



Enter the Story

Paul's Mission

A narrative about how God uses every gift and every opportunity to spread the Good News!

THE BIBLE

Acts 13-14; 16-20, Rom. 1, 3-6, 8, 12, 15
Gal. 1, 3, 5-6, 1st Cor. 1, 3, 5-6, 10, 12-13, 15-16
1 Thess. 1-5

Prepare for the Story

ICEBREAKER

- What is your purpose or mission in life? What do you believe God has clearly called you to do or be a part of?

Rewind the Story

Can someone highlight what has happened in the story so far ...

- Signs & Wonders – The miracles of the Apostles
- Persecution & Growth – Steven and the church scatters
- Saul to Paul - Road to Damascus conversion.
- Peter – Peter's vision and revelation

Hear the Story

Scene One: Issues in Lystra

Paul and Barnabas were sent by the Holy Spirit to preach the Good News to both Jews and Gentiles all over the Roman Empire. They sailed to many cities and eventually reached the city of Lystra.

In Lystra, there was a man with crippled feet who had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Then Paul looked directly at him and saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, *“Stand up on your feet!”* At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they mistook him and Barnabas for gods and offered sacrifices to them. But when Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they rushed out into the crowd shouting, *“Friends, why are you doing this? We are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God ...”* Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from worshipping them.

Then, some of the Jews from other cities who had been angry with Paul and had been searching for him arrived in Lystra. They worked up the crowd and won them over. They convinced the people to stone Paul. He was beaten so badly that they dragged him outside of the city and left him to die. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into Lystra. The next day, he and Barnabas left to continue on their journey.

Scene Two: Problems in Philippi

Once in the city of Philippi, Paul and his companions were met by a female slave who earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. She followed Paul for days, shouting: *“These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.”* Finally, Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to her, *“In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!”*

At that moment, the evil spirit left her. When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and brought them before the authorities, who ordered them to be flogged. Then they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to keep a close watch over them.

About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. Suddenly, there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once, all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose.

The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, *“Don’t harm yourself! We are all still here!”* The jailer rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and asked, *“What must I do to be saved?”* Paul replied, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.”*

Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him, and at that hour of the night, he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because his entire family had come to believe in God.

Scene Three: Conflict in Corinth

After this, Paul traveled to Corinth, where he met a Jew named Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. They were tentmakers, as Paul was, so he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath, he reasoned in the Synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. But when they eventually opposed him and became abusive, he said to them, *“Your blood will be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles.”*

Then, one night, the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision. *“Do not be afraid; keep on speaking; do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you because I have many people in this city.”* Encouraged by this vision, Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. When he left, he traveled from place to place throughout Asia Minor, encouraging and strengthening all the disciples.

Scene Four: Paul’s Impact

After some time, Paul returned to the city of Ephesus. While there, he spoke boldly in the synagogue for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them refused to believe.

So, Paul left them and preached to others outside of the synagogue to anyone who would listen. This went on for two years so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province had heard the word of the Lord.

God did extraordinary miracles through Paul so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured, and the evil spirits left them. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. In this way, the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

Near the end of Paul's two-year stay in Ephesus, he wrote a very direct letter to the Christians in Corinth, where the believers were splintered into factions over many issues.

Paul's letter spoke eloquently to issues they faced, comparing them to a body, reminding them about what bound them together, and concluding with a reminder that Jesus had already defeated death.

He also wrote another letter to the Christians in Rome, which mapped out foundational truths and answered tough questions about sin, grace, the Jewish law, and the never-ending power of God's love.

After leaving Ephesus, Paul set his sights on Jerusalem. He felt urgently compelled by God to return there, even though hardship awaited him.

Retell the Story

- Where were Paul and Barnabas spreading the good news?
- What happened in Lystra?
- What happened in Philippi?
- Who did Paul meet in Corinth?
- What vision did Paul have while in Corinth?
- What happened in Ephesus?
- What else did Paul do?

Discuss the Story

- What is your first reaction to this story? How did this story make you feel?
- What stood out to you from this story? What did you notice for the first time?

- What from this story made you wonder?
- After his conversion to Christianity, how would you describe Paul's passion and mission for life?
- When in a new city, why do you think Paul always began his outreach in the synagogue?
- Why do you think Paul and his fellow prisoners stayed when they could have escaped?
- What do you learn from the story of the jailer?
- In your opinion, what was the purpose of Paul's miracles?
- Did you hear anything that reminded you of *other* stories?
- From this story, what did you notice about humans?
- From this story, what do you notice about God's character or His qualities?

1) SPIRITUAL ATTACKS

As Paul preached the message of Jesus, he faced spiritual attacks (read Acts 13:1-12 & 16:16-34). What form did these battles take? What spiritual battles might we face as we seek to bring the message and hope of Jesus to our world? How can we resist and overcome?

2) THE CHURCH IS A BODY

In his letter to the Corinthians (1st Corinthians 12), Paul clearly described the church as a body where every member has a purpose and function. What is one spiritual gift God has given you, and how are you developing it and using it for His glory? In what ways can the church encourage its members to use their gifts to serve Jesus?

3) SHARING THE GOSPEL

If a close friend or family member came to you and said, "I have watched your life and listened to your words. I want what you have. What must I believe and do to be saved?" What would you share with them? Why do you think we don't share the Good News or "evangelize" more? What good or bad could come out of each of us sharing the Gospel regularly? Is it worth the risk?

God,

We thank You that your gospel of redemption and salvation is for everyone. We are so thankful for those who shared the Good News with us to get us to where we are today. We are also grateful that we are able to participate in spreading this Good News through the gifts and passions You've given us.

May we continue to see that each of our stories is significant and that You give us opportunities every day to demonstrate the Good News to others. We thank You for these things in the name of Jesus! Amen.