CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MAY 30 2026

Scripture Story: Luke 21:12; 2 Timothy.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 48, 49.

army of one



Photo by Terrill Thomas

flashlight

"Among the Greeks and Romans it was customary to allow an accused person the privilege of employing an advocate to plead in his behalf before courts of justice. By force of argument, by impassioned eloquence, or by entreaties, prayers, and tears, such an advocate often secured a decision in favor of the prisoner or, failing in this, succeeded in mitigating the severity of the sentence. But when Paul was summoned before Nero, no man ventured to act as his counsel or advocate; . . . Among the Christians at Rome there was not one who came forward to stand by him in that trying hour" (*The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 492, 493).

keytext

"Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing."

(2 Timothy 4:8)

what do you think?

The apostle Paul faced great persecution for preaching about salvation in the name of Jesus Christ. Can you name two other individuals in the Bible who faced persecution because of their faith and/or obedience to God? Give a brief description of each person's experience.

1. _____
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_____

2. _____
_____
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did you know?

Once more Paul has an opportunity to uplift before a wondering multitude the banner of the cross. As he gazes upon the throng before him—Jews, Greeks, Romans, with strangers from many lands—his soul is stirred with an intense desire for their salvation. He loses sight of the occasion, of the perils surrounding him, of the terrible fate that seems so near. He sees only Jesus, the Intercessor, pleading before God in behalf of sinful men. With more than human eloquence and power, Paul presents the truths of the gospel."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 494, 495.

INTO THE STORY

"So don't be ashamed of the message about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, his prisoner. Instead, join with me as I suffer for the good news. God's power will help us do that. God has saved us. He has chosen us to live a holy life. It wasn't because of anything we have done. It was because of his own purpose and grace. Through Christ Jesus, God gave us this grace even before time began. It has now been made known through the coming of our Savior, Christ Jesus. He has broken the power of death. Because of the good news, he has brought life out into the light. That life never dies. I was appointed to announce the good news. I was appointed to be an apostle and a teacher. That's why I'm suffering the way I am. But this gives me no reason to be ashamed. That's because I know who I have believed in. I am sure he is able to take care of what I have given him. I can trust him with it until the day he returns as judge."

"There will be terrible times in the last days. People will love themselves. They will love money. They will brag and be proud. They will tear others down. They will not obey their parents. They won't be thankful or holy. They won't love others. They won't forgive others. They will tell lies about people. They will be out of control. They will be wild. They will hate what is good. They will turn against their friends. They will act without thinking. They will think they are better than others. They will love what pleases them instead of loving God. They will act as if they were serving God. But what they do will show that they have turned their backs on God's power. Have nothing to do with these people."

"I give you a command in the sight of God and Christ Jesus. Christ will judge the living and the dead. Because he and his kingdom are coming, here is the command I give you. Preach the word. Be ready to serve God in good times and bad. Correct people's mistakes. Warn them. Encourage them with words of hope. Be very patient as you do these things. Teach them carefully."

"I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Now there is a crown waiting for me. It is given to those who are right with God. The Lord, who judges fairly, will give it to me on the day he returns. He will not give it only to me. He will also give it to all those who are longing for him to return."

(2 Timothy 1:8-12; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Timothy 4:1, 2, 7, 8, NIrV)

OUT OF THE STORY

In 2 Timothy 1:8 Paul tells Timothy not to be ashamed to be a witness for the Lord, and also not to be ashamed of Paul because of his sufferings for the Lord. Have you ever been embarrassed because of another person's witness? Have you ever had to defend another person's witness? Explain.

Reread the quote under *Flashlight.* When Paul had to stand before Nero, he did not have an advocate. There was no one present to speak in his defense. Who will speak for us when we need an advocate? (Read 1 John 2:1.) When will this take place?

What is the good news that Paul is talking about?

How can you, like Paul, announce the good news to your family, friends, and neighbors?

Why would a person suffer for giving good news?

