

What Gifts Can You Receive From God?

The *International Sunday School Lesson* for Sunday, August 29, 2010
Acts 28:16-25a, 28-31

“When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening” (Acts 28:23—NASB-U).

“After the Jews had set a day to meet with Paul, they came to him at his lodgings in great numbers. From morning until evening he explained the matter to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets” (Acts 28:23—NRSV).

“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening” (Acts 28:23—KJV).

Paul took advantage of being under house arrest in Rome to share the good news of Jesus with as many as possible, including his fellow Jews, whose opposition to the Christian faith he understood well, having once persecuted the followers of Jesus himself. (Luke wrote about Paul’s encounter with the risen Lord Jesus and summarized Paul’s teaching in the Book of Acts.) Paul did not expect the Jews to believe the good news on his testimony alone, and so he explained how the law of Moses and the prophets foretold what the Messiah would do when He came, and how Jesus fulfilled the predictions and promises upon which the Jews had placed their hopes for centuries.

Paul taught about the kingdom of God, where Jesus reigns as King over all creation. Then, Paul promised that if anyone submitted to Jesus as King and received Him as their Savior from sin, they would experience a new life on Earth and forever: “For the kingdom of God is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). Therefore, through faith in Jesus, believers become right with God and receive the Holy Spirit to live right before God. Believers experience peace with God and peace of mind, spirit, and heart. They receive the joy and happiness that only the Holy Spirit can give believers. All these gifts and more believers receive from God now and throughout eternity. —
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Questions for Further Thought

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1. What would you do if you had a captive audience, similar to a guard, as Paul did, and were under house arrest for a crime that you had not committed, but for your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? What do you need to do to prepare yourself, if something like this should happen to you?
2. After all of the mistreatment Paul suffered from his fellow Jews, what attitude did Paul take toward them? How easy is it for people today to take the attitude that Paul took toward those who mistreat them? What can we do to try to maintain a Christ-like attitude toward others?
3. Why does the Bible show at least three different approaches to dealing with those who oppose God and the kingdom of God: the way of Jesus, the way of Stephen, and the way of Paul? [Tradition teaches that Paul was later martyred, but the Bible does not teach this.]
4. Why is the use of reason important in teaching the good news of Jesus? Why is giving an explanation for why you believe in Jesus important? Why is appealing to what the Bible teaches important when you speak to someone about Jesus and the good news?
5. Would you be willing to teach the Bible freely to others at your own expense? Sunday school teachers do this, as well as others. Paul also received support from various churