

LESSON 61

Paul in Chains

ACTS 28:11-31



BIBLE TRUTH

NOTHING CAN STOP THE ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW **5 MIN**

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY **10 MIN**

Read Acts 28:11–31 from the Scriptures or read story 139, “Paul in Chains,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 **10 MIN**

Paul's Imprisonment

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ simple Paul costume made from a flat sheet and a rope belt (include chains and locks)

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

Not Hindered by Unbelief

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ twenty sheets of colored paper rolled into balls

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

7. ACTIVITY TIME **10 MIN**

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 61—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

LESSON SNAPSHOT

- 8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN
- 9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Proclaim and Spread the Gospel

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ gospel handouts (To prepare, type out the word “gospel,” but separate it into two syllables “go” and “spel” and copy it on the page enough times so that when the page is cut apart each child gets at least two sets. Cut out the “go” and “spel” words from the printed sheets.)
- ✓ two containers for the children to use to distribute the slips of paper

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Paul was in chains because of the gospel—Paul’s testimony had caused a disturbance among the Jews in Jerusalem who began to riot in opposition (Acts 21:27–36). While Paul was in custody, the Jews swore they would kill him (Acts 23:12–13). Knowing that he was called to go to Rome (Acts 23:11), Paul appealed to Caesar. By making this appeal Paul knew that he would be sent to Rome to stand trial. After a difficult journey, Paul finally reached Rome. Once in Rome, Paul called the local Jewish leaders together to share his story with them. He wanted to explain that he had been arrested for teaching about Jesus and sharing his testimony (Acts 28:20).

In spite of his chains, Paul continued to preach—After gathering the Jewish leaders together, Paul explained the gospel story from the Old Testament (Acts 28:23). In the end, some were convinced by what Paul shared, but others did not believe (Acts 28:24).

Paul was not hindered by the unbelief of the Jews—In spite of the fact that many did not believe, Paul remained committed to spreading the message. For two years Paul welcomed all who came to see him and preached the gospel without hindrance (Acts 28:30–31). Paul knew that many of the Jews would reject Jesus, but he also remembered that the Lord had called him to proclaim the message to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). Even while under house arrest, Paul continued the work God had assigned him.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Paul said, "It is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain" (Acts 28:20). Jesus, the Messiah, who died upon the cross and rose again on the third day, is the hope of Israel that Paul spoke about. To put it another way, Paul said, "I was arrested for preaching the gospel." Once in Rome, Paul knew that he was under house arrest and not in a dungeon so that he could preach the gospel freely. In Philippians 1:12, Paul said that the advancement of the gospel was the reason for his imprisonment in Rome.

For two years Paul stayed under house arrest, sharing with anyone who would come to listen. He proclaimed the "kingdom of God and [taught] about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:31). Even when others were preaching with false motives (to make a name for themselves) and in competition with Paul, Paul rejoiced. To him it was most important that the message go forth.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Acts 28:11–31 from the Scriptures or read story 139, "Paul in Chains," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 **10 MIN**

Paul's Imprisonment

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ simple Paul costume made from a flat sheet and a rope belt (include chains and locks)

While dressed as Paul, explain the story in Acts 28. Include information from Philippians 1 as well. You can have Paul editorialize a bit. For instance, he could talk about how glad he was to be placed under house arrest, where he could share the gospel, instead of confined to a dungeon, where he would have been alone. Also feel free to add information from Acts 27 about the shipwreck.

Have Paul ask the children the following questions:

- **What is the gospel?**
(Be sure they understand what the gospel is.)
- **What do we call it when someone suffers for proclaiming the gospel?**
(persecution)
- **Who helps us proclaim the gospel with boldness and courage?**
(the Holy Spirit)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

Not Hindered by Unbelief

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ twenty sheets of colored paper rolled into balls

Use this object lesson to demonstrate that although some may try to hinder the spread of the gospel, it cannot be stopped.

Divide your class into two groups. The first group represents those open to the gospel. They should stand at one end of the classroom. The second group represents those hostile to the gospel. They should stand in the middle of the room. The twenty balls represent the gospel message. Explain to the class that you are going to be the only Christian in the room. Stand on the other side of the room, opposite those open to the gospel.

You are to preach the gospel by throwing the balls through the opposition to those open to the gospel. If a ball makes it through the opposition to those open to the message and is caught in the air, the person who catches it is “converted” and should join you in the work of evangelizing. They can bring back to your side any balls they find on their side of the room.

The opposition can try to block your evangelism by knocking the balls down. They cannot, however, keep the balls. Any Christians may pick them up to be thrown again. Eventually you will have an increasing number of people helping you throw the balls—preach the gospel—to those ready to receive it.

Ask the class the following questions:

- **Could the opposition stop the advance of the gospel?**
(No. They might be able to stop a few balls, but they could not stop all of them.)
- **How did adding more converts (people throwing the balls) make it easier to save more people?**
(The more people throwing balls, the harder it was for the opposition to stop the balls.)

Talk about how this exercise demonstrates the unstoppable nature of the gospel. In the game there were a limited number of balls. In real life, Christians who memorize God’s Word have unlimited ammunition, the words they speak.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 61—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What is Paul doing in the picture?**
(Paul is writing.)
- **What do you think Paul is writing?**
(Paul wrote the book of Philippians while under house arrest and he shared the gospel with all those who would visit him.)
- **What do you think Paul would have told the guards?**
(Paul would have told the story of how Jesus met him on the road, blinded him, and changed his life. The guards began to understand the gospel and realized Paul had not done anything wrong but was being held because of his faith.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Proclaim and Spread the Gospel

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ gospel handouts prepared as instructed below
- ✓ two containers for the children to use to distribute the slips of paper

The object is to show how the gospel spreads from just a few to many.

Before class type out the word “gospel” but separate it into two syllables “go” and “spel” and copy it on a page enough times so that when the page is cut apart each child gets at least two sets. Cut out the “go” and “spel” words from the printed sheets.

Pick two volunteers to be the Christians. Give each of them a container with the slips of paper. They are to evangelize the class by telling someone that Jesus died on the cross for their sins and rose again on the third day and handing them one slip of paper randomly.

A person does not become a Christian the first time they hear the gospel. Only after they get both the “go” and the “spel” do they “become a Christian.” Once they are converted they take their slips of paper and share with someone else in the class. They can only give away a portion of their word each time. The unbelievers should not reveal which part they already have. So a child could get three “go” slips before receiving the key “spel” slip they need to complete the word and become a Christian. This demonstrates that it often takes multiple hearings of the gospel before God opens our hearts to believe.

What starts out as very quiet with two people sharing will soon become mayhem with many children walking around the room. Let the children know that you will do this for several minutes and then you will call them back to their seats or flash the lights as a signal to return to their seats and talk about what happened.

Ask the class the following questions:

- **What was amazing about this exercise?**
(Draw out their observations.)
- **How is this exercise like sharing the message with others in real life?**
(Each person that we share with who is saved is added to our number and can share with others. More and more people can hear the message of the gospel and be saved.)
- **Why did some get converted quickly while it took longer for others?**
(Accept any answer.)
- **Does everyone believe when they hear and understand the gospel in real life?**
(No. Only those whom God touches by his Spirit receive the message. Others remain in their sin and reject it.)

Remind the class that they are “saved” this way only during the game, not real life. But the exercise helps us see why telling people about Jesus is so important.

