

*Not the right time..*

THIS CONTEXT	IS NOT THE RIGHT TIME FOR...	THIS ACTIVITY
Working from home		
Doing your schoolwork at home		
Being in church		
The coronavirus outbreak		Telling people the Good News??

1



**Now is the Time**  
Acts 26

2

### *Setting for Acts 26*

- Paul had been arrested
- 40+ people vowed to kill him or die trying
- He went through multiple trials with no justice
- Then he was **in prison for 2 years** with no progress
- Then Festus became governor in place of Felix
  - Maybe some hope, but people again tried to kill him
  - So Paul appealed to Caesar
    - When justice wasn't coming, a Roman citizen could appeal to the highest authority in the Roman Empire
- New inquiry before Festus & King Agrippa (raised Jewish)
- Here is what Paul said when he has his chance to defend himself

3

### *Acts 26*



<sup>1</sup> Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.”

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense:

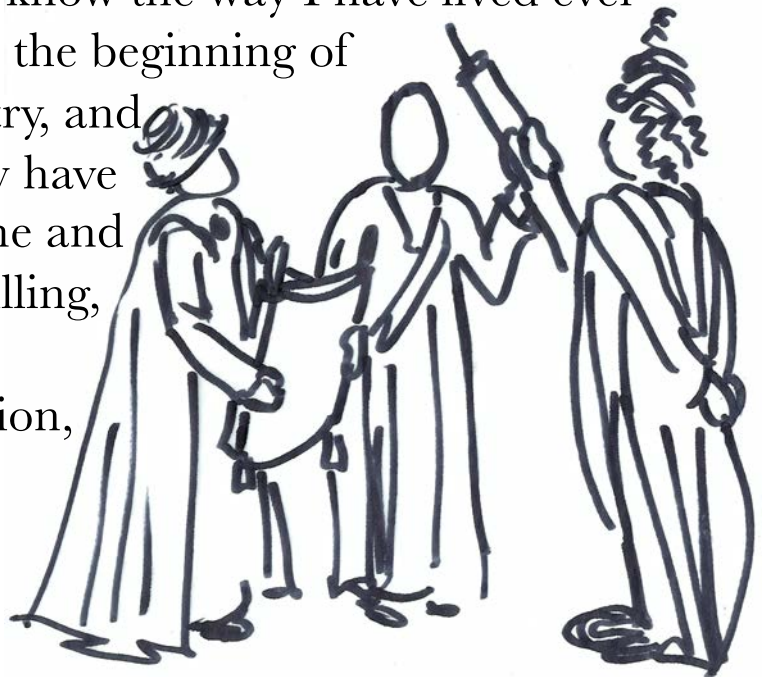
4



<sup>2</sup> “King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, <sup>3</sup> and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

