

“I preached first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that all must repent of their sins and turn to God—and prove they have changed by the good things they do.” Acts 26:20 NLT

[lectio] // ACTS 26:19-29

listen to the text by reading out loud slowly and repeat up to 3x if desired

Paul has his audience with King Agrippa and he's making his case. He tells Agrippa what his job and his message is in 5 seconds. I preached and told people they need to repent and turn to God. Then he adds, “and prove they have changed by the good things they do.” And prove they have changed? Prove to who? Not God, he sees the heart. Prove to all those that know them, before Christ after Christ, what's different? When one encounters Christ there is always change, but is it apparent to those around. Ten lepers were healed, that's change, but only one return to thank Jesus. That one “proved” they changed by immediately giving thanks. Many were changed and went out and did amazing things for God, but it was not recorded (Mad naked man, Veronica, Sychar's evangelist). When your life has rotated 180°, someone is bound to notice! My friends noticed immediately and we negotiated a peaceful goodbye for our lunch meetings. Paul had his “elevator” speech ready to go when he met with powerful decision makers. Are you ready to share your story (which Paul shared in 2:30 seconds) calling and duty in 40 seconds?

[oratio]

pray as responding to the words, phrase, sentence that God has stirred within you

Dad,

I would love to get my story and my calling down to 3 minutes like Paul did. He was ready to share and knew how to do it quickly for those in powerful positions. I'm going to work on that today. Holy Spirit, will you help me get it right?

[contemplatio]

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root

“Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You may speak in your defense.” So Paul, gesturing with his hand, started his defense: “I am fortunate, King Agrippa, that you are the one hearing my defense today against all these accusations made by the Jewish leaders, for I know you are an expert on all Jewish customs and controversies. Now please listen to me patiently! “As the Jewish leaders are well aware, I was given a thorough Jewish training from my earliest childhood among my own people and in Jerusalem. If they would admit it, they know that I have been a member of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion. Now I am on trial because of my hope in the fulfillment of God’s promise made to our ancestors. In fact, that is why the twelve tribes of Israel zealously worship God night and day, and they share the same hope I have. Yet, Your Majesty, they accuse me for having this hope! Why does it seem incredible to any of you that God can raise the dead? “I used to believe that I ought to do everything I could to oppose the very name of Jesus the Nazarene. Indeed, I did just that in Jerusalem. Authorized by the leading priests, I caused many believers there to be sent to prison. And I cast my vote against them when they were condemned to death. Many times I had them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus. I was so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in foreign cities. “One day I was on such a mission to Damascus, armed with the authority and commission of the leading priests. About noon, Your Majesty, as I was on the road, a light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me and my companions. We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will.’ “‘Who are you, lord?’ I asked. “And the Lord replied, ‘I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. Now get to your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness. Tell people that you have seen me, and tell them what I will show you in the future. And I will rescue you from both your own people and the Gentiles. Yes, I am sending you to the Gentiles to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God’s people, who are set apart by faith in me.’ “And so, King Agrippa, I obeyed that vision from heaven. I preached first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that all must repent of their sins and turn to God —and prove they have changed by the good things they do. Some Jews arrested me in the Temple for preaching this, and they tried to kill me. But God has protected me right up to this present time so I can testify to everyone, from the least to the greatest. I teach nothing except what the prophets and Moses said would happen — that the Messiah would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, and in this way announce God’s light to Jews and Gentiles alike.”

Acts 26:1-23 NLT

[contemplatio]

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root