

PARENTS' PAGE LESSON 30: Paul's Final Days

Timeless Truth: *God's saving grace is worth more than any earthly suffering.*

Bible Basis: Acts 20:22–28, 36–38, 22:22–29, 27:1, 9–41, 28:1–10

Key Verse: “I want to complete the work the Lord Jesus has given me. He wants me to give witness to others about the good news of God's grace” (Acts 20:24).

Resource: *The Story: Teen Edition, The Story for Kids/Children/Little Ones: Chapter 30*

Parent Tips:

Use the Table Talk questions to start a discussion around the dinner table during the week. The Living Faith activity has your family put on a sock puppet play, featuring the snake that bit Paul. The Extra Mile encourages your family to watch a music video or read a story on the possible discovery of Paul's sea anchors.

Get the Point:

Preschool: Paul served God with his whole life. God wants me to serve him, too.

Elementary: Paul served God with his whole life. God wants me to serve him, too.

Middle/High School: God is always with us as we follow him.

Table Talk

Preschool/Elementary

- Paul says he doesn't care if he has to go to prison, he wants to finish the work that God gave him – which is to witness to others about God's love. What are some ways you can show and tell others about God's love?
- What kind of job do you want to do when you grow up? How can you serve God in that job?
- The Holy Spirit protected Paul many times, but the Spirit also prompted Paul to go to Jerusalem where he knew he'd be arrested. Who also went to Jerusalem even though he knew he'd be arrested? (Jesus)
- By being arrested, Paul got to share about Jesus with a lot of Romans. Do you think that's part of why God allowed Paul to be arrested?
- Can you always see how God's plans are going to turn out? Do think God usually shows you his plan one step at a time?

Middle/High School

- Paul is clear that salvation is a gift from God – nothing that's deserved or can be earned. Since the Bible is so clear, why do people still believe they'll go to heaven because of their good works?
- Why is it easy to get caught up comparing yourself with other people, instead of to God's standard?
- Paul writes that “all Scripture is God-breathed.” What does that mean?

• God's Word is powerful and useful. Paul mentions four specific things where the Bible is helpful (2 Timothy 3:16). Look at each one:

- How is the Bible helpful in teaching?
- How does the Bible rebuke us?
- In what ways can the Bible correct us?
- Why is training in righteousness important?
- Think of verses where the Bible teaches, rebukes, corrects and trains.

Living Faith

Paul's shipwreck on Malta is one of the most exciting stories in the Bible. As soon as everybody is safely on land, Paul goes to gather firewood and is bitten by a poisonous snake. Paul shakes the snake into the fire as the Maltese people wait for him to swell up and drop dead. But God saves him, and Paul's able to share about Jesus Christ and see many people come to faith over the next three months.

Put on a family play by creating a snake puppet from an old sock and two buttons. Sew on the buttons for eyes. If you have any red felt or material, cut out a small piece in a forked shape and sew it on as a tongue. You can create two snakes, have the snake talking to Paul or do a snake monologue. Read Acts 27:13-28:10 for background. Ad lib your lines for the play by using one of these ideas:

1. Have two snakes talking to each other. One snake is kind of singed, since it just bit Paul and was thrown into a fire. This snake is upset because Satan (who once took the form of a serpent) told him to go bite Paul, but nothing happened. In fact, not only is Paul OK, but the islanders think he's a god and want Paul to tell them about Jesus. The snake is bummed because Satan's plan isn't working out. The two snakes get more and more agitated, because God's power always seems to defeat Satan's plan.

2. Snake talking to Paul after biting him. Snake is confused because Paul's not dying. The snake says stuff like, "I put the poison in you, right?" Paul can explain that God is more powerful than any poison. Paul can explain God's purpose for life. At the end, Paul casts the snake into the fire.

3. Snake monologue. Have the snake give all the details of the day. Again, the snake is singed after escaping from the fire. He retells watching 276 people wash up on the beach and start to build a fire, how he bit Paul, how Paul didn't die, how Paul was taken to the chief official of the island and healed his father. The snake is amazed at God's power shown through Paul.

Have family members take turns playing different parts.

Extra Mile

God can use anything in life for his glory. Sometimes we cannot see the complete picture. This week play Tag-Team Drawings. Each member of the family sits at the table with his or her own color marker and a piece of paper. At "Go," everyone have 30 seconds to begin a drawing. When the time is up, everyone moves clockwise to the next paper, gives it a quarter turn, and has 30 seconds to continue the drawing. Continue in this manner, with the paper being given a quarter turn by each new artist, until everyone has added to each drawing.

Talk about the following questions as a family:

- Did you know how the picture was going to turn out when you first started drawing?
- Do we know how things turn out when things go bad? How can we trust during those situations?

Talk about a time in your life that God used something bad for good.