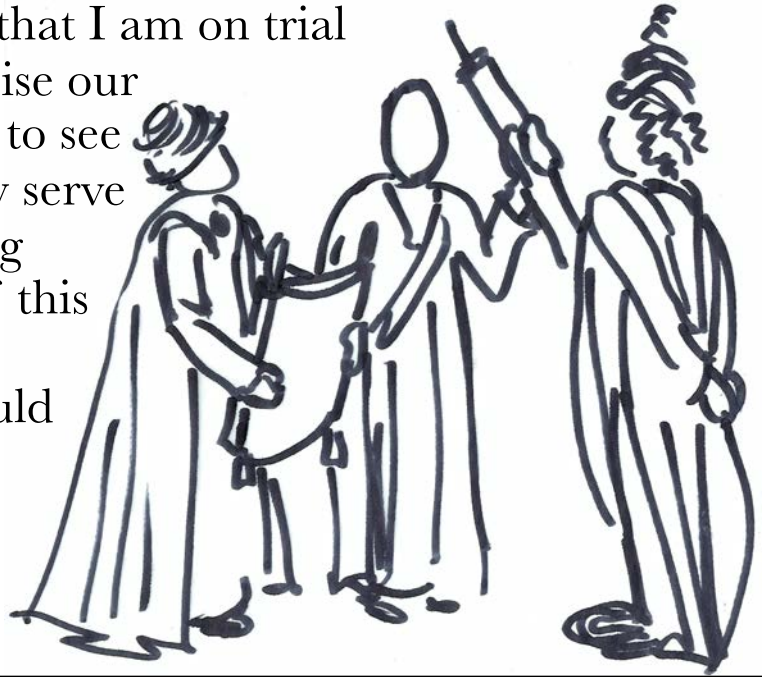
5

<sup>4</sup> “The Jewish people all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup> They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion, living as a Pharisee.



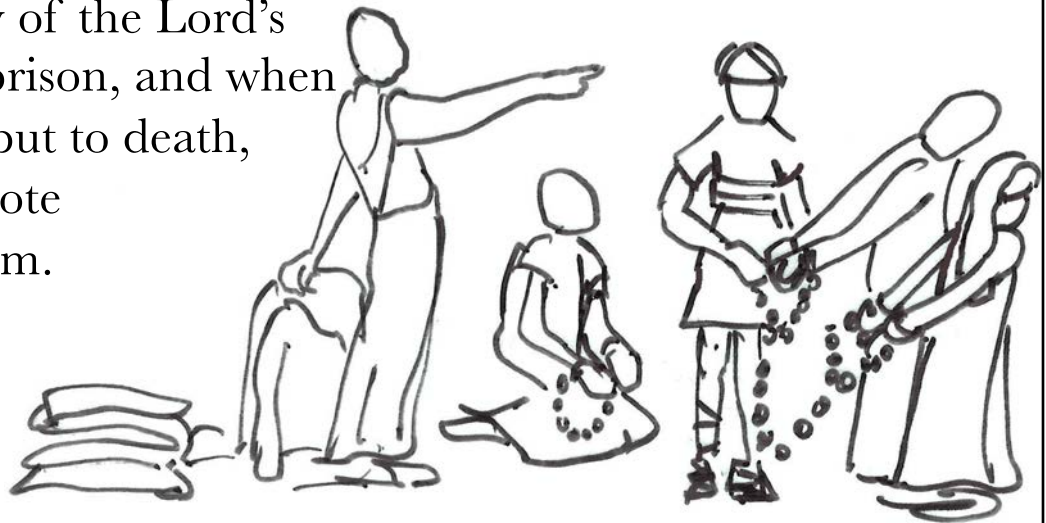
6

<sup>6</sup> And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. <sup>7</sup> This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. King Agrippa, it is because of this hope that these Jews are accusing me. <sup>8</sup> Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?



7

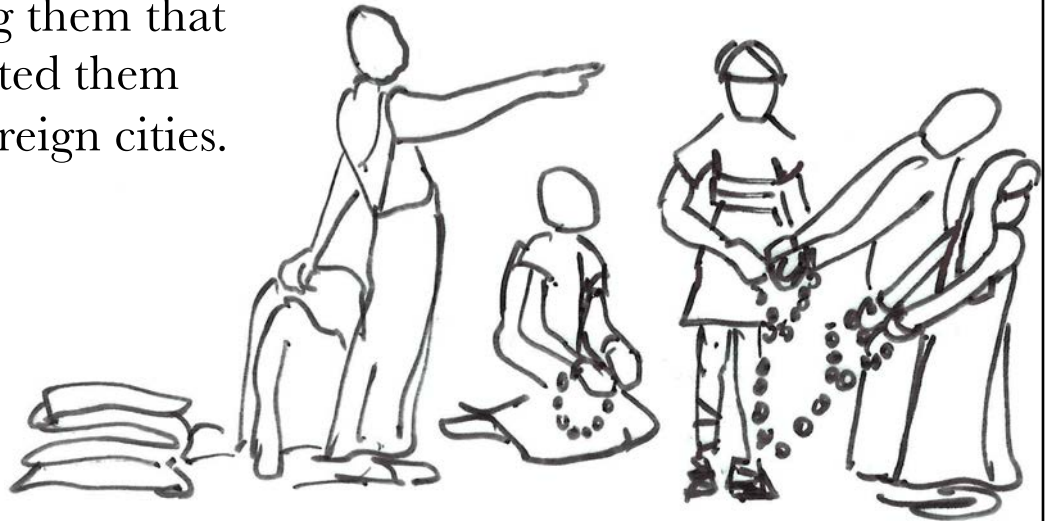
<sup>9</sup> “I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>10</sup> And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord’s people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.



