beyond. And they're like, I want to speak to your manager. And you know what? They always say, the customer's always right. So you're like, okay. But as you're like walking back to your manager, you're like, I don't know what I'm going to tell this person.

I've literally done everything that they want me to do. I've gone above and beyond. And still they're asking to speak to the manager. That's how Festus is. Okay. Let me also kind of paint this picture because I, this was not clear to me.

[11:15] And so I want to hopefully make this clear to you. If I said there's a governor and a king, who do you think has more authority? You would think the king.

Guess who actually has more authority here? The governor. Okay. So let me just kind of explain. You have the emperor, Nero, Rome. Okay. And then he has governors throughout different regions. The governors, there is also kind of a dotted line over here. To what they call a client king. Okay. And that's where this guy named King Agrippa comes into place.

King Agrippa has, he does not have the authority that Festus has, that a governor has. A governor has the authority to uphold the law, to apply taxes, to take military force.

In other words, the governor also has the ability to carry out capital punishment. Okay. That's a key point. King Agrippa over here, he is somewhat appointed, he is appointed by Caesar.

[12:29] King Agrippa over here, he is a ruler of the people. He is supposed to handle the religious affairs. If there is anything that is out of order within the temple, it is like, let's have someone like that in place who knows the religious rules.

And you can kind of govern that aspect of things. That's why, you know, when, and I'm going to make another connection here, but that's why when Jesus is, is before Pilate, the, the, the governor.

And Pilate's like, I don't, I don't really see what the charge is here. And who does he kick him over to? Herod. Herod was the client king. Okay. Herod was like this, like, I wish I had a better word for it, but I mean, he was a, a monarch of a smaller, much weaker state.

The other interesting thing is Herod. And when you think of Herod, almost think, because there's multiple Herods. Herod is like the last name of, of almost like this ruling class.

King Agrippa is the last Herod. Okay. So there's this connection. His grandpa is the one that was involved in, you know, Jesus was born.

[13:45] The wise men came to Herod. They explained what was happening. And Herod's like, Hey, that sounds great. Why don't you go and find him and come back and tell me. And they didn't. And so he goes on and he, what, he kills every young boy under the age of two.

That was his grandpa. This may be a bad analogy, but like Herods are like, if I say the Bushes of the United States or the Clintons, it's like a ruling family, multiple people involved in that.

And you kind of know who that is. Okay. That, that's kind of how the Herods were. So King Agrippa was the last of the, the, the, the client Kings of the Herod family.

Okay. So the reason why the Jews, the ruling class wanted to kill Paul. But like I said, does King Agrippa have the authority to crucify someone?

No. So they have to get it over to the governor and they say, Hey governor, this guy is like really causing a lot of upheaval and issues. And the governor's like, it doesn't really look like an issue that I, this isn't a civil issue.

[14:53] This more, it looks like more of a religious issue, but he wants to appeal to the folks. He's like, well, you guys want him over in Jerusalem. I'll send them knowing that they're going to ambush and kill him.

Okay. So do you guys see how this is kind of breaking out here? We have the authority of the governor here who doesn't really see the issue. And we have the people over here, the religious leaders that really see the issue, but don't, don't have the authority to actually kill Paul.

And so they're trying to like scheme and like, how can we make this happen? And Paul catches wind and says, I appeal to Caesar. Just to, again, kind of break out. Let me read the first four verses of Acts 26.

So if you have your Bibles, I hope you do go to Acts 26 and let's just read the first four verses. And then I want to kind of just give a little bit more context into who this line of Herods were.

So it says in verse one of 26, so Agrippa said to Paul, you have permission to speak for yourself. Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense.

[15:54] Stretching out his hand. I'm just kind of picturing like, you know, like a Shakespeare type of event. He's, he's an actor. He's, he's been, he's been preparing for almost two years, I think, for this. Here is my chance to share the gospel with those of authority, with Jews, Gentiles, everyone that is around.

And he says, I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today. Against all the accusations of the Jews.

Especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies, controversies of the Jews. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

This, this, this family of Herods, they were kind of, they were considered like half Jews. They, they were aware of the religious rules and how things were done.

And so they had kind of authority in that. But it's not like they were just like fully in support of, you know, the Sanhedrin and, and the leadership amongst, you know, the Jewish temple.

[17:05] Like I said, Herod the Great was the grandfather of this guy, Agrippa. He was the man who tried to kill baby Jesus. And after being tricked by the wise men, he put a decree out to kill all boys under the age of two.

Then there's the uncle, Herod Antipas, Antipas, the man who beheaded John the Baptist and mocked Jesus during his trial.

