

# VOYAGER

*Experiences That Shape Our Faith*

**About the Series:** Experiences are powerful and can shape our Christian faith. But experiences should not be what defines our faith. Rather, it should serve to strengthen our faith and affirm what we already know to be the facts of our faith as recorded in the Scriptures. In this sermon series, we explore the journeys of Apostle Paul and how encountering life-changing experiences can teach valuable life lessons to voyagers like us who are on a journey called life.

## Part 18

### An Effective Christian Witness

Acts 25-26 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

#### DISCUSS

To a follower of Jesus, carrying the title of “Christian” is a lot of responsibility and pressure, and sometimes makes it difficult to be an effective witness for the Lord in this world. We don’t know how to strike the balance in talking about normal things and talking about Christ. Through the example of the apostle Paul, we draw out four questions we need to ask ourselves so that we can be an effective witness for Christ. Read Acts 25-26

#### **Is the time, venue, and audience appropriate to engage in spiritual conversation? (v. 25:1-12)**

- Describe the situation Paul was in. What did the Jewish leaders want to happen, how did Governor Festus deal with it, and what did Paul do?
- Give examples of times and dates that may not be appropriate to have spiritual conversations. Share your own experience if possible.

- Do you think social media is an appropriate avenue to have spiritual conversations? Why or why not?
- What does the Bible tell us about engaging with those who have no interest in civilized and open-minded conversations (Proverbs 23:9)? Does this mean we don’t share with them the Gospel? Discuss.

#### **Do I share a compelling message worth listening to? (v. 25:13-27)**

- There are now a number of people in power who met Paul and knew the circumstances surrounding his arrest. What did these people have in common regarding their response to what Paul was saying?
- What was Paul’s message centered around? (v. 19)
- What compelling message about Jesus do you talk to those in your circles?
- In making spiritual conversations, how do you relate the real needs of a person’s soul to what Christ is offering? (ex: hope for the hopeless, mercy and grace for the broken, etc.)

#### **Is my life story focused on the salvation and life transformation offered by Jesus? (v. 26:1-23)**

- What was Paul’s testimony? Why did he think he needed a Savior?
- If people want to know you more or want to hear about your life, is Jesus anywhere in the story?
- Share with the group the story of salvation and life transformation in Christ.
- Do you need to have a powerful life story (ex: addiction, crime, etc.) to be able to effectively share your story of life transformation? Why or why not?

#### **Do I understand that my responsibility is only to share Jesus and not to change hearts? (v. 26:24-32)**

- What was King Agrippa’s reaction to what Paul said? What was Paul’s response?
- If it’s not our responsibility to change hearts, then who is?
- What fears do you have in talking about Jesus to others?
- Why is it important that we understand what our responsibility is in our role as a Christian witness?

## REFLECT

Being a Christian witness means talking about Christ to others. There may be someone now that you're trying to reach for Christ. To do this effectively, ask yourself these four questions:

- Is the time, venue, and audience appropriate to engage in spiritual conversation?
- Do I share a compelling message worth listening to?
- Is my life story focused on the salvation and life transformation offered by Jesus?
- Do I understand that my responsibility is only to share Jesus and not to change hearts?

## PRAY

Heavenly Father, sometimes the responsibility of sharing Jesus to others overwhelms and frightens me. But thank You for reminding me of the important things I need to be focusing on regarding that responsibility and providing steps so I can do it effectively. I pray for the people I'm trying to reach with the Gospel message. Give me the wisdom to know when, where, and who to engage with. May my story of salvation and life transformation magnify Jesus. And may the knowledge that it is the Holy Spirit alone who changes hearts free me from unnecessary burdens I place on myself. I ask these, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.