8



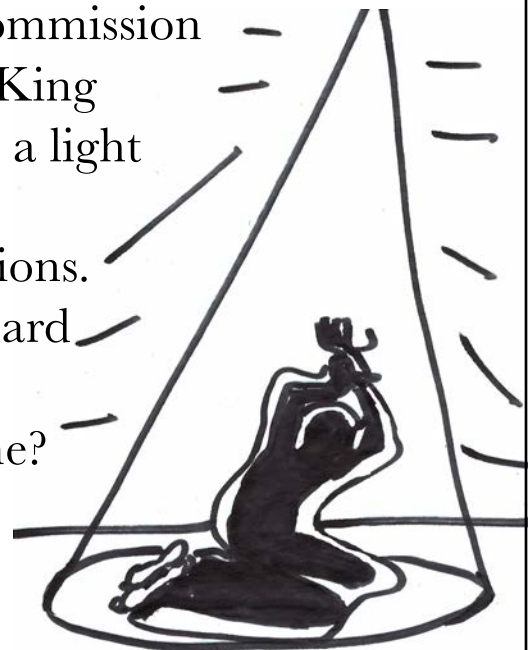
<sup>11</sup> Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.



9

<sup>12</sup> “On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. <sup>13</sup> About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. <sup>14</sup> We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

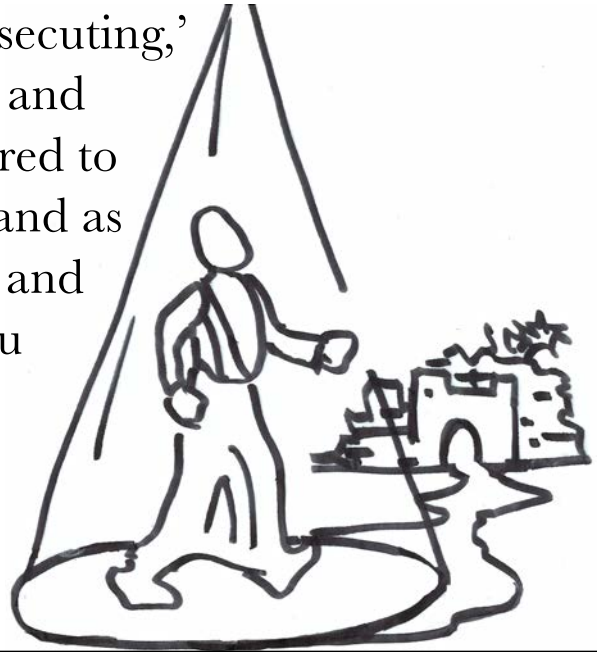
**goads = sharp rods used to force cattle to move**



