

## ENGAGING GOSPEL DOCTRINE (EPISODE 164)

### LESSON 38

#### **“Thou Hast Testified of Me”**

Hook	The end of the book of Acts reads like a crime drama, but for most of us, it is one where we don't understand the characters, or really even what the crime was.
Manual Goal	To encourage class members to follow Paul's example and be faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ even in the midst of trials and tribulation.
EGD Goal	To help class members understand the power of stories, and to use our own stories and those of others to seek greater conversion, as well as to accept what is best for us.

Correction to Consider: Got my first vehement complaint about the full reading, so I moved things around for this episode and I will keep things that way. Please let me know what you think; I listen and take it seriously! I still stand by my decision to include the whole assigned reading... we need to learn to appreciate scripture in healthy portions! That said, I want this to be as helpful as possible for people in a range of circumstances, time constraints etc.

So I am tweaking the structure again:

- I. Framing
- II. Two-minute take home
- III. Select scripture commentary
- IV. Lesson portion
- V. Then and only then, review reading in full.

Everyone who can, sign up for a monthly donation, a little bit from most listeners will make all the difference. (We are dipping below sustainable and I am putting more work in than ever, so I hope you all can respond)

\*Pause the podcast, tap on the image, go to “monthly donation” and select your amount

\*or go to [www.MormonSundaySchool.org](http://www.MormonSundaySchool.org) and set up a monthly donation

We are in the process of getting set up as a 501(c)(3), should be in place by year's end.

Also, share how you are using the podcast! Whether in your Sunday School class or elsewhere, we want to hear! I have loved hearing about success

Here is a useful app to help the podcast run faster and more smoothly:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/crystal-block-ads-browse-faster/id1022177308?mt=8>

## I. Sunday School

- a. Framing (cast of characters)
- b. Two minute Take Home
  - i. Overall theme: Accepting your fate while courageously fighting for the best outcome.
  - ii. The power of telling our stories
  - iii. “kicking against the pricks” (Acts 26:14)
  - iv. The power of courage and attitude (Paul on the ship)
- c. Reading Commentary (look at the Annotated Reading if you want the comments in context)
- d. Lesson:
  - i. The power of telling stories: Rumors about Paul, Paul’s recounting of his experiences to strengthen believers, Paul’s telling of his conversion story (what it does for him and what it does for his listeners). There is little that moves us more powerfully than well told stories, especially our personal stories. They can bring together and heal and motivate and transform. We also learn about effective engagement, communication, be ready to defend yourself while remaining open to others.
  - ii. Daniel Dennett, “How to criticize with kindness” I LOVE these guidelines!! <https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/03/28/daniel-dennett-rapoport-rules-criticism/> Makes me think of Paul
  - iii. Kicking against the goads! (“pricks”). A goad is a sharp stick used to herd cattle. Fighting it just makes it worse. This is very worth discussion as a central point. Why do we fight against the way things are, or the direction we feel called to follow? Life is demanding, and often we crave comfort while life calls us to growth and change.
  - iv. Attitude (see determinants of happiness, 50% genetics, 10% circumstance, 40% behaviors and attitude)
  - v. “Almost thou persuades me to be a Christian” (26:28) ONE of the best lines. ☺ in what ways are we “almost” persuaded to do something that would improve our lives or change us for the better? What prevents us from being fully persuaded and make those changes?
  - vi. Talk about callings and vocations

## II. Scripture Study

- a. New Testament anti-Judaism (Matthew, John, Hebrews)
- b. Who is “we”? (Three theories: eye witness, false claim, using a source, literary convention)
- c. Paul’s conversion accounts (Interesting to compare the accounts in Acts 9, 22, 26 and Galatians 1)

Acts 9	Acts 22	Acts 26
Paul's companions "heard the voice but saw no one" Paul is knocked to the ground, others left standing Paul sent to Ananias	Paul's companions "Saw the light but did not hear the voice" Paul sent to Ananias	Everyone falls to the ground Paul is instructed by Jesus himself
Galatians 1:11-16		

d. Book Recommendation:

- i. Amy Jill-Levine's Jewish Annotated New Testament NRSV as base with notes and essays that illuminate, as one would expect from the title, the New Testament from a Jewish perspective. Since Jesus and his earliest followers were Jews, and since
- ii. James Faulconer's New Testament Made Harder (Do for Lesson 38)

III. Study Notes

- a. Memory, stories, myth, truth, and fiction (we don't have accurate accounts of what happened, we have \*stories\* about what happened, and the more we access those memories, the less reliable they come. But guess what? We are SUPPOSED to work that way. In fact, remembering too well is a symptom of trauma. Fascinating implications.
- b. Telling stories and effective communication (acknowledge that our perceptions may be wrong, talk about what we are feeling, what we understand, and allow ourselves to be corrected)

Link to a few of these: [https://www.ted.com/playlists/196/the\\_complexity\\_of\\_memory](https://www.ted.com/playlists/196/the_complexity_of_memory)

I have to admit I enjoyed Michael Ballam in "Paul: A Chosen Vessel"

<https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2012-06-1980-paul-a-chosen-vessel?lang=eng>

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/03/28/daniel-dennett-rapoport-rules-criticism/>

1. You should attempt to re-express your target's position so clearly, vividly, and fairly that your target says, "Thanks, I wish I'd thought of putting it that way.
2. You should list any points of agreement (especially if they are not matters of general or widespread agreement).
3. You should mention anything you have learned from your target.

4. Only then are you permitted to say so much as a word of rebuttal or criticism.

### **Determinants of Happiness**

