

# Acts 21:37 to Chapter 26 Part 1

## A GROWING MOVEMENT

### Sow - Water - Let God Bring the Increase


Life Group Leaders should read through this material and choose a few questions to talk over in your group. Your group will not have time to cover all the material. The guide is for personal study and for choosing a few questions that you and your life group would like to discuss.


#### Read Aloud 1 Corinthians 3

Before we break down this section of Scripture, describe what is happening in your own WORDS. (Being able to summarize Scripture is a great way to see if we are comprehending what we have just read.)

#### 1 Corinthians 3:5-9

This Scripture makes it clear on the role that we play in regard to ministry and changing peoples hearts. All we can do is simply plant the seed and water the seed, but it is God who brings the increase.


 **Question: When you are met with resistance to the Gospel, do you find yourself feeling a lot of pressure to "figure out" the best way to help the person understand/believe? Why do you think that is?**

 While it is not wrong to pray for discernment and direction in our method of sharing. Nowhere in the Scripture are we told that our "method" is what saves people.

#### Acts 21:37-22:21

Paul had the opportunity to share his testimony and defense to the Jews. He knew that one of the primary accusations that the Jews had of him is that he ministered to the Gentiles. And even worse, that God had divinely commissioned him to bring light to the Gentiles. Yet this was a vital part of the Gospel; this was the purpose of God from the beginning of time: to unite all men, women, nations, and tribes under the banner of Christ. This point of the Gospel could not be compromised.

**Read: Acts 22:17-21** - Paul does not water down the truth, but instead shared exactly what God had told him.

 **Question: How do you think Paul was able to share confidently and boldly something that he knew would get him killed? Do you find yourself telling white lies or slightly changing a story or even God's Word to avoid conflict? Why do you think you may do this or be tempted to do this?**

## **Acts 22:22-23:11**

Paul continues to state the facts of the Gospel and his testimony to both Jews and Greeks. It continues to end in conflict and even violence.

**A** **Read Acts 23:11** - Jesus encouraged Paul with a simple idea. Paul had declared “**the facts about Me.**” Jesus did not reprimand Paul on his tactic or the lack of fruit. Rather the Lord encouraged Paul because he had simply declared the facts. That is our role: we are called to declare the truth of God.

We are Christ’s ambassadors. An ambassador was someone who received a message, typically from a nation or government, and their only responsibility was to relay that message to the recipient. Their role was not to modify the message or to debate the message but simply to deliver the message.

**B** **Read: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21**

**Q** **Question: Do you know the message with which Christ is sending you? When we know a message well, it is easy to repeat it. Perhaps you have played the telephone game. If the message is not passed on clearly, it can end up a jumbled mess of nonsense. As an ambassador, do you feel confident in the message you carry?**

## **Acts 23:11-26:32**

Once again, Paul is given multiple opportunities to give a defense. He does not change the message but continues to preach Christ crucified and His heart to reach the Gentiles.

**Read: Acts 26:24-29**

As Paul testified of Christ, he did not do so in his own words. Paul continually goes back to the Scripture as his foundation. His greatest defense to the Jews was that he was not saying anything new that the prophets and Moses had not foretold. It is the Scripture that has the power to change our hearts, not necessarily the miraculous or compelling arguments.

**Read: Luke 16:19-31** - The key to faith was not in seeing someone rise from the dead, but the key was faith in the promises of the Scripture.

**Q** **Question: Not many people have a testimony like Paul’s: going from murderer to missionary. Yet even Paul did not rely only on a miraculous testimony, but rather rooted his message in the Word of God. How confident are you in sharing your testimony? How confident are you in rooting your testimony and story into the Scripture to help provide a foundation of truth of who Jesus is according to the Bible?**

# Weekly Challenge

In this section of Acts the life and ministry of Paul takes a drastic turn. Paul goes from planting churches and leading a world wide movement, to being imprisoned. Yet regardless of season Paul was a man on one message and one mission, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Regardless of the perilous seasons Paul found himself in he remained faithful to the simple message of the Gospel and the word of his testimony.

This week take some time to read through Acts chapter 21:37 through Acts chapter 26:32 and look for common themes. One theme we will discuss today is the faith that Paul had in God's power to change people. He did not put the pressure on himself to change people, but simply obeyed God and trusted that the Lord could cause any seed to grow.

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# Memory Verse

## **Acts 14:21-23 ESV**

*<sup>21</sup> When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, <sup>22</sup> strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. <sup>23</sup> And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*