



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

03-02-2015 @ 0900

**"God Even Paves the Way!"**

Acts 23:23-25

### Lord, Be Glorified!

In my life, Lord, be glorified! Be glorified!  
In my life, Lord, be glorified today!  
In Your Church, Lord, be glorified! Be glorified!  
In Your Church, Lord, be glorified today!

### Acts 23:23-25

"Then the commander called two of his officers, and said, 'Get two hundred soldiers ready to go to Caesarea, together with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, and be ready to leave by nine o'clock tonight. Provide some horses for Paul to ride, and get him safely through to Governor Felix.' Then the commander wrote a letter..."

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Can you remember sensing God's "Call to Action" for some task/mission, but had no idea how you'd afford it, or even get there? Did the "not knowing" impact your call? (Did you ever go?)
- In a crisis you were facing, did you find all your needs met "suddenly and unexpectedly", and in ways you "never saw coming"? (Did you give God any credit for that?)
- Have you known other "believers" who made such "leaps of faith" look easy? How did their "testimony" influence your own willingness to "step up" and "embrace your call"?

"Failure to plan is planning to fail", right? Taking on a project, or beginning a trip demands a plan, and a sense of direction. Few of us would just "jump on a bandwagon" without knowing where it was going, what to expect at its destination, and what sorts of rewards or benefits we might reap. We like to know when to move, where we're going, how we'll travel/work/rest & refuel, and how much our operation will cost us before "stepping out", "moving forward", or otherwise putting much faith into the stated "mission", or the "leadership" coordinating it. This gets especially "dicey" in the "spiritual sphere"; consider today's Passage, for example. God has told Paul, "Don't be afraid! You will give witness to Me in Rome!" It's an easy promise for God, but how was Paul supposed to make this trip, especially through a countryside that was becoming more hostile by the day? Such a journey would present problems on several levels, unless someone "significant" should intervene on Paul's behalf, especially if such a benefactor was "wealthy" and "influential". If this patron was "powerful" enough to make resources of the Roman government available...to provide speedy transportation, and enough security as well...that would make the process easier, and eventual success much more likely! This is what God arranged for Paul; not only did He *make* a way, He *paved* it! This is still God's S.O. P., (Standard Operating Procedure,) and He does so with amazing creativity and astounding generosity. In any "hopeless" situation we may face, God is ready to BE our Hope. In all of our "impossible" circumstances, God is willing to BE our Possibility. Our task is trust...trust that God will deliver...in the way He knows best, and at the time He knows best. God, grant us the Grace of Total Trust! We live in a world of limited vision and less understanding. Expand our vision, so we surrender ourselves to Your Will with complete abandon. Deepen our understanding, so we submit with childlike faith to the flows of Love and Favor You generate in our lives. When Your Ways are most mysterious, help us "STAND" on Your Promise to Deliver, answer Your Call, and go "all-in" for Your Gospel!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

03-03-2015 @ 0900

**"God Even Provides Accommodations!"**

Acts 23:31-35

### Lord, Be Glorified!

In my life, Lord, be glorified! Be glorified!  
In my life, Lord, be glorified today!  
In Your Church, Lord, be glorified! Be glorified!  
In Your Church, Lord, be glorified today!

### Acts 23:31-35

"The soldiers carried out their orders. They got Paul, and took him that night as far as Antipatris. The next day, the foot soldiers returned to the fort and left the horsemen to go on with him. They took him to Caesarea, delivered the letter to the governor, and turned Paul over to him. The governor read the letter, and asked Paul what province he was from. When he found out that he was from Cilicia, he said, 'I will hear you when your accusers arrive.' Then he gave orders for Paul to be kept under guard in the governor's headquarters."

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- When you had to make a lengthy journey, did it help to "have company on the road"...to help head off trouble, and see you safely to your destination?
- Were you ever "on the road" a long time, only to find "no vacancy" signs lit when you started looking (even at the expensive inns) for somewhere to spend the night?
- While you were in such a "jam", did you find "an unexpected door" just "happened" to open for you? As you thought about that later, did you sense God might be behind the offer?

It had already been a very long day of driving, but we decided to go about 50 more miles before "pulling in for the night". The flaw in the plan lay in not knowing a big race was planned in a town about 200 miles further up the road...Indianapolis. When they "run the 500" around Memorial Day weekend, there are no rooms of any kind for some 200+ miles around Indianapolis. We learned to our sorrow that accommodations become a very precious commodity on a long trip, and failure to make reservations can "leave the unprepared without pot or pillow"...a disagreeable development! In God's Divine Design, though, every eventuality is "covered". Consider Paul's "jaunt to Caesarea". God made the way, arranged for its security, and took care of the accommodations, too. Not only did the Lord deliver Paul from foes in Jerusalem, He provided safe and relatively comfortable passage to the governor's own headquarters! It's far too common today to act as if God is "limited", "unwilling", or unable to meet or exceed our every need. We tend to see troubles on every horizon, and view reasons why we can't "go", "do", or "be", and look for "ways out" instead of "ways through"! We need to remember that God who calls us is the God who makes all things possible, that we are the beloved of the Lord who "finds a way" (or makes one) where there seems to be no way. How big is your God? We may have asked this question before, but it bears re-asking, since our answer to the question will reflect our "faith quotient". God, grant us the Grace of fear-free Faith! We can fret over "pagan" concerns, Father! We worry about petty matters, Lord, which become "issues", due to our lack of certitude that You are ever able, willing, and ready to redeem Your "beloved". Help us "take You at Your Word" to meet or exceed any need we face now...or ever! You sent Your Son to "show us the Way", and strengthen us with Your Spirit. Complete in us, Lord, the "Good Work" You've begun!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

