

## THE STORY

### CHAPTER 30

Summary of Chapter:

On Paul's journey back to Jerusalem, he decided to sail past Ephesus and meet up with the Ephesian elders at Miletus. There he reminded them of how he lived amongst them and served the Lord with great humility and tears in the midst of severe opposition. He reminded them of what he preached and how he declared the truth to both Jews and Greeks. He then explained to them the compulsion he felt to return to Jerusalem, despite not knowing what lay ahead there for him. He wanted to finish the race God had called him to, well. After encouraging them to be the shepherds of God's church that he called them to be, he prayed for them, they all embraced and shed tears knowing that this would be the last time they would see each other. Paul then continued his journey to Jerusalem.

Arriving at Caesarea, they stayed with Phillip the evangelist, one of the seven. After a few days a prophet named Agabus prophesied to Paul concerning the danger that awaited him in Jerusalem. Paul's travelling companions tried to convince him not to go on, but Paul remained committed in going to Jerusalem.

When they had arrived in Jerusalem, Paul was warmly received by the believers and they were excited to hear from him what God had done amongst the gentiles. Paul also went to the temple to tell the Jews about what God had done to change his life on the road to Damascus. However, some Jews stirred up trouble for Paul and seizing him, they dragged him from the temple and began to beat him. While they were trying to kill Paul, the Roman commander saw that the whole city was in uproar and he took some men and went to find out what it was.

When those trying to kill Paul saw the commander coming they stopped beating Paul. The commander had Paul arrested and when he questioned the people as to his crime, he could not establish what was the truth. The commander took Paul away to the barracks but on the way Paul pleaded with the commander to allow him to speak to his enemies. The commander agreed and Paul turned to his enemies and told them his testimony of what Jesus had done in his life. When Paul mentioned that God had sent him to the gentiles, the crowd shouted and jeered to get rid of Paul.

The commander took him away into the barracks and was about to have him flogged when Paul ask if it was legal for the centurion to flog a Roman citizen. After finding out that Paul was a Roman citizen, the commander released Paul. He had Paul and the Sanhedrin come together to find exactly what the accusations against Paul were. But again, as Paul spoke of what God had done in his life and for His people, there was a great uproar.

That night God appeared to Paul and told him that he would speak about him in Rome just as he spoke of him in Jerusalem. However the Jews conspired to kill Paul

but the commander came to hear of this conspiracy and sent Paul away during the night to Caesarea to be judged by Governor Felix. Governor Felix called for the religious leaders from Jerusalem to establish again the accusation against Paul, but no fault could be found of Paul. The religious leaders asked if Paul could be transferred to Jerusalem for more questioning but Paul appealed to his right as a Roman citizen to be judged in Rome.

Felix agreed and Paul was shipped off to Rome with other prisoners on trial. Along the voyage Paul had more opportunities to speak of the grace of God and to show the grace of God to people. He was used greatly by God to help the sailors, the Roman guards and the prisoners when they were shipwrecked on the Island of Malta on their way to Rome.

They spent three months on Malta before they boarded another ship headed for Rome. After arriving in Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself with a soldier to guard him until his trial date. During this time he spoke with the Jewish religious leaders about what had happened to him in Jerusalem and why, some believed him, others would not believe him. For two whole years Paul stayed in Rome under house arrest, where he wrote a letter to the church at Ephesus reviewing God's love through Jesus Christ to them and calling them to unity in Jesus.

After two years under house arrest it appears that Paul was released and embarked on a missionary journey to Asia Minor, Crete, Greece and Spain. He was imprisoned again in Rome but this time languished in a cold dungeon chained like a criminal. Paul later was martyred during the reign of Emperor Nero in about AD 67 or 68.

During his final days he penned a personal letter to Timothy which we know as 2 Timothy. In this letter Paul pours out his heart with a mixture of loneliness, tenacious faith and concern for his fellow worker during difficult times of persecution for God's church. Paul, along with many of the other apostles, was martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ.

### ***1. How was Paul able to endure the pain and trials that he suffered for his beliefs?***

I think Paul was able to endure because he really believed what he believed and proclaimed. He was absolutely convinced that what he was doing was for God and was the truth of God, the only hope for salvation for God's people.

He trusted that God through his sufferings would receive honour and praise and that God would turn the suffering and pain into His good for Paul.

I also think through God's Grace Paul was able to endure the pain and trials that he suffered. I also think that through that grace, Paul could count it a privilege to suffer for the name of Jesus, for he saw in his suffering, a deeper identification with his Lord and Saviour which grew him closer to Him and grew him in his own dependency on God. And through God's grace, he found it to be sufficient for his life and godliness through those trials.

**2. *What can you learn from Paul's life about how to face difficult circumstances?***

Trusting that God has a purpose in difficult circumstances and that He will do what His best for His glory and for our good in those circumstances, will help us face and endure difficult times.

**3. *Why was Paul willing to walk into the face of danger?***

Paul knew and understood God's calling on his life and because he believed in that calling, he knew that his personal safety was in the hands of God. Where God would lead him he would go, no matter the potential danger that may be there. He trusted that God would use him and look after him and His grace would be sufficient to help him endure whatever danger lay ahead.

I think the belief and trust that Paul had in God is on display here for all to see. It was not a belief or trust that only revealed itself when God blessed, but also when God lead him to possible trial and danger for His name sake. As re: question 1 Paul really believed God and in God's calling on his life.

**4. *What character qualities do you see in Paul?***

A trusting character – He had immense faith in God and trusted Him for his personal safety and provisions. He remained faithful to his God no matter what the circumstances or situations of his life. He was faithful to God's word, despite the arguments and debates with the religious leaders, he stood firm on the truth.

A focussed and committed character – He never took his focus off the calling God had given him and despite the opposition and difficulties, he was committed to being obedient to that calling.

A compassionate Character – At the heart of his faithfulness and obedience to his calling was a genuine compassion for people who did not yet know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Not only did this compassion take him to share God's word in remote places but even on the ship that was eventually shipwrecked, Paul had compassion on all who were on board and desired that none would die or be lost.

**5. *What practical steps can you take to cultivate character qualities that resemble Paul's?***

The more we know our God and who He is and what He has done for us; I believe our trust in Him and in His calling on our lives will grow. Our faithfulness to Him will grow stronger even in the trials and dangers of life.

Daily reminding oneself of what God has called you as a follower of Jesus to do, will help in cultivating a focussed and committed characteristic like Paul's – these reminders can take on various forms from memorizing scripture to daily devotional times.

Praying and asking God to help you cultivate those characteristics which He would want you to have in your hearts especially like compassion and love for those who do not yet know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. At the heart of this question really is not being conformed to what Paul was like, but as Paul was striving for, being conformed to the character of Jesus.

**6. *How would you sum up Paul's message?***

“I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”

I believe in Paul's daily life and in his obedience to God's calling on his life, this is the message that came through. That knowing Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour meant more to him than anything else. Paul lived this out in his life as he travelled to faraway places to speak about the value of knowing Jesus, he put himself in dangerous situations because knowing Jesus was more valuable to him than his life and he would not stop speaking about knowing Jesus despite the attempts on his life.

Living for and being obedient to God was more valuable to Paul than anything else.