CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

MAY162026

Scripture Story: Colossians; Philippians.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 44, 45.

a good report



Photo by Alden Ho

flashlight

"It could not be expected that Paul, a poor and friendless prisoner, would be able to gain the attention of the wealthy and titled classes of Roman citizens. To them vice presented all its glittering allurements and held them willing captives. But from among the toilworn, want-stricken victims of their oppression, even from among the poor slaves, many gladly listened to the words of Paul and in the faith of Christ found a hope and peace that cheered them under the hardships of their lot. Yet while the apostle's work began with the humble and the lowly, its influence extended until it reached the very palace of the emperor" (*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 461).

keytext

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

(Colossians 3:17)

what do you think?

The apostle Paul showed great faith even though he was a prisoner. Check the things in the list below that are expressions of faith:

____ Praying for something that seems impossible
____ Forgiving a friend
____ Loving those who don't love you
____ Making your own breakfast
____ Trusting in people who are not trustworthy

did you know?

If we use the analogy of an iceberg, our conscious mind can be understood as the small part of the iceberg that is above water that everyone can see. The subconscious mind is the much larger and vaster part of the iceberg submerged under the water that cannot readily be seen. Our deepest conflicts reside in the deepest part of the iceberg and are the most difficult to uncover.

As we contemplate the life of Christ and fill our minds with the stories and principles found in God's holy Book, we will be storing powerful images in our conscious mind. These images will shape our thoughts and prompt us to do and say the things that will be becoming of children of the King. One of the greatest witnesses is the Christlike actions of the child of God.

INTO THE STORY

Paul is under house arrest in Rome for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even in his chains, he expresses great joy in his letters to some of the churches throughout the region. His joy is not dependent on external circumstances. It comes from knowing Christ and spreading the good news of salvation to others. Paul counts it a privilege to be a minister of the gospel and to be a servant to his fellow believers. Even as a prisoner he asks his Christian brothers and sisters to pray that he would have more opportunities to share his faith. He writes to the churches that he has heard good reports of their diligent work for the gospel. He admonishes them to continue in the faith, and in love and unity with one another. He reminds them that if they continue in their walk with Christ, they will have a great reward in heaven.

In the following passages, written to the Philippians, Paul wants the believers to know that his trials are for good—for the furtherance of the gospel. And he encourages them to continue the work.

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. I am happy because you have joined me in spreading the good news. You have done so from the first day until now. . . . And I am sure that he will carry it on until it is completed. That will be on the day Christ Jesus returns. . . .

"Brothers and sisters, here is what I want you to know. What has happened to me has actually helped to spread the good news. One thing has become clear. I am being held by chains because I am a witness for Christ. All the palace guards and everyone else know it. And because I am a prisoner, most of the believers have become bolder in the Lord. They now dare even more to preach the good news without fear. . . .

"I completely expect and hope that I won't be ashamed in any way. I'm sure I will be brave enough. Now as always Christ will receive glory because of what happens to me. He will receive glory whether I live or die."

(Philippians 1:3-6, 12-14, 20, NIrV)

OUT OF THE STORY

In Colossians 3:2 Paul says to "set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." What earthly things do you think he is referring to?

What difficult challenges are you facing because of your choice to follow Christ? What difficult challenges do you think you might face in the future as a follower of Christ?

How has your Christian experience influenced those around you (friends, family, neighbors, or classmates)?

Why do you think the Lord allowed Paul and others to be put in prison and persecuted for preaching the gospel? (See Philippians 1:12-14 for a clue.)

In his letters to the Philippians and Colossians Paul speaks of the good reports he has been receiving about the Christians in those churches. Do you think it is important for others to hear a good report about your conduct? Why or why not?

punch lines

"I have learned to be content no matter what happens to me. I know what it's like not to have what I need. I also know what it's like to have more than I need. I have learned the secret of being content no matter what happens. I am content whether I am well fed or hungry. I am content whether I have more than enough or not enough. I can do all this by the power of Christ. He gives me strength" **(Philippians 4:11-13, NIrV).**

"We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven . . . if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven" **(Colossians 1:3-5, 23).**

"Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord" **(Philippians 4:4, NIrV).**

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" **(Colossians 3:17).**

"Praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains" **(Colossians 4:3).**

further insight

"In every generation and in every land the true foundation for character building has been the same—the principles contained in the word of God. The only safe and sure rule is to do what God says."

—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 475

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Colossians 3:17.

Read the *Key Text* for this week's lesson. On the lines below, write out the meaning of this verse in your own words. Give real-life examples of words and/or deeds that are reflections of Christ.

_____
_____
_____

Sunday

Read John 17:3.

A quote by Doug Batchelor in his book *To See the King: Seven Steps to Salvation* says that "nothing is more important than knowing [Christ] and preparing yourself and others for His return! If it isn't true, then nothing really matters." Why do you think nothing really matters if the good news about Jesus and what He has done for us is not true?

_____
_____
_____

Monday

Read 1 Corinthians 2:2.

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

Behavior	Testimony	Conviction
Observer	Visual	Announcement

Conduct _____ Witness _____
Example _____ Message _____
Report _____ Belief _____

Choose three words from those listed above and describe how they are important to you as a follower of Christ.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Tuesday

Read Colossians 4:3.

Communication is a powerful tool that can be used for good or for evil. We can communicate thoughts, ideas, and beliefs verbally and nonverbally. Nonverbal communication comes in many forms such as: written, music, art, dance, behaviors, jesters, facial expressions, etc.

Choose three or four of the nonverbal communication tools above and give an example for each of how it can be used to witness or share your faith.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Wednesday

Read Colossians 1:3, 4, 23.

Joseph always conducted himself as a child of God, even in the face of adversity. He never retaliated or sought revenge on those who had done him wrong. Potiphar was so impressed with the way Joseph carried himself that he put Joseph, who was a slave, in charge of his whole household. When Joseph was falsely accused and thrown into prison, even the warden noticed Joseph's good behavior and trusted him to be over all of the other prisoners. Joseph's good reputation paid off in the end and he was made ruler of all Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. (Read Joseph's story in Genesis 39:1-23; 41:37-40.)

How does this example affect your life? What can you do differently as a result of this example?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thursday

Read Philippians 4:11-13.

Complete the following sentences.

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

2. "For God has not given us a _____ of _____, but of power and of love and of a _____ _____" (2 Timothy 1:7).

3. "There is laid up for me the _____ of _____, which the Lord, the righteous _____, will give to me on that Day" (2 Timothy 4:8).

Friday

Read Philippians 4:4.

When Paul was under house arrest in Rome, he was hearing good reports of the Christian believers in the nearby cities and towns, reports of the good work they were doing to spread the gospel of Jesus, and of their loving interactions with one another. In turn he gave them a good report of his experiences in Rome. As a prisoner he was still rejoicing in the Lord and witnessing to the guards and those in Caesar's household. Paul's story is an example to us of how vital our Christian conduct is in witnessing and spreading the love of Christ. Many hearts can be won to Christ just by watching the good example of someone else. Can you name someone in your own life who has been a witness or a good example to you?

this week's reading*

The Acts of the Apostles (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 44, 45.

**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.