03-04-2015 @ 0900

**“Sometimes You’re Just Supposed to ‘Be Where You Are!’”**

Acts 26:1-32

### Lord, Be Glorified!

In my life, Lord, be glorified! Be glorified!  
In my life, Lord, be glorified today!  
In Your Church, Lord, be glorified! Be glorified!  
In Your Church, Lord, be glorified today!

### Acts 26:1-32

“Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You have permission to speak on your own behalf.’ Paul stretched out his hand and defended himself.... Agrippa said to Paul, ‘In this short time, do you think you will make me a Christian?’ ‘Whether a short time, or a long time,’ Paul answered, ‘my prayer to God is that you and all the rest of you who are listening to me today might become what I am – except, of course, for these chains!’ Then the king, the governor, Bernice, and all the others got up, and after leaving, they said to each other, ‘This man has not done anything for which he should die or be put in prison.’ And Agrippa said to Festus, ‘This man could have been released if he had not appealed to the Emperor.’”

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever found yourself in a “most uncomfortable situation”, only to realize suddenly that it was full of “meaning” & “purpose” as an awesome chance to “stand up & speak out for God”?
- Do you ever give much thought to what you would say about your faith, or your God, if given the chance to address your coworkers, boss, governor, or even national/world leaders?
- Were you ever impressed to hear a “committed believer” deliver a “testimony” of the Love and Goodness, Grace, and Mercy of God with easy confidence and earnest conviction?

Because “Christianity” is still rather “settled” in our society, it’s easy to “go blindly through our days” on “autopilot”, rather than thinking deeply about “faith”, “eternity”, or “God”. Oh, we “believe in God”, and many ascribe some reverence to Jesus Christ, but most of our “modern discipleship” is a pretty “sedate” affair; we wouldn’t want to get “fanatical” or “disagreeable” to the point of ever “offending anyone” who would hold “different opinions”. So...when “opportunity knocks”, and we can “share our faith”, and elaborate on what we’ve received of “God’s Revelation”, we tend to freeze, panic, or tell them, “Come to our church, and listen to some of our sermons. You’ll get a better picture of what we actually believe from listening to our preacher.” God, however, has chosen *us* to be the bearers of His Good News. To help us do this, He often arranges certain “unique” places at “opportune” times for us to share this Good News according to our gifts. Our task is to be ready when God brings one of these meetings about, so we can give a good account of our faith and hope! The “Message of Eternity” is important, even crucial. It is literally a matter of “life-and-death” on a cosmic scale, to an apocalyptic degree! God continues to “place His children” where He knows we can do the most good, but we must be ever ready to “seize the opportunity” when “openings” appear. Sometimes, the “Grandmaster of Grace” has arranged a “synchronicity”; we are just supposed to be where we are... to share the Message of Salvation with a brother or sister in need, regardless of our “readiness” or “preparation”! God, light a “fire in our bones” to share the Mysteries of Your Mercy and the Glories of Your Grace! Teach us to trust You enough to “stay ready” to “spread the Word” You entrusted to us! Then continue to lead us to the places we’re needed at the times we can serve You best!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

02-05-2015 @ 0900

**"How Much Further Must You Grow?"**

Acts 18:24-25

### THOU ART WORTHY, GREAT JEHOVAH!

Thou art worthy, Great Jehovah! Thou art worthy, Mighty God!  
Thou art worthy, Abba! Father! Thou art worthy, Lamb of God!

#### Acts 18:24-25

"At that time, a Jew named Apollos, who had been born in Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent speaker and had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord, and with great enthusiasm, he proclaimed and taught correctly the facts about Jesus. However, he knew only the baptism of John."

#### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Were you ever engaged in some "mission" or "project", when a "stranger" arrived on the scene, and joined the work, with some pretty impressive "gifts" to "bring to the table"?
- On the other hand, were *you* ever the "new voice in town", hoping to "find a good spot" on an awesome team, but knowing you'd need to do some "OJT" (On-the-Job-Training)?
- In your "walk of faith", do you detect some areas of knowledge and commitment in which you still need further study and practice? What are you prepared to *do* about that?

