

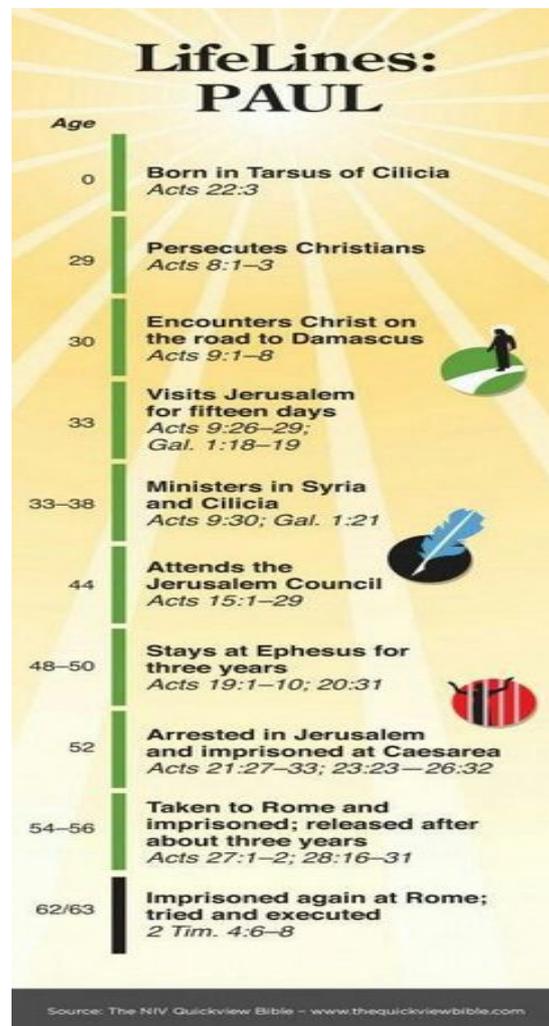
# Be Courageous like Paul for Christ

## Intro;

Christians today may not be nailed to crosses or thrown to wild animals or burned at the stake, but the need is as great now as it was in Paul's day for us to be courageous. When we look at the life of the Apostle Paul, we will find a lot of inspiration and tools to be courageous in the time we are living in.

The renowned German scholar, Adolf Deissmann, once declared: "There is no single person since Nero's days who has left such permanent marks on the souls of men as Paul the New Man." He noted that the grand apostle of Christ, "rising from the mass of the insignificant many" is "still molding the world at the present moment"

Do you see it my brother and sister, being courageous like Paul through Christ, has a lasting effect and legacy in the world around you. Lets quickly look at the life of Paul in the diagram;



This is quite an impressive life in Christ when we look at it as children of God, but equally impressive if you look at it from a historical point of view. What this digram is lacking is how Paul really was as a person. This will help us understand courage as child of God more clearly.

## **2 Timothy. 2:1-3 (Amp)**

*1. So you, my son, be strong [constantly strengthened] and empowered in the grace that is [to be found only] in Christ Jesus. 2. The things [the doctrine, the precepts, the admonitions, the sum of my ministry] which you have heard me teach [a] in the presence of many witnesses, entrust [as a treasure] to reliable and faithful men who will also be capable and qualified to teach others. 3. Take with me your share of hardship [passing through the difficulties which you are called to endure], like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*

This is Paul at his end in prison waiting for this final departure. He is still encouraging his fellow friend in Christ. This is words that most will not utter in the circumstances he was in at that point. But Paul had a special way of saying things too. Just read;

## **2 Timothy 2:15-17**

*15. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 16. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 17. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,*

Yes, the use of the word gangrene would not be so strong in today's culture, but in Paul's time him calling a persons teachings gangrene will be harsh words. Paul was human like me and you. He got humbling lessons from God on the road to Damascus and that change his personality a bit.

## **Determination was one of Paul's many qualities**

Determination was one of Paul's heroic qualities because he was determined to share God's Word and he wanted everyone to know about God. This was the reason that when he was stuck in jail, he wrote encouraging letters to the people that needed encouragement. Because he once was known as Saul and was wicked, then he accepted Jesus and wanted to change and be a better person. He was determined to get this message of hope and change out there for all to experience and live a life of freedom in Christ.

## **Giving Hope to all around him was another of Paul's many qualities**

### **2 Timothy 1:12.**

Verse 12 contains three key words:

**Ashamed**, **Know** and **Committed**.

**Ashamed**. The hope and faith we have in Christ are never a cause of shame but always a truth to share.

**Know**. The reason for this hope was Paul's personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. Merely to know Christ was all that Paul needed in order to trust Him. The Greek word - oida means fullness of knowledge the kind of knowledge that comes from a personal experience with another.

**Committed**. The Greek word - Paratheke means a deposit committed to someone's trust. This was so strong in Paul's life and gave him enormous courage. He was entrusted with this very message that changed lives, for the love of his Paul's life Jesus Christ.