Then you have Agrippa the first. So this is his dad, the guy that we're looking at this morning, Agrippa the first. And in Acts 12, he executes the apostle James.

He imprisons Peter. Remember, Peter gets out of prison. It's a super interesting story because then after that, he goes and he speaks to the people. And the people are like, is that, is that God speaking?

And he doesn't correct them. And it says he dies and his body is eaten by worms. And then now you have Agrippa the second, King Agrippa here.

[18:02] He is the last of the Herods. He knew the Jewish customs well, which is again, why Paul says, I beg you to listen to me patiently. So what we're going to look at here for the remaining portion of Acts 26 is going to be essentially Paul's testimony.

And the biggest takeaway that I want you guys to, you know, hopefully walk away with is just the power of personal testimony. And I just want to kind of, you know, think for a second.

Paul isn't just giving a legal defense, which he did and does. He is presenting the gospel. He is presenting the good news of what Jesus has just done.

And when you think about how that can be done, that can be done in a lot of different ways. I'm like picturing, like imagine we're all wearing a tool belt. And you're out sharing the gospel. You're out making Jesus known.

And how do you do that? That could, you may pull out the sword. And you can directly share God's word with someone. In a series of verses.

[19:13] You know, you think about the Romans road, the Romans 3.23s and 6.23s and John 3.16s and John 5.24s. And all these verses that just so clearly line up and articulate, we are sinners.

We are in need of a savior. God delivered his son to be that perfect savior. He died. He was buried. He rose again. And by putting our faith in that, you can be saved. And that is extremely powerful. I hate to like rank these in my head, but like that has to be like near the top. Right? That is such an effective way of sharing the gospel. What else can you do to show the gospel? You could show love and acts of service and like genuinely minister to someone.

That is a way of displaying the love of Christ and the gospel in a bit of an indirect way, but it's an effective way. What else? You can pray for someone.

The power of prayer. Praying that, you know, someone that you know or maybe even don't know comes to know who the Lord is as their savior. The last tool that I was kind of thinking about is the personal testimony.

[20:25] And the personal testimony I love because it's really hard to argue against someone's testimony. I was just we were talking to a friend last night about this and he gave me a good counterpoint.

So I kind of share that as well. But when you go and share your testimony, someone may argue if you share a verse. Well, I don't really believe the Bible is true. And that kind of takes you down another path.

And so you've got to kind of work through that. But if you share, this is my testimony. This is who I was before. This is what happened. And this is what my life looks like now.

That is really, really powerful. Do you guys get that? My buddy's counterpoint was, well, there's also like some very wild stories that people will share. And in the back of their mind, they may be thinking, this guy's a little crazy.

We're going to see that here at the end of 26. So I'm not going to leave that part out. So my point, though, is I want you to walk away with a sharpened tool for sharing your testimony.

[21:28] And looking at the model of how Paul does it and how we can replicate that. So looking at, okay, let's just go to the next section. So Acts 26, verse 4. Let's just read through 11.

This is him explaining what his life was like before becoming a Christian. And he says, My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews.

I was a patriot. I was with you. I was amongst you. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest part of our religion, I have lived as a Pharisee.

And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our 12 tribes hope to attain as they earnestly worship night and day.

And for this hope, I am accused by Jews. O king, why is this thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? He's saying, I was with you.

[22:34] I was a Pharisee. I was zealous for what you believe. And I had my hope and my faith in what was to come.

And he came. That's Jesus. So what was this hope? What was this promise? You can look through the Old Testament. You can see, you know, the promise that God made to Abraham in Genesis 13 and 15.

I'm going to make you a great nation. I'm going to set you apart. In 2 Samuel, the promise is made to David when he says, And so this is what the Jews were looking forward to.

They were looking forward to this Messiah. And so Paul is saying, he came. He came. And I, this is who I am. Continuing on, it says, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.

[23:56] And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme. And in raging fury against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities. And you think about, if you want to just flip over to Acts 9, this talks about Paul's conversion on the Damascus Road.

You know, and you're looking at just how he's, you know, just ravaging the church. Does anyone ever think about just the stoning of Stephen? I mean, just talk about like, just, it's a, just a beautiful picture, but it is a sad one, frankly.

You know, at the end of Acts 7, they're, they're casting Stephen, and they take him outside the city and they stone him.

And as they're stoning Stephen, he calls out, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And falling to his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them.

And when he laid, and when he said, I'm sorry, and when he had said this, he fell asleep. His last words, do not hold this sin against them. What's the very next sentence in chapter 8?

