

St. Paul's Testimony in Acts

Read these two passages and as a table and list what you notice about Paul's testimony. How are they similar and different?

Acts 22: 1-21: Speaking to whom? _____

What is Paul talking about in each section?

Acts 22:1-5	Acts 22:6-11	Acts 22:12-21

Acts 26:9-23: Speaking to whom? _____

What is Paul talking about in each section?

Acts 26:9-11	Acts 26:12-18	Acts 26:19-23

What does this investigation tell you about Testimony?



What is Testimony?

- A firsthand account of what God has done in my life and the difference that has made.
- It is an authentic personal experience of Christ's work in me – real, heartfelt, relevant. It is not abstract nor tutorial.
- It communicates life is different and more meaningful with Jesus Christ. It provides evidence of why we are committed to Christ now.

<p>Life Before My current intensity and level of relationship with God.</p>	<p>What changed me and the direction of my life? It may be one event or a series of steps which you can trace and describe.</p>	<p>Life Now My relationship with Jesus Christ now.</p>
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What is Testimony for?

- It is a means to help someone else see God's presence, active in a life.
- It clarifies God's call to relationship is real and makes an actual difference.
- It helps others know us as a follower of Jesus Christ rooted in the Church.

What Makes it Powerful?

- 1. AUTHENTICITY of the narrative.
- 2. INTEGRITY of the speaker.
- 3. RELATIONSHIP-DRIVEN.

What the benefits of giving testimony?

What about it is intimidating or concerning?



Igneous Eruption!

- Intense heat creates molten material and quick cooling solidifies it.

*On that journey as I drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from the sky suddenly shone around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' I replied, 'Who are you, sir?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazorean whom you are persecuting. **St. Paul (Acts 22:6 – 8)***

Intense experience that completely changed your life direction

Did you have an unexpected, intense experience that completely changed your life direction toward God?



Some Characteristics:

- unexpected encounter (*did-not-see-it-coming event*)
- significant force
- was blind but now see: disbelief to belief
- impelled to act on it

Sedimentary Shaping

- Layers formed by an accumulation of sediment over time.

At Gilgal Joshua set up the **twelve stones that had been taken from the Jordan**, saying to the Israelites, "In the future, when your children ask their parents, '**What do these stones mean?**' you shall inform them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan here on dry ground.' For the LORD, your God, dried up the waters of the Jordan in front of you until you crossed over, just as the LORD, your God, had done at the Red Sea, drying it up in front of us until we crossed over. **Joshua 4:20-23**

Shaped over time through many people and experiences of God

Were you shaped and supported over time by many people & experiences of God?

Some Characteristics:

- A progression in faith that is mainly steady,
- Links of faith may be hidden in depth of meaning
- May be ebbs in intensity or faithfulness
- The shore (of family, friends, a community of faith) is generally near, never far
- Living of faith; Witness to others fairly constant



When was God doing something new in you?

Situations or moments that felt surprising or enlightening or moving or inspiring:

And because of which you changed in some way:

- A change in heart
- A change of heart and mind
- Leading to a desire to change in attitude and action



Metamorphic Moment

- Exposure to extreme conditions (heat, pressure or chemicals) modifies the composition of a sedimentary rock. (Limestone becomes Marble)

*But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. **Luke 1:34-38***

A surrender and complete "yes" to God's call!

Was there a definite moment when you surrendered your will with a complete "yes" to God?



Some Characteristics:

- Has a deep faith
- The focus shifts from obstacles to trust in God's care
- A surrender out of that faith
- A complete "yes"
- Release of fear
- Fullness of joy

3. Life Now: What is Different?

- a closer relationship to Jesus
- a profound love for Jesus opening your heart
- a deep trust in Jesus' care for you
- an inexplicable joy based in trusting Jesus
- How are you different? (thoughts, attitudes, motivations)
- How is your daily life different?
- What are your longings or desires now?
- What does God's faithfulness mean to you?
- *a relationship with Jesus or a deeper level of relationship*
- *knowing God's love*
- *no longer alone or lonely*
- *fruits of the Spirit evident in you*
- *God's forgiveness and my forgiving others*
- *a better perspective in life*
- *freedom from fear, peace of mind*
- *having a purpose, fulfillment, significance*
- *dealing with difficult people or dealing with stress*
- *overcoming tragedies, having strength*
- *no fear of death*
- *the impact of God's Word, God's counsel*
- *finding a place of belonging, fellowship, acceptance*
- *commitment to _____*



Life Before

Event or Significant Turning Points



In Speaking Your Testimony



What to Avoid:

- Too much Church vocabulary
- Clichés or generalities
- Over-dramatizing or sensationalizing your story
- Negative remarks about others or other parishes, churches or religions
- Claiming what God will do for someone else

Testimony Do's!

- Keep testimony short with adequate but simple detail.
- Use your own words.
- Use language that will help others understand your experiences and life.
- Emphasize Christ's work in you.
- Convey your assurance in Jesus Christ.
- Stick to the point, avoiding tangents.
- Be genuine in your descriptions and feelings.
- Be positive.
- Be humble. We are all still a work in progress!