

Di121 Effective Communication

Lesson Di121-4 Why Communicate? God's Story

How did news spread before radio, television, or the Internet? Well, some people used drums or smoke signals, but most news spread by word of mouth. One person told another person—or several others.

Your last lesson explained that all God's people have a personal story to tell, their testimony. We are not the only ones with a story, however. In the Bible God told the story he wants people to hear. In his story God reveals his character, especially his love. Amazingly, God chose to make us a part of his story, as we share his love with others. The following event in the life of the apostle Paul shows how he became a part of God's story. He too experienced God's love in his life.

Paul was arrested on several occasions as he spread the news of the Messiah. In the Book of Acts, chapter 21, we learn that he was arrested again in Jerusalem. Over the next two years his imprisonment gave him the opportunity to tell many people about God's love. One of these people was King Agrippa.

Paul began his defense with, "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews.... They can testify, if they are willing, that I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion, living as a Pharisee" (Acts 26:2, 5).

"I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord's people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

"On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'

"Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'

"'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me'" (Acts 26:9-16).

Paul also explained what happened next. He said, "My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me. A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.

He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.

“Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’ When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking to me saying. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.’

“‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles’” (Acts 22:11-21).

Some of the details of God’s story are revealed through Paul’s testimony. God did not stop loving Paul because he opposed the followers of Christ. God chose to reveal himself to this Pharisee. Paul had authority from the religious leaders to imprison Christians, but soon he met the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus. When he met Christ, he surrendered his will to God. He was blinded physically so that he could experience the healing and light that comes from God. On the road Jesus explained to Saul that persecuting the church was the same as persecuting him. God had a plan for this persecutor of the church. He would send him to plant many more churches among the Gentiles.

The testimony of Paul reveals much about the story God is telling to this world. His testimony shows God’s abundant love for all sinners like himself. Paul would later say that the churches in Judea heard the report that “the man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy” (Gal 1:23). The report of Paul’s conversion was being passed from one church to another. God wants to redeem and change sinners—even those who persecute Christians like Paul did. He wants them to become his children. This is God’s desire for all men and women who are still unbelievers.

These events in the life of Paul tell the story that God wants to write through history and in each individual life. God’s story is the story of redemption—of lives changed forever. As effective communicators, we need to tell God’s story as a part of our story. Then people will understand his love for all peoples and his plan to bless them.

This story is **important** because it reveals how God worked in the life of Paul to accomplish his plans and demonstrate his love.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that we must include God’s story in our testimonies, so people will know of his great love for them.

Let’s **review** this lesson—

1. Where was Paul going when he first met the risen Jesus? [Pause]

A. If you answered that Paul first met Jesus on his way to Damascus to imprison believers, you are correct.

2. What did Ananias tell Paul was the reason Jesus appeared and spoke to him on the road to Damascus? [Pause]

A. If you answered that he said God had chosen Paul to hear Christ's words and to be a witness to all people of what he had seen and heard, you are right.

3. What story do we want to include when we give our testimony? [Pause]

A. If you said, "We want to include the story of God's great love," you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for the lesson is to tell the story of Paul's conversion and how it illustrates the story God wants each person to hear. After telling Paul's story, ask this question, "Was Paul's conversion a great miracle because he became a great missionary? In what sense is the conversion of each person also a miracle?" Answer: Each conversion is a miracle because we are transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. We become one of God's children.