

LESSON 11
August 16, 2026

Unit III: Faithful Witnesses Spread the Good News
Tell Me What You Know

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 86:1-10
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Acts 22:3-15
PRINT PASSAGE: Acts 22:3-15

KEY VERSES

And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. (Acts 22:14-15, KJV)

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“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.’” (Acts 22:14-15, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Retell Paul’s call and commissioning story comparing and contrasting to your own story of conversion and discipleship.
- Celebrate the witnesses for Christ who have encouraged your own walk with Christ.
- Develop ways of witnessing for Christ so that others are encouraged to serve.

***Key Terms**

Binding (verse 4)—Greek: *desmeuó* (des-myoo’-o): fettering; putting in chains; “arresting” (NIV).

Bring (verse 5)—Greek: *agó* (ag’-o): to lead, carry.

Instructed (verse 3)—Greek: *paideuó* (paheedyoo’-o): chastened; corrected; “taught” (KJV); “trained” (NIV).

Journeying (verse 6)—Greek: *poreuomai* (poryoo’-om-ahce): to go; travel, go forth, depart; “made my journey” (KJV); “came near” (NIV).

Light (verse 6)—Greek: *phós* (foce): a source of light; radiance.



The Biblical Context

Luke wrote the book of Acts to serve as a history of the early church fulfilling the Great Commission, as commanded by Christ to His disciples to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the surrounding regions and the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). The book highlights the Holy Spirit's ministry as the empowering force behind the church's rapid and spiritual growth, beginning in Jerusalem and continuing after Stephen's martyrdom, which launched opposition and forced believers and their witnesses out of the city and into the surrounding areas. Saul led this opposition until his miraculous encounter with the risen Christ transformed his life and led to his name change to Paul (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-31). Starting in chapter 13 and continuing to the end of the book, Paul becomes the central figure in Christianity's expansion beyond Samaria and Judea. The backstory of Acts 22 covers the events that occurred after Paul's return to Jerusalem from his third missionary journey. Some Jews from Asia observe Paul in the Temple and mistakenly accuse him of defiling the holy place by bringing Gentiles into the Temple, inciting a riot, and leading to his seizure by the crowd before his arrest by Roman authorities for his safety (Acts 21). After clarifying his identity with the arresting Roman commander, Paul is granted permission to speak to the people. He begins his defense by explaining his Jewish heritage, his former life as a church persecutor, his conversion experience on the road to Damascus, and his commission to be a witness to Christ by Ananias (Acts 22:3-15).

Zealous (verse 3)—Greek: *zélôtés* (dzay-lo-tace'): eagerly devoted to a person or a thing.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

Introduction

Determining authenticity can be challenging. Calling something authentic means it is what it claims to be. However, there is no universal set of criteria for verifying authenticity in the real world. In the spiritual realm, though, there is clear evidence to determine if those claiming to be Christian are truly genuine: spiritual transformation. Typically, transformation refers to a complete and lasting internal change that influences a person's desires, values, behaviors, and thought patterns. Spiritually, authentic transformation involves these elements but is guided by the indwelling Holy Spirit and achieved through intentional, ongoing sanctification—the process of becoming more Christlike (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:17). This process begins with encountering Christ through the Gospel and accepting its message of salvation by faith (Romans 1:16-17). While spiritual transformation starts internally, its authenticity becomes visible externally through the Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). This transformation leads to new life priorities and a deeper awareness of God's presence. Paul offers one of the most powerful examples of spiritual transformation. Once a zealous persecutor of the church, he encountered Christ on the road to

Damascus and became one of Christianity's most influential advocates. His encounter with Jesus completely redirected his passion and purpose toward proclaiming the Gospel.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

A Faithful Witness's Credentials (Acts 22:3-5)

KJV

3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

NIV

3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.

4 "I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison,

5 "as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished."

The background of these verses is Paul's near-death experience after being seized by a mob led by Jews from Asia, who accused him of bringing Greeks into the Temple. Intervention by Roman authorities saved Paul's life and granted his request to speak to the crowd of accusers. Paul begins his defense by affirming his Jewish heritage to establish credibility with his audience. In verse 3, Paul declares his position as a loyal Jew, emphasizing the significance of his birthplace and training, his rigorous education in the Law under the renowned rabbi Gamaliel, and his shared zeal for it with his accusers. To maintain a Jewish connection with his audience regarding strict adherence to the law, Paul acknowledges his previous hostility toward followers of the Way (Christianity) in verse 4. Paul then substantiates his devoted religious fidelity to persecute Christians by highlighting the high priest and council members as witnesses who approved his efforts (verse 5). Thus, Paul's initial defense refuted the accusation that he was against Judaism, proving instead that he was more zealous in preserving it and affirming his regard for God and the law. Paul's defense underscores the importance of faithful witnesses identifying with those they serve, being doctrinally prepared, and being transparent about their experiences with God before and after encountering Christ to validate their spiritual transformation.

❓ WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What is the significance of Paul highlighting his background and education, and how does it relate to being a faithful witness to Christ?

A Faithful Witness's Conversion (Acts 22:6-11)

KJV

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, LORD? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

NIV

6 "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me.

7 "I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'

8 "'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied.

9 "My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

10 "'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. 'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.'

11 "My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me."

