

Power From on High

Series: Power From On High
Title: A Life On Trial, Part 2
Lesson: 139

Text: Acts 25:13-26:3
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The important pattern that kept surfacing through Paul's ministry:

Observed Paul's character ➡ Presentation of the gospel

Acts 23:1 Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, "Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day."

Acts 24:16 "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men."

- 1. The strongest defense of the gospel is often the integrity of the one proclaiming it.**

Our integrity gives credibility to the gospel.

Our lives are always on _____ .

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

1 Peter 2:12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

This pattern of witness before proclamation did not start with Paul, it started with Jesus.

For Paul - His proven innocence was the means God used to magnify his witness.

For Jesus - His innocence revealed that He is our perfect sacrifice.

He had to be the unblemished and spotless Lamb.

His declarations of His innocence came from every conceivable witness:

1. Judas Iscariot - Matthew 27:3

"I have sinned by betraying innocent blood."

2. Pilate's Wife - Matthew 27:19

"Have nothing to do with that righteous Man..."

3. Pontius Pilate- John 18:38; Luke 23:4; John 19:4; Luke 23:14; John 19:6; Luke 23:22

He repeatedly declared that he had found no guilt in Him.

4. Herod Antipas - Luke 23:13-15

"nothing deserving death has been done by Him."

5. The thief on the cross - Luke 23:41

"This man has done nothing wrong."

6. The Roman Centurion - Luke 23:47

"Certainly this man was innocent."

7. The Jewish Leaders - Mark 14:55–59

They couldn't establish a legitimate case against Him

Kingdom impact requires kingdom _____.

How do we approach narratives?

Acts 25:23 So, on the next day when Agrippa came together with Bernice amid great pomp, and entered the auditorium accompanied by the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at the command of Festus,

"pomp" [phantasia]

It basically means to be impressive - To have an outward show of splendor, grander and opulence

"Fantasy"

The scene highlights the fleeting nature of earthly status, power, and prestige.

"great" pomp

23a Paul was brought in.

2. Believers don't need status or prestige to prevail, all we need is courage and _____ to proclaim the truth.

The gospel's power is not in it's platform, it's in the message,

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for **"IT"** is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

God chooses unlikely messengers.

1 Corinthians 1:26–28 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many **wise according to the flesh**, not many **mighty**, not many **noble**;

27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,

God intentionally bypasses the world's standards of greatness.

He chooses the **"foolish"** the **"weak"** and the **"base things"**

The **"despised"** and the **"things that are not"**

29 so that no man may boast before God.

So we win people through charisma, polish, and persuasive communication?

1 Corinthians 2:1–5 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling,
4 and my message and my preaching **were not in persuasive words of wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

The Apostle Paul was not a good speaker.

2 Corinthians 10:10 For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive, and his speech is contemptible.”

1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel **not in cleverness of speech**, that the cross of Christ should not be made void.

“made void” [keno] – deprive of force, vain, empty, hollow

Do we need to make friends with the world?

James 4:4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

“world”

Jesus never developed such worldly strategies.

His descriptions of His kingdom echoed the same pattern.

1. The mustard seed
2. Leaven in dough
3. Salt
4. Light

God delights in stacking the odds against His people:

1. David before Goliath

1 Samuel 17:33 Then Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth.”

38–39 Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor. 39 David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested

them. So David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." And David took them off.

45–47 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.

46 "This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands."

2. Gideon's Army

Judges 7:2–7 The Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.'

3 "Now therefore come, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.' " So 22,000 people returned, but 10,000 remained. 4 Then the Lord said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there. Therefore it shall be that he of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go with you; but everyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."

5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, "You shall separate everyone who laps the water with his tongue as a dog laps, as well as everyone who kneels to drink." 6 Now the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was 300 men; but all the rest of the people kneeled to drink

water. 7 The Lord said to Gideon, “I will deliver you with the 300 men who lapped and will give the Midianites into your hands; so let all the other people go, each man to his home.”

Implication

God delights in using human weakness so that His power and glory are _____.

Discussion Guide

1. Can you think of a situation where someone’s character made you more or less willing to listen to what they said?
2. Why do we tend to associate effectiveness with status, influence, or impressive platforms? How does Paul’s example in Acts 25–26 challenge that way of thinking?
3. God repeatedly uses unlikely and seemingly weak people to accomplish His purposes. Review together why God works that way and how should that change the way we view our own weaknesses, limitations, or lack of influence?
4. The kingdom of God often advances quietly like a mustard seed, leaven, salt, and light. Where do you see opportunities for quiet, faithful influence in your family, workplace, neighborhood, or church?

ANSWERS: trial, character, faithfulness, unmistakable