

## **Living an unusual life 2**

### **The pestilent fellow**

Last week we spoke about “living an unusual life”. We saw that Paul’s life was unusual – not because of the absence of challenges but because in the middle of challenges he experienced unusual favour, unusual miracles and unusual results.

Today, we are going to look at Paul’s life again and learn about what the Apostle Paul carried in his life, about what he carried into the challenges he faced.

**Text: Acts 24:1-5**

**V.5** – *“For we have found this man a plague”*

In this text, we find Paul on trial. In the book of Acts and in several of Paul’s epistles, we either find Paul leading people to Jesus or being arrested and put in prison. Wherever he went, he was a catalyst of both revival and trouble: God worked with him, the devil worked against him. However, at every turn we read about the prevailing power of Christ, favour and unusual miracles.

He was no trouble maker, or law breaker. He simply preached the gospel of peace. However, he didn’t always receive the key of the city, or the appreciation of the authorities for preaching Jesus, or the applause of the religious but instead, he was accused:

Tertullus the prosecutor declared: *“we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes”*.

Paul was called a plague, or as the KJV puts it, “a pestilent fellow”.

**Matthew 5:11-12** - *“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Ahab called Elijah the “troubler of Israel” (1 Kings 18:17), Joseph was called “the dreamer”.

**Acts 17:6b** – *“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too”*.

Paul never received praise for turning the world upside for Jesus, instead he was persecuted.

Why was that? Because Paul was a threat. He was such a threat to the devil, he was a threat to the powers of darkness, he was a threat to false religion.

Once they said of Paul:

**Acts 22:22b** - *Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!*

Paul was a threat because what he had was contagious. That is why they called him a plague: something contagious, something that spreads and that can't be stopped. What Paul had was infectious and spread like an epidemic to the whole world.

How can we all be contagious believers? What did Paul have in his life that made him contagious?

### **1. Paul had God's power in his life**

**Acts 19:11-12** - *Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, **12** so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.*

Notice how this power, this 'plague', was transferable from Paul's hands to aprons, from aprons to the sick, dislodging sickness and evil spirits.

You can't be an influence without the anointing.

**2 Corinthians 4:7-8** - *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. **8** We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;*

Paul spoke about the pressure that comes against us because of the gift of God in us.

That gift is a treasure because it is so powerful against the enemy and sickness.

### **2. Paul had a strong sense of purpose in his life**

Just about every time he was arrested, he always mentioned what Jesus spoke to him:

**Acts 26:16** - *But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.*

Some people just cruise through life. Some live it with intensity and with a deep sense of destiny and purpose.

### **3. Paul had a vision**

Just about every time Paul was arrested he spoke about the vision he had received of Jesus.

**Acts 26:19** - *Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,*

That vision was a driving force. That vision demanded obedience and action.

The church of Jesus has a distinctive vision. We all follow that vision.

### **4. Paul had an uncompromising spirit**

Let us look at this passage in Acts 16, where we find Paul in prison again:

**Acts 16:35-37 - 35** *And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, "Let those men go." 36 So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace." 37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out."*

They didn't know what to do with Paul: whether in prison or out of prison people were coming to Christ. The magistrates saw that they couldn't win and ordered Paul to be released and to "go in peace".

However, Paul didn't accept the terms of release. He didn't need deals with the enemy. The enemy will always offer you some sort of "off the court deal". Paul had an uncompromising spirit. That made him a threat and contagious.

## **5. Paul had the gospel**

The gospel is the unstoppable power of God unto salvation. Nothing can stop this Gospel.

Persecution only resulted in more people turning to the Lord in **Acts 11:19-21**

In China, prior to the "cultural revolution" there were about 5 million Christians. Officials came along and tried to close churches. However, today it is estimated that there are at least 100 million Christians there.

Plagues spread by contact. Therefore, the only time the Gospel is contained is when we keep it for ourselves. With us rests the power to spread it or to contain it. Let us spread this wonderful, uncontainable plague!

## **Conclusion...**

Be a contagious believer. Be a carrier of this wonderful virus and if they call you 'a pestilent fellow' take it as a great compliment.

Remember that plagues only spread by contact. Be sure to 'contact' many.

These things made Paul contagious:

1. The power of God
2. A strong sense of purpose
3. A vision from God
4. The Gospel

Are you contagious? Are you a pestilent fellow?