10

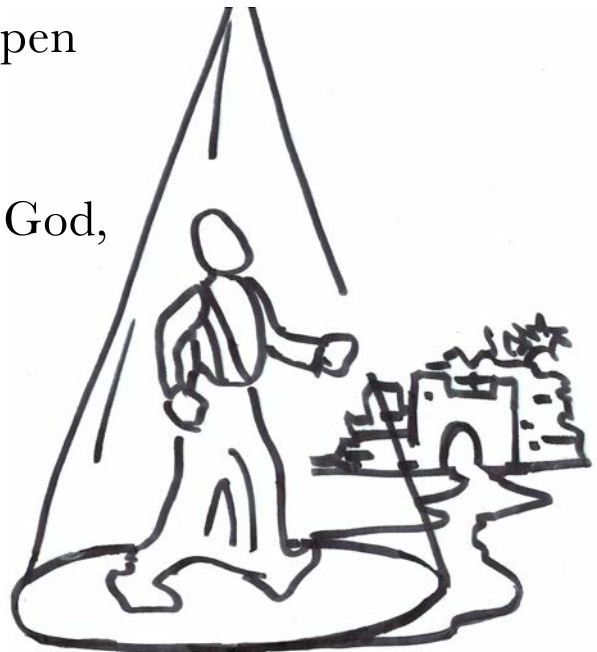
<sup>15</sup> “Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’  
the Lord replied. <sup>16</sup> ‘Now get up and  
stand on your feet. I have appeared to  
you to appoint you as a servant and as  
a witness of what you have seen and  
will see of me. <sup>17</sup> I will rescue you  
from your own people and  
from the Gentiles.



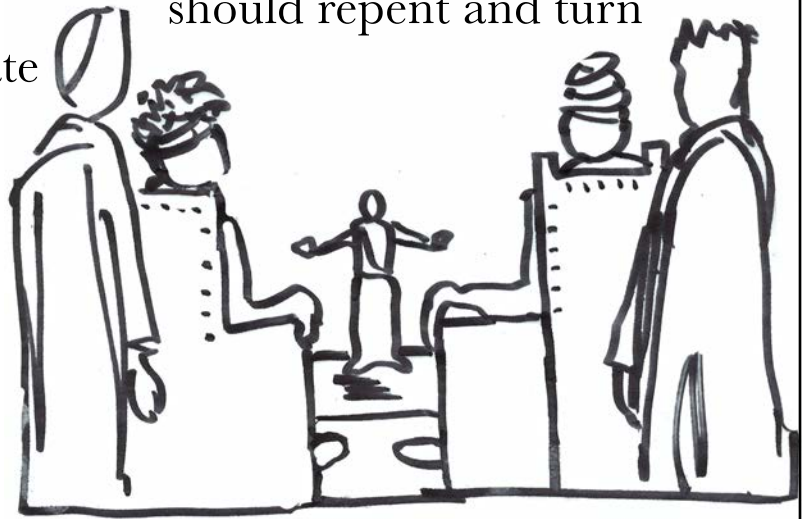
11

I am sending you to them <sup>18</sup> to open  
their eyes and turn them  
from darkness to light,  
and from the power of Satan to God,  
so that they may receive  
forgiveness of sins and  
a place among those who  
are sanctified by faith in me.’



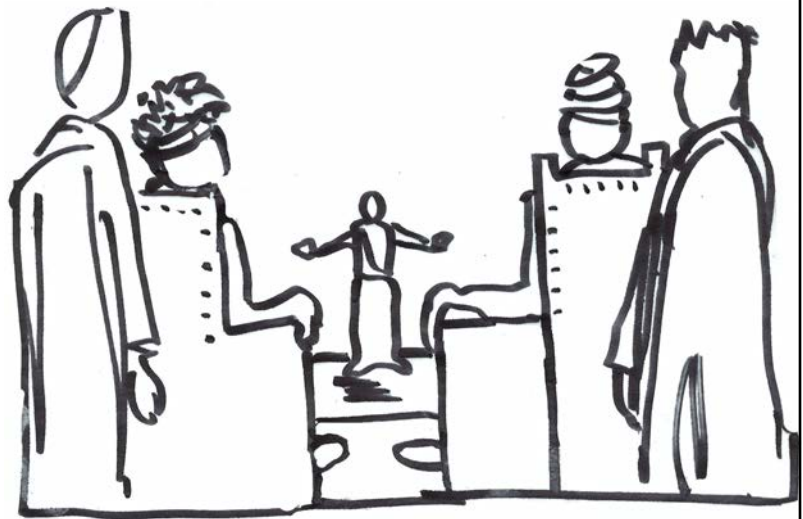
12

<sup>19</sup> “So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> That is why some Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me.