Paul continues his defense by describing the supernatural events that led to his encounter with Christ and his transformation from persecutor of the church to a faithful witness to Christ. His changed behavior was not of his own making; it was because Israel's God sovereignly intervened and redirected his zeal for Him and His message. This life-changing event happened dramatically at noon on his way to Damascus when he was introduced to a light brighter than the sun at that time of day (verse 6). Paul notes that he fell to the ground and heard a heavenly voice calling his name and asking, "Why do you persecute Me?" (verse 7). The voice responds to Paul's request to be identified and reveals that it is Jesus of Nazareth (verse 8). This response

is crucial to Paul's defense because if this is Jesus, it follows that God resurrected him, and Paul is guilty of persecuting the God to whom he claims loyalty. Paul foresaw the possibility of doubt about his encounter with the Lord and explains that his traveling companions could corroborate his story because they saw the light and heard the voice speaking to him (verse 9). Realizing the seriousness of the encounter and his need for complete change, Paul asked the Lord for direction (verse 10). The Lord told him to continue to Damascus, where he would receive his new assignment. Blinded by the bright light, Paul relied on his companions to lead him into the city (verse 11). This part of Paul's testimony reveals that becoming a faithful witness for Christ begins with a divine call. That call must then be followed by acknowledging God as the source and submitting fully to His guidance without hesitation.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Why did Paul emphasize the supernatural aspect of his encounter with Christ on his way to Damascus?

A Faithful Witness's Commission (Acts 22:12-15)

KJV

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

NIV

12 "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.

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

14 "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.

15 "You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard."

Paul begins the conclusion of his defense before the Jews by describing his commissioning by Ananias upon arriving in Damascus (verse 12). He introduces Ananias as a devout follower of the law and a respected Jew in Damascus, affirming his connection to Jewish heritage. Before receiving his commission as Christ predicted, Paul's sight is restored (verse 13). This miraculous event confirms that what Paul was about to hear and see was preordained by God

and aligned with His will and purpose for Paul's life even before this transformational experience took place (verse 14). "The God of our fathers" affirms that Paul's calling was from Israel's covenant God and highlights the link between his Jewish heritage and his soon-to-be-revealed new mission. Additionally, Ananias reveals to Paul that he was chosen to know and understand God's will, see the risen Christ, the Righteous One, and receive His instructions directly from Him, affirming that his commissioning and apostolic authority were divinely orchestrated. Verse 15 states that the purpose of Paul's supernatural revelation was for God to choose him as His witness to all people—Jews and Gentiles—covering everything he saw and heard during his encounter with Christ. These final verses of this part of Paul's defense illustrate that faithful witnesses are not called randomly but purposefully and in accordance with God's sovereign will. Furthermore, witnesses to Christ must know Him personally, recognize who He is, and boldly share the Gospel with everyone, regardless of their social, economic, ethnic, gender, racial, or cultural background.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Why is it important for Christians to understand that their calling comes from Christ and is aligned with God's will?

A Closing Thought

This part of Paul's defense before the Jews, who wrongly accused him of defiling the Temple, highlights several key principles for believers called to be faithful witnesses to the Gospel despite challenges to the authenticity of their transformed lives. Paul utilized his Jewish heritage, extensive training in the Law, conversion experience, and a divinely guided commission from God to demonstrate that his supernatural transformation—from persecuting the church to becoming one of its strongest advocates—was genuine. Although spiritual transformation happens inside, there are external, biblically supported proofs that believers can display to support their claims that their lives have changed and legitimize their witness to Christ. One of these proofs is showing the Fruit of the Spirit in relationships with others, empowered by the Holy Spirit's presence (Galatians 5:22-23). Another is demonstrating evidence of a "renewed mind" by pursuing righteousness, which is evident in changed behavior that glorifies God (Romans 12:2).

Your Life

Every believer is called to witness for Christ and share the Gospel's message of salvation. However, to be convincing and trustworthy, those approached with this vital message must see evidence of lives that God's grace has transformed. Therefore, it is essential that believers intentionally practice spiritual disciplines that clearly demonstrate their spiritual transformation. These include consistent study and application of God's Word, daily communication with God through prayer and meditation, reflective solitude, offering oneself to God as a living sacrifice, and submitting to the Holy Spirit's guidance every day.

Your World!

Paul's mission was to share the good news of salvation with everyone, a result of his own transformed life. This need still exists today. Some people have not yet heard the Gospel, which makes it even more critical for faithful witnesses to demonstrate spiritually transformed lives that draw others to Christ for salvation. Therefore, the faith community, both individually and collectively, must respond to this need by ensuring that those seeking salvation see clear evidence of lives that reflect Christ's character and by convincingly sharing their faith in Christ.

Closing Prayer

Gracious Lord, please help us respond to Your call to share the Gospel as faithful witnesses by humbly surrendering ourselves to You and showing Christlike character as proof of lives truly transformed by Your grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

Next week's lesson examines the necessity and evidence of the positive effects of parental influence on their children's spiritual growth and maturity (2 Timothy 1:1-6; 3:14-16).

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, August 17	"A Protégé with Promise"	(Acts 16:1-5)
TUESDAY, August 18	"Listen to Wise Instruction"	(Proverbs 1:1-9)
WEDNESDAY, August 19	"Learn from Father and Mother"	(Proverbs 23:22-26)
THURSDAY, August 20	"A Worthy and Trusted Minister"	(Philippians 2:19-24)
FRIDAY, August 21	"Make God Known to Future Generations"	(Deuteronomy 4:9-13)
SATURDAY, August 22	"Thankful for Established Faith"	(2 Timothy 1:1-16)
SUNDAY, August 23	"Continue in What You Have Learned"	(2 Timothy 3:10-11, 14-16)

Notes