God has put some amazing people to work in this world! In every field of human endeavor, be it a science or sport, art or craft, theory or practice, there are those who constantly seek to "raise the bar" or "take the next good step" in promoting their passion in spectacular fashion. In the realms of faith, it is no less astonishing to note how some particular individuals "step up to the plate". These believers seek to glorify God and serve brothers and sisters with talent and reserves of energy that leave the rest of us agog. Luke recounts the arrival of Apollos, an eager evangelist with a mesmerizing manner whose love for the Lord was "electrifying", even if his training was incomplete. (This is good news for any among us who may worry that "we don't know enough" to share Jesus well. The Lord has His ways to make up for our "lack", as long as we stay humble enough to keep learning as we go.) Apollos is a "new element" in the growth of the Church. He is not listed among the first wave of those who "embraced the Way". Like us, he has received the Gospel through "second-hand" sources, and "knows about Jesus" correctly. He is utterly certain Jesus is the Messiah, and wants to "spread the Word" at every opportunity. But he has yet to "go all-in" for the Lord, because he is unaware at this point of his need to be "baptized into Christ"...i.e., "totally immersed" into the Death and Resurrection of the Lord. This requires more than "personal commitment", (although such commitment is essential in a life of true discipleship). It's equally important to see to the "social dimension" of discipleship as a member of a "religious body", accountable to authentic authority. Both personal growth and social development make up true discipleship; note how the Lord prayed for His friends on the night He was betrayed "that they all may be one, Father, as We are One"! God, grant us the Grace of True Growth! Bless us with fullness of Wisdom so we live the Baptism to which You call us! Enable us to KNOW Your Son, and to LOVE Him with heart, soul, mind, and strength. Then send us forth to share His Gospel as apostolic servants, who win hearts and open minds in the Power of Your Spirit and the Truth of Your Word! Make us fully "one" in Him who went "all-in" to save us, bless us, and send us!



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

03-06-2015 @ 0900

**“Courage Counts Most When it Makes No Sense!”**

Acts 27:13-26

### Lord, Be Glorified!

In my life, Lord, be glorified! Be glorified!  
In my life, Lord, be glorified today!  
In Your Church, Lord, be glorified! Be glorified!  
In Your Church, Lord, be glorified today!

### Acts 27:13-26

“A soft wind from the south began to blow, and the men thought that they could carry out their plan, so they pulled up the anchor and sailed as close as possible along the coast of Crete. But soon a very strong wind – the one called “Northeaster” – blew down from the island. It hit the ship, and since it was impossible to keep the ship headed in the wind, we gave up trying, and let it be carried along by the wind. ...After everyone had gone a long time without food, Paul stood before them and said, ‘...I beg you; take courage! Not one of you will lose your life; only the ship will be lost. For last night, an angel of the God to whom I belong, and whom I worship, came to me and said, “Don’t be afraid, Paul!””

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Can you remember a “fear-full time” in which somebody (father/ mother, brother/sister, or a confident/ friend) “came alongside” with encouragement and helped you face your fears?
- Were you ever in a position to encourage a “fear-full” person in whom you saw potential, even in the face of great difficulty and profound discouragement?
- On the basis of your own experience, what is “courage”? What place does it hold in your “life of faith”? How would you allow “God” to manifest as the “Core of your Courage”?

In the “crunch of crisis”, Courage is key! Life can “turn upside down” quick, fast, and in a major hurry! When this happens, uncertainty can give way to terror in a heartbeat. We can be “cruising along” one moment, and suddenly hit one of life’s speed-bumps, pot-holes, or red lights. Suddenly, life has thrown us a curve we never saw coming, and “control” is wrenched away from us without apology or advance notice. This “loss of control” can awaken profound fear. In these moments, courage counts! Take the stormy sea in today’s Scripture, for example. In Luke’s account, we find “professional” sailors completely at their wits end, and ready to abandon ship. They are so frightened they haven’t eaten in many days while they fight the storm, and are beginning to wonder how many are going to die. Just then, “God’s man” steps forward, and says, “Take courage! Oh, and by the way, not one of you will lose your life. The ship is going down; it’ll be a total loss, but all you are going to be just fine.” Now put yourself in this place, and imagine receiving this “word of encouragement”. How would you have taken it? Here you are, on a rolling deck of a leaking ship, smack in the middle of Northeaster that is showing no signs of weakening, and some “holy joe” says, “Take courage!” Right... This often describes how we tend to think, doesn’t it? So what was the source of Paul’s “courage”? More to the point, “Who was the Source of that courage”? God, grant us the Grace of Spiritual Vision! We need to “know Your Presence” with the kind of insight that cored Paul’s courage in the teeth of the storm. As we embrace the challenges of life, empower us to proceed on the basis of Your Promise: “I will never leave you, never forsake you. I am with you always!” When it seems our situations are most dire and “hopeless”, be the HOPE that sparks a courage we can share with confidence and joy!