Series: Unstoppable (Part 39)
Speaker: Serene Lim

INTRODUCTION

Paul had been falsely accused of starting riots and defiling the temple. Although innocent of these accusations, Paul was kept in prison in Caesarea where he appeared before a succession of governors and leaders including Felix, Festus and even the Roman-appointed Jewish King, Agrippa. At each court appearance, Paul spoke freely about his Christian faith.

In today's sermon, we picked up from the previous story where Paul met with King Agrippa, high-ranking officials and the important men of the city (Acts 25:23 to Acts 26). Festus sought the help of the Roman-appointed king of the Jews, Agrippa, to discover some concrete evidence that Paul was guilty so that he could have a reason to send Paul to Caesar. Agrippa was intrigued by Paul because he had heard about Paul's reputation; "Paul the pest" by unbelieving Jews and gave Paul permission to speak. Though Paul encountered Jesus 25-30 years ago on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), the story was still fresh in his mind. He told about his formal education, strict adherence to Jewish law and his fanatical campaign against Christians before he eventually encountered Jesus. He described, in detail, what Jesus had told him to do.

In the sermon, the preacher mentioned these five takeaways from Acts 26.

1. Our salvation stories are important.
2. Our encounters with Jesus are important because He is real.

3. Encounters with God nudge us towards something.
4. God's Words are true (Acts 9:15-16).
5. Obedience has a cost.

DISCUSSION

1. Our salvation story is important because it helps to ignite our faith walk. The story reminds us of the grace of God in our lives, Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:10, says, *"But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and His grace towards me did not prove vain; but I laboured even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."* Paul's salvation experience had a permanent impact on his life from then on.

   Although most of us may not have a dramatic story like Paul's, our salvation experience has changed the trajectories of our lives.

   a. What is your salvation story? Why did you choose to be a Christian? Share with your life group or people you regularly interact with.

   b. How freely have you shared your salvation story with others? Why? If not, what is preventing you from telling it?

2. Read Acts 26. For the third recorded time, Paul told the story of how he met Jesus on the road to Damascus.

   a. What were the main themes in Paul's testimony?

   b. What insights did you gain from the way Paul told his story?

3. Paul's salvation story which began in Acts 9, was a momentous one. In his encounter with Jesus, Paul received his assignment (see Acts 26:13-18).

   a. What was unique about Paul's assignment? Why was he so zealous about it that he was willing to give his life for it? (see Acts 20:22-24, Galatians 1:11-16, 2 Corinthians 11:24-28)

   b. Have you received a heavenly vision for your life? Or are you keenly aware or have any idea about the kingdom assignment God has for your life? If not, what steps can you take to discover His assignment for you?

   c. If you do know, share with the group, what and how have you heard from God. What is the encounter with God nudging you to do? Have you been obedient to your heavenly vision or assignment?

4. Our encounters with God are important. They may be for comfort, reassurance, correction or instruction. Paul never grew tired of telling everyone he met about his encounter with Jesus. Paul said that salvation is through Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. He was assured of WHO he believed in and to WHOM he belonged. His identity is in Christ.

   As human beings, we are citizens of a particular country. As Christians, we have a spiritual identity and heavenly citizenship. Are you always assured of who you believe in and to whom you belong? Are you aware of what may cause you to stumble or doubt your faith? If you have doubts, what steps can you take to be more rooted in Christ and know who you are in Him? How can your life group support you in your faith journey?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Paul was tenacious and zealous. He was truly a fully devoted follower of Christ. Despite all the unimaginable hardships he endured (2 Corinthians 11:24-28), he did not back down and kept on obeying until the end of his life. God can equip and empower us whenever we take steps of faith to obey Him. Luke 10:2 (NIV), *"He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field"*.

Are we willing to be God's workers? Let us be like Paul, unstoppable in our zeal and in our passion to obey our Lord's assignments for us. At the end of our lives, we can say with confidence that we were not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

MEMORY VERSE

"So then, King Agrippa, **I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven**. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds." - Acts 26:19-20 (NIV)