[25:13] And Saul approved this execution. Saul was right there, approving of, of the, the martyr, martyring in the, in the persecution of the believers.

And then as, I love, if you want to just jump over to Acts 9, it says, but Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

When it says he was still breathing threats and murder against them, I just think of like, you know, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Like, it wasn't like, hey, we were really bad, and we kind of like on our own, stopped doing the bad.

And then Christ said, okay, now you're good enough. It's like, while he was in the midst of wanting to murder these Christians, Christ stops him in his tracks.

And it says, And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And he said, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting, but rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.

[26:35] And so, just in this first part of Paul's testimony, I just want you to encourage, I want to encourage you, as you're kind of like, thinking about this, and thinking about your own story, if you have the opportunity to share that testimony with someone, it's important to really articulate, what did life look like before Christ?

I always kind of felt bad, because I got saved when I was young, and I thought, I'm not, you know, I wasn't a, I wasn't persecuting Christians, I wasn't a, a criminal, I wasn't a, you know, whatever it may be.

It doesn't matter. Life prior to Christ is, it's still worth pointing out, because you need to understand that you were lost, you were a sinner, you were destined to an eternity separated from Christ.

And that was the state of things. And so that's what Paul's doing. He's making this connection with people. Like, I was, I was just like you. I was just like you. I believed what you believed.

I persecuted these people. I said, let's get rid of these people. But then there was this irresistible call. And so just going to verse 12, looking at 12 through 18, it says, in this connection, I journeyed to Damascus.

[27:59] And with the authority and commission of the chief priest at midday, O King, I saw on the, on the way, a light from heaven, brighter than the sun that shone around me.

And those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

It is hard for you to kick against the gods. And I said, who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but rise and stand upon your feet.

For I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me, and to do those in which I will appear to you, delivering from you, your people and for, and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light.

And from the power of Satan to God. And that they may receive forgiveness of sins in a place amongst those who are sanctified by faith in me. He is on this Damascus road, and he recounts this light shining around him, and hearing the voice of the Lord.

[29:23] Jesus gives him a clear calling. And he says, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.

It's one of the purest, just, moments of someone getting saved. You know, I almost like put it right up there with like the thief on the cross.

It is just, it is the most basic of what it should be. There was not a prayer that was like, hey, repeat after me. It was not an altar call of some sort.

It wasn't, you know, a mid-state church setting. I mean, he is on the way to killing Christians, and the Lord stops him. And he cannot resist, but respond.

And he says, who are you? And you said, he said, I am Jesus. You know who I am. I'm the one that you're persecuting. This is the moment that Paul is fully persuaded, fully convinced, that he believes in the gospel.

[30:37] That's the bottom line. This is the moment. So, okay, translate this again to your own life, in your own testimony. what was life like before Christ?

What was the moment of salvation? Some of you may say, I don't know the moment, and that is totally fine. I'm not going to push back on that. But, it is very important to understand what led you to the Lord, in the sense of, what makes you go from darkness to light?

What makes you become a Christian? Okay? I always use this analogy. You can go to Florida, you can go to Florida a couple different ways. You can fly to Florida, you can drive to Florida.

If you drive to Florida, you know exactly when you cross that line, and there's that welcome to Florida sign, the sunshine state. If you fly to Florida, you don't know actually when you got into Florida airspace, maybe if you're looking at the map on the app, but I mean, you really don't know until you land.

You're like, okay, now we're in Florida. Some folks know very clearly. I mean, I can remember Easter weekend, I think it's, I should know this, 1992, you know, I'm doing a devotion with my mom, and she's walking me through what the gospel is, and I just remember thinking, I do not want to go to hell, and Jesus is offering salvation, eternity in heaven by putting my trust in what his son has done.

[32:08] That's it. I want to believe that. I believe that. Okay? That's a very different story than Paul on the road to Damascus, but like that, the stories are very unique.

Okay? Do not discount your own story. The Lord will use it however he will. It's very powerful. Okay, just continuing on, we are running short on time, so let's go down.

19, he says, therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem, and then throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, and get this, I love this part, I had to underline it, that they should repent and turn to God performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.

His message is a repentance, a turning of the mind, so turning away from, like, this is the way I'm going to get myself to heaven, good works, follow the law, to Jesus, and then he's encouraging them to keep in the deeds of that repentance.

Okay, so it's a very small detail, but it's an important one. He is sharing the gospel, salvation, not by what you are doing, or what you can do, but turn to the Lord in faith, and then I'm encouraging you to walk in that as well.