Me and you brother and sister, we were entrusted with the same message of hope just like Paul, what are we doing with this message today?

In the December 1956 issue of the *National Geographic Magazine*, there appeared an article, as I recall, under the title, "In the Steps of Paul." The author or authors, who had done considerable research on Paul's travels, estimated that his missionary endeavors consumed some twelve thousand miles, some by ship on the mighty Mediterranean Sea, and also across its "arms"—the Aegean and Adriatic Seas. In addition, hundreds of miles were traversed by land. He visited approximately fifty cities in his evangelistic endeavors (McRay 2003, 11).

## **Persistence was another of Paul's many qualities**

Within the thirteen epistles known to have been written by Paul, and penned over an era of maybe just under twenty years, there is no complaint of fatigue, no whimpering at the hardships, no disappointment expressed of having been "crucified with Christ," or of wasted years, or lack of family, wealth, or fame—just adulation. There was the simple joy in

-serving his Lord, and for the blessed hope of life to come. Paul was a “stick-tight” who could not be budged from his resolute and course. You could say he was stubborn for Christ and the message of hope in Christ.

**Offering help to others was another of Paul's many qualities (2 Timothy 2:2; 3:15-4:5).**

A. Help by Winning and discipling others (2 Timothy 2:2). It is not only our privilege to receive the Gospel, it is our duty to transmit it.

All Christians must look on themselves as links between two generations, just like Paul teaches us.

**William Barclay said that the reception of the faith is the privilege of Christians; transmission of the faith is the responsibility of Christians.**

A church grows not by addition but by multiplication.

You lead someone to the Lord and stay with that person until he or she begins to lead others to the Lord. (Discipleship)

Don't ask yourself How many spiritual children do I have (that is How many have I led to Christ?), but How many spiritual grandchildren and great-grandchildren do I have? This is the way Paul looked at it.

B. Help by Proclaiming Bible truths of the gospel. (2 Timothy 3:16-4:5).

1. That are addressed to our own needs.

**2 Timothy 3:16. LB**

*The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right.*

2. That will equip us to win others (2 Timothy 3:17).

*17. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone.*

3. That may not always be popular (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

*1. And so I solemnly urge you before God and before Christ Jesus—who will someday judge the living and the dead when he appears to set up his Kingdom— 2. to preach the Word of*

*God urgently at all times, whenever you get the chance, in season and out, when it is convenient and when it is not. Correct and rebuke your people when they need it, encourage them to do right, and all the time be feeding them patiently with God's Word.*

*3. For there is going to come a time when people won't listen to the truth but will go around looking for teachers who will tell them just what they want to hear. 4. They won't listen to what the Bible says but will blithely follow their own misguided ideas.*

*5. Stand steady, and don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Bring others to Christ. Leave nothing undone that you ought to do.*

### **Humility was another of Paul's many qualities**

#### **Acts 20:19.**

*19. serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews;*

In spite of all his greatness, Paul was a humble man. He is perhaps the greatest Christian in all of the Bible, but didn't strut around saying, "Yes, I'm Paul, writer of half the New Testament...from Romans and Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and *maybe Hebrews!* J" No, here's what he said...

Humility means you are aware that you are unworthy. You understand that apart from Christ you are nothing and can do nothing.

It's not in talents...but in the touch of God. It's so easy when God blesses us to develop an over-inflated opinion of ourselves. We "glory" in it...but God is the One Who deserves the glory!

Joke—flea on the back of an elephant...they crossed a wooden bridge. On the other side, the flea whispered in the elephant's ear, "did you feel the bridge move when we walked across?!"

Humility is tough to cultivate in your life, esp. if God does something great through you!

Paul knew this very well, this is the reason why he writes so many warnings about pride in his letters.

#### **Ephesians. 3:8**

*8. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;*

Paul says, it's the Holy Spirit that does the work. I understand that we should work hard, and try to use every tool at our disposal, and we should work like it all depends on us...but through it all we must pray like it all depends on God, for it does!

### **Paul's courage has a heaven to gain**

#### **2 Timothy 4:6-8.**

*6. For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. 7. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

Paul wrote these words in the midst of persecution.

This was the darkest hour in his life.

He was about to be executed for a crime he did not commit.

Friends were forsaking him.

Yet there is no doubt that the church, though apparently defeated, would eventually be triumphant.

There is no doubt that the second Paul's head would be cut from his body, he would go directly to Christ, whom he loved and served so devotedly.

Conclusion

Across the ages Paul still challenges us to be courageous Christians. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.... Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus (**2 Timothy 2:1, 3 NIV**).

Stand firm for Christ, Proclaim the Truth, Be a courageous Christian like Paul!

Alter call for Repentance.

**Amen**