13

<sup>22</sup> But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen— <sup>23</sup> that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”



14

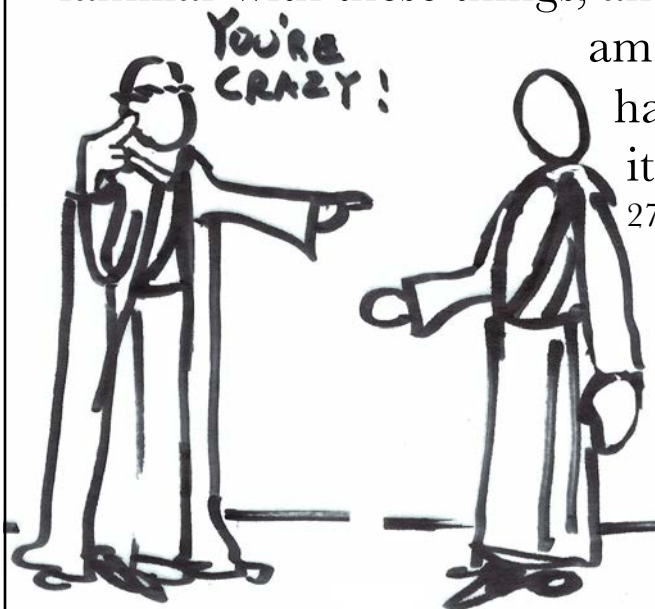
<sup>24</sup> At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."



<sup>25</sup> "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied.

15

"What I am saying is true and reasonable. <sup>26</sup> The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.



<sup>27</sup> King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."

16





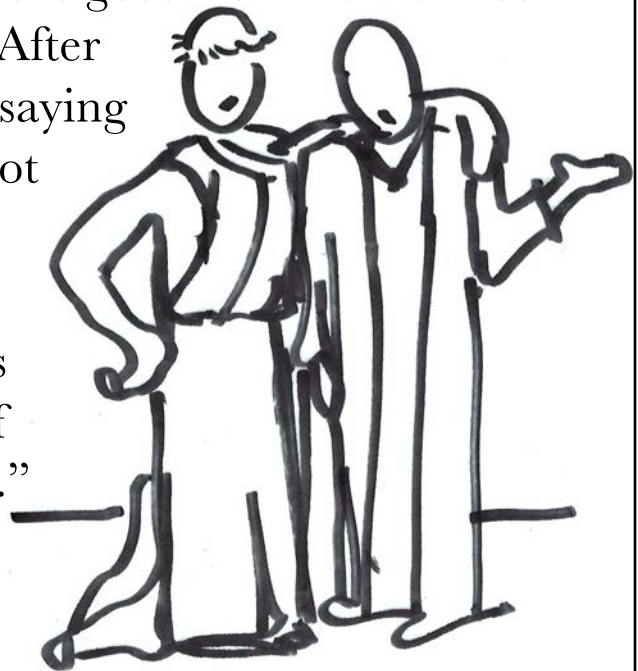
<sup>28</sup> Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”

<sup>29</sup> Paul replied, “Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”

17

<sup>30</sup> The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. <sup>31</sup> After they left the room, they began saying to one another, “This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment.”

