

My Witnesses - A Study of Acts Discussion Guide: Week 50 - Acts 26:1-11

Summary of this week's teaching: In this week's passage Paul begins to defend his faith in front of King Agrippa, Bernice, and many others. Paul condenses his defense into one simple proclamation: that he is on trial for his hope in the promise of God, namely that God can and does raise the dead. This short passage teaches us of the key role that hope ought to play in the life of every believer.

Connect: Relational questions to get conversations started.

1. What is one thing for which you are now hoping? Have you ever hoped for something that didn't come to fruition? What was that like?

Seed: The Bible, God's inspired Word, is very much like a seed - it contains everything we need to experience life. Please read the following passages of scripture as a group: (perhaps in two different translations) Acts 26:1-11, and Philippians 3:5-11.

1. What old testament passages can you think of that foreshadow and/or promise the resurrection from the dead? Do you think Paul was thinking of a specific passage when he mentioned "the promise made by God to our forefathers"?
2. What does the Philippians 3 passage teach us about hope, our salvation, and the resurrection?

Roots: Like subterranean tree roots which extend in all directions searching out water, each believer needs to grow and develop spiritual roots that allow us to make personal connections with our God.

1. How would you describe your current connection with the Lord? What are you doing to strengthen that connection? What challenges are you facing in this area?

Trunk: Without trunks, plants may be large, useful, and beautiful, but they are not trees. The same is true for our faith - without it we are not saved and cannot please God. These questions will help us grow our faith in Him.

1. Please read Romans 4:16-25. What lessons of faith can we learn from Abraham's life?
2. What does it mean to "hope against hope" in the promises of God? How do you do this in your own life?
3. What is the difference between faith and hope? Can you have faith in God without having hope? Can you have hope in God without having faith? What interplay between faith and hope do you find in Romans 4?

Crown: Crowns are the glory of a tree; the culmination of the roots and trunk working in harmony and can be seen for miles around. The crown of a tree represents the visible portion of our faithlife. These questions will encourage us to apply these principles into our everyday lives.

1. Please read 1 Peter 3:13-17. What can you do to always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you?
2. Why is it important to do this with gentleness and respect? How is that accomplished?

THE BOOK OF ACTS