[33:34] That turning, that faith in Christ is the point of salvation, that walking with the Lord is the sanctification, is the growth, is the discipleship that follows. And so that is what Paul is doing.

He's like, I'm going into all the regions and I'm preaching this message, and it says, for this reason, the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. To this day, I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying, both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass.

I'm with you. I am one of you. We look forward to this. The Lord delivered. That's what I'm preaching. That the Christ must suffer, and by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim, light both to our people and to the Gentiles.

And I can just almost imagine, this is two years, this is a pent-up message. And then there's an exhale. And I'm almost picturing, he's like, okay, this is it.

I mean, everyone in here has got to be thinking, I'm going to put my faith in this, in the message of Jesus. And as he was saying these things in verse 24, in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, are you out of your mind?

[34:58] Your great learning is driving you out of your mind. I mean, can you imagine? It's almost like comical. It's like the point in the story where it's just like the pinnacle of the pitch.

And the guy's like, are you out of your mind? This goes to my point earlier. Sharing your testimony can be very powerful. It's hard to refute. You will have people in their minds saying this guy is crazy. This girl is crazy. You have gone off the deep end. And that is what Festus said. Again, this is the Festus that said, I don't really think this guy has done anything like legally wrong.

I know the Jews are saying he's stirring up trouble in the temple and that's their angle for like, you know, a civil judgment. Festus is like, I don't really see it.

I do think you're crazy though. And Paul said, I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking truth and rational words for the king knows about these things and to him I speak boldly.

[35:58] I love this. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice for this has not been done in a corner. You ready? King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?

I know that you believe. And Agrippa said to Paul, in a short time, would you persuade me to be a Christian? Paul's saying, I know you're aware of everything that we're talking about.

I'm not coming up with something off the wall. We all are looking forward to a Messiah and he has come. Do you believe that Jesus is that Messiah? In the world of like, sales and whatnot, there's a point where they say, you need to just ask for the business.

I'm not saying this is a sale. I'm not saying this is a transaction. But there is something to be taken away from here. You share the gospel with someone. You share your story. You share verses.

I think it's a great thing to say, do you believe this? When Jesus goes to Mary and Martha after Lazarus dies and he's like, Martha, I am the resurrection and the life.

[37:09] Do you believe? Like, that is a very pointed but appropriate question in that moment. And Paul said, whether short or long, I don't know, I don't care how much time you need.

I would go to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am except for these chains.

He is there for the point of sharing the gospel. If the musicians want to come up, it wraps up with, then the King Rose and the governor and Bernice, who I think is, Bernice is a sister of King Agrippa. I should have gone into Bernice a little bit but I didn't have time. And those were sitting with them, so they get up and when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, this man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment.

And Agrippa said to Festus, this man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar. It's an interesting comment there.

[38:14] I would just close by just, I want to just say this. There's two more chapters in Acts. It's essentially the story of Paul traveling to Rome.

He is shipwrecked along the way. He spends time in an island I think it's Malta and ultimately makes it to Rome.

He spends a couple years on house arrest and then Acts just kind of stops. It's really interesting. But you are seeing kind of the providence of the Lord. The very end to say, if he had not appealed to Caesar, he would have been set free.

It's just, it's a very, you know, the Lord's plans, the Lord's timing is not our own. You know, I think David made this point last week, like the thought of like Paul just spending two years in prison under Felix, like man, that feels like such a waste of time.

But it's not all lost. The Lord had a plan. And most of like Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, a lot of these letters were written during Paul's time under house arrest.

[39:22] Like this was not wasted time. The Lord had a plan. And in this example, I just love how he gave Paul this opportunity to share his testimony. And I would encourage you to do the same.

Think about that. Think about your life prior to Christ. Think about the moment you were saved. Think about life now. Formulate what that sounds like, how you can relate to someone and share that.

And I just, I would be remiss not to say, if you're like, I don't know if I have that testimony, I would encourage you to look at what the word says, what the gospel is, this free gift that Jesus gives to us.

And by putting our faith in him, you can be as Paul is. You can be saved. You can go from darkness to light. Let's just go ahead and close in prayer.

Heavenly Father, thank you again for this morning. Just the example of Paul in Acts 26 and just how you used him in sharing his testimony, the impact that he had for you and for your glory in the audience that was amongst the group there.

[40:31] Yeah, Lord, I just pray that you would give us that same boldness to just remember what you have done for us in saving us and being able to share that with others, Lord. I just pray that our eyes are always open to how we may further the gospel, how we may show your love.

And again, all in a Christ-centered, genuine way. So we just thank you for that, Lord. Thank you for your word. Amen. Amen.