<sup>32</sup> Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”



18

- This was Paul’s “defense”:
  - not of himself
  - not intended to gain his release from prison
- What was Paul defending?
  - Christianity:
    - “True and reasonable”
    - The genuine fulfillment of the long history of Judaism
- **While a prisoner, he was inviting the king and the rest of these powerful people to follow Jesus!**

19

### The Big Idea

God has chosen and called His children  
at all times

**Paul: suffering injustice**

**Us: coronavirus, unemployed, stressed, depressed, dying, ...**

**Evangelism makes the most sense when HOPE is least expected**

to open the eyes of people

telling the  
Good News  
about Jesus

from all nations and all walks of life

to receive new life in Jesus

20



*The Gospel: Acts 26:16-18*

Jesus said, “I have appeared to you to **appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me**. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am **sending you to them...**

- to open their eyes and
- turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God [in Christ],
- so that they **may receive forgiveness of sins**
- and **a place** among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

21

**The Big Idea**

God has chosen and called His children  
at all times

**The work of Jesus**

to open the eyes of people

from all nations and all walks of life

to receive new life in Jesus

22

**Application:****Join Jesus in opening the eyes of people to the Gospel**

- Like Paul, tell the story of the Gospel in your life
    - Emphasize what you have in common with the person
    - Turning point: “Christ took hold of me” *Philippians 3:12*
      - Even when human activity is most visible, **Jesus is the moving force behind every conversion**
    - Do it creatively in a way that fits who God made you to be
      - Show your hope
      - Point to Jesus
- } **That is evangelism!**

23

**Application:****Join Jesus in opening the eyes of people to the Gospel**

- Like Paul, tell the story of the Gospel in your life
- Trust Jesus to speak when we point to Him
  - God’s plan: “that **the Messiah**...would bring the message of light to people” *Acts 26:23*
    - Another version: “That **he** would proclaim”
    - Even when human activity is most visible, **Jesus is the moving force behind every conversion**

24



**Application:****Join Jesus in opening the eyes of people to the Gospel**

- Like Paul, tell the story of the Gospel in your life
- Trust Jesus to speak when we point to Him
- Invite people to receive a wonderful gift!
  - **Forgiveness in Christ** (looking back)
    - No one can change the past
    - But Jesus will forgive AND use it for good (grace)
  - **Belonging in Christ** (looking forward)
    - Receive “a place” in God’s perfect, eternal, loving family and home

25

**Application:****Join Jesus in opening the eyes of people to the Gospel**

- Like Paul, tell the story of the Gospel in your life
  - Trust Jesus to speak when we point to Him
  - Invite people to receive a wonderful gift!
  - Our “proclamation” is a fulfillment of **God’s promise**
    - “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” *Matthew 24:14*
    - When we show our hope and point to Jesus, **we are doing the work of God**
- Showing our hope and pointing to Jesus
- 

26

**Application:****Join Jesus in opening the eyes of people to the Gospel**

- Like Paul, tell the story of the Gospel in your life
- Trust Jesus to speak when we point to Him
- Invite people to receive a wonderful gift!
- Our “proclamation” is a fulfillment of **God’s promise**
- It may seem crazy to people
  - “Jesus told us to tell the Good News to people like us”
  - Yet the Gospel is true and the Gospel is life
  - So it is the most reasonable, compassionate action

27

**Application:****Join Jesus in opening the eyes of people to the Gospel**

- Like Paul, tell the story of the Gospel in your life
- Trust Jesus to speak when we point to Him
- Invite people to receive a wonderful gift!
- Our “proclamation” is a fulfillment of **God’s promise**
- It may seem crazy to people
- Together
  - Encouraging each other and helping each other proclaim
  - Inviting people into our community of Christ’s people

28



“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

*1 Peter 3:15*

- Hope must be **supernatural** to prompt the question
  - Is your hope supernatural? **Let it show!**
  - If your hope weak, **seek God first**, asking for His Spirit!
- Then clearly give the reason
  - “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.”
  - “Our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness” → historical life, death, and resurrection

**supernatural = beyond natural, rooted in God**

29

### The Big Idea

God has chosen and called His children  
at all times  
to open the eyes of people  
from all nations and all walks of life  
to receive new life in Jesus

**Is Jesus our Lord victorious even in...**

- **Coronavirus?**
- **Politics?**
- **Economic struggles?**
- **Death?**

**Really?**

**People need to know that!**

- **Show your hope and point to Jesus**
- **Invite them to be among His people of hope**

30