

Text: Acts 26:18, Title: Invisible Realities, Date/Place: The Road, 11/12/17, AM

A. **Opening illustration: 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, Catholic doctrine of salvation**

B. Background to passage: Last week we saw how Paul gave his defense before Felix the Roman governor in Caesarea, addressing them about his hope in God. Today we will see his testimony before the new Roman governor, Festus, and Herod Agrippa II. It is clear throughout the text that for two years the Jewish hatred of Paul has not subsided, and they are still seeking fresh opportunities to have him killed. Thwarted for a road trip to Jerusalem, then thwarted at a dismissal of charges, Paul is heading to Rome. Knowing his innocence, but being forced to send him to Rome, Festus must include a summary of legitimate charges for the authorities, and potentially the Emperor, to describe why he is sending him. So, the welcome visit from King Agrippa makes a good time for a more seasoned opinion on the matter. Going to look at the glory of the gospel in one verse; words of the Lord in Paul's commission that describe the task to be accomplished.

C. Main thought: The description of the gospel and the results of the gospel demonstrate for us the richness of the truth of salvation by faith; for the preaching of the gospel of Christ is power to them who believe.

A. **The Process of the Gospel (v. 18a)**

1. Three Descriptions

- i. **Opening eyes:** by nature, man is blind to the reality of the beauty of Christ. We are blind to the inestimable value of the greatest being and treasure in the universe. We are blind to the glory and power of almighty God. Our eyes don't just need glasses they need supernatural surgery. The Holy Spirit comes as the Word is preached and removes the scales off of our eyes that blind us, then we can see. The cross and the resurrection go from invisible to majestic.
- ii. **Darkness to Light:** the bible describes the unsaved man as one who walks in darkness. The theme throughout scripture of light and darkness shows us that man does not know which way to go spiritually on his own. Now the picture of man is doubly dark, but this also makes the description of salvation doubly awesome (kinda like Double Mint Gum). When Christ comes in, someone turns on the lights on in our souls. Immediately, the unapproachable light of Christ explodes away every ounce of darkness that stands between us and God. We become children of light. We are transformed, and the core of our being is made different and we are adopted into Kingdom.
- iii. **Satan to God:** man is in bondage to sin and Satan before salvation. Satan, being given limited power on earth, takes pleasure in and advantage of the blinded eyes, darkened hearts, to exercise authority over unbelievers. The sin that ravages our world (and our hearts) so easily captures them. Again, the gospel delivers from this captivity, and puts believers under the authority of a new Master; One who's yoke is easy and burden is light. The message of the cross, when believed upon, breaks Satan's unfettered power, and gives the Spirit within, who is greater!

2. John 9:39, 2 Cor 4:3-6, 1 Thess 5:5, 1 Pet 2:9, Eph 4:18, 1 John 5:19, Col 1:13,

3. **Illustration: He is a chain breaker, way maker, prison-shaking Savior, the lady at Southeast Pipe that could sale ice to an Eskimo, really got cranked up when when I asked her if she could sell Jesus like her business, then she started talking about her soon-to-be husband and his awesome deliverance from alcohol and meth addiction in the isolation cell of the Lee Co jail,**

4. What a powerful gospel! What a powerful Christ! How spectacular is the power of the cross. When God saves, He opens blind eyes, drives out darkness, and demolishes the authority of Satan. Therefore, each of us lives in the realm of open eyes, enlightened lives, and under the authority of God, OR blinded eyes, darkened hearts, and under the power of Satan. The gospel makes the difference, and as you will see, it is all through faith.

B. **The Results of the Gospel (v. 18b)**

1. Two benefits

- i. Forgiveness of sin: Paul uses a purpose clause here to tip us off that all these descriptions and mechanisms of the gospel produce the forgiveness of sin. In this context, the language would have been mounting for Agrippa and Festus, and now he offers forgiveness of wrongs committed. The range of meaning for this word give it depth; it means to pardon, cancel, release, liberty, freeing from something that confines, canceling debt or punishment or guilt. We have offended the God of the universe infinitely with every spot and blemish, and deserve eternal punishment and suffering. Yet, Jesus says that His gospel frees from that. On the cross He bore the wrath for every sin of all those who would believe until the end of time.
- ii. An Inheritance Among the Saints: Jesus said he would give a place among the sanctified ones. The tense of the verb indicates the sanctified ones are permanently and perfectly sanctified. Of course, that means heaven, but how? The other half of the gospel is that Jesus earned for us perfection in the life that he lived, and when the gospel breaks in, we receive the forgiveness from the punishment due us, and also inheritance of those made perfect. Notice the “in me.” That’s where the perfection comes from. The great transaction where by faith we are given perfect holiness, because he earned for us perfect righteousness. Again, this is the beauty of salvation. Wonderful, Merciful Savior.

2. 1 Cor 6:10-11, Eph 1:7, 11, 14, Col 1:12-14, Rom 8:17, Heb 10:10, Eph 2:8-9, Rom 5:1-2

3. Illustration: God would be an unjust judge if he just set free a criminal,

4. Freedom from guilt here, and everlasting, ever-increasing joy to come. Describe Edward’s view of heaven. And it will be among every tribe, tongue, and nation. Every believer from all time experiencing mind-blowing joy and satisfaction every moment for eternity! WOW! Just think on it, that’s what the gospel bought us. And in his mercy, he looks down removes the scales, turns on the lights, delivers from Satan’s authority by faith in the gospel, providing for us, among 10,000 other things, forgiveness of all, and an inheritance. To God be the glory.

- A. Closing illustration: When the gospel is faithfully proclaimed in the manner that Paul does, we may expect the risen Lord to bring spiritual enlightenment (*to open their eyes*) and genuine conversion (*to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God*), enabling people to share in the benefits of his saving work (*so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me*).¹
- B. Agrippa asks if Paul thinks that he can in such a short time, with so little effort, and so few logical arguments convince him to become a Christian? And Paul responds in the affirmative, and begs with great urgency, “yes, I wish all of you would become Christians.” So, I beg you with urgency embrace such a wonderful Christ and such a glorious gospel of his life, death, burial, and resurrection! Approach your life with the urgency of an all-satisfying, infinitely beautiful Savior!
- C. Invitation to commitment

Additional Notes

- **Is Christ Exalted, Magnified, Honored, and Glorified?**

¹ Peterson, D. G. (2009). *The Acts of the Apostles* (p. 669). Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.