What does the text say will keep us from becoming selfish, proud, greedy, disobedient, ungrateful, unloving, unforgiving, and thoughtless?

punch lines

"Give praise to the God who is able to keep you from falling into sin. He will bring you into his heavenly glory without any fault. He will bring you there with great joy" **(Jude 24, NIrV).**

"God is the God who gives peace. May he make you holy through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept free from blame. May you be without blame from now until our Lord Jesus Christ comes. The God who has chosen you is faithful. He will do all these things" **(1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24, NIrV).**

"You received Christ Jesus as Lord. So keep on living your lives in him. Have your roots in him. Build yourselves up in him. Grow strong in what you believe, just as you were taught. Be more thankful than ever before" **(Colossians 2:6, 7, NIrV).**

"Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus. Don't try to stop what the Holy Spirit is doing" **(1 Thessalonians 5:16-19, NIrV).**

"Do your best to please God. Be a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed. Teach the message of truth correctly" **(2 Timothy 2:15, NIrV).**

further insight

"After Infinite Wisdom has spoken, there can be no doubtful questions for man to settle, no wavering possibilities for him to adjust."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 506

Sabbath

Read 2 Timothy 4:8.

Write out the meaning to this week's *Key Text* in your own words.

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Sunday

Read 2 Timothy 2:15.

Second Timothy 2:15 says: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (KJV). What does the expression "rightly dividing the word of truth" mean? (If possible, read this verse in different translations of the Bible.)

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_____

Monday

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:22, 23.

Choose from the words in the box below to write synonyms for the words in the list below.

Prisoner	Mistreatment	Embarrassed
Judgment	Convince	Defender

Persuade _____ Captive _____
Ashamed _____ Sentence _____
Persecution _____ Advocate _____

Tuesday

Read Jude 24.

Paul had to stand before Nero's court to defend his position. He was accused of blasphemy and heresy. Many of the Jews did not accept the teaching that Jesus was the Son of God. They considered this to be blasphemous. They also thought Paul was going against the traditional teachings and laws of the Jews. Paul was innocent of these charges. One day Jesus will come to judge the world, but His true followers will be found innocent of all charges against them. How is this possible?

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Wednesday

Can you think of any Bible characters in the Old Testament whose life was threatened or who were killed for doing the right thing? (Read the following texts for a few examples: Esther 3:1-9; Genesis 4:1-8; 1 Kings 19:1-3.)

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Thursday

Read 2 Timothy 4:18.

Complete the following sentence:
"And the Lord will deliver me from every _____ _____ and _____ me for His heavenly kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:18).

Friday

Read Colossians 2:6, 7.

The apostle Paul was a great warrior for Christ. For many years to follow, men and women of God would arise to proclaim the gospel of Christ and uphold the truths found in the Word of God. And many would be persecuted for their faith. In the book *The Great Controversy* Ellen White writes of some of these men of God who suffered great trials for their stand for right and for proclaiming the truth. Contemplate the following account about John Wycliffe. He believed that ordinary men and women should have access to the Bible so that they could read and learn of the truth for themselves instead of simply accepting the interpretation of educated scholars and pontiffs, who would often teach false doctrine:

"While Wycliffe was still at college, he entered upon the study of the Scriptures. In those early times, when the Bible existed only in the ancient languages, scholars were enabled to find their way to the fountain of truth, which was closed to the uneducated classes. Thus already the way had been prepared for Wycliffe's future work as a Reformer. . . .

"When Wycliffe's attention was directed to the Scriptures, he entered upon their investigation with the same thoroughness which had enabled him to master the learning of the schools. . . .

"Here he saw the plan of salvation revealed and Christ set forth as the only advocate for man. He gave himself to the service of Christ and determined to proclaim the truths he had discovered.

"Devotion to truth could not but bring him in conflict with falsehood. The more clearly he discerned the errors of the papacy, the more earnestly he presented the teaching of the Bible. He saw that Rome had forsaken the Word of God for human tradition; he fearlessly accused the priesthood of having banished the Scriptures, and demanded that the Bible be restored to the people and that its authority be again established in the church" (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 80, 81).

What is your position and response when you have to take a stand for God's truth as revealed in His written Word? _____

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this week's reading*

The Acts of the Apostles (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 48, 49.

**Unlikely Leaders* is a special adaptation of *The Acts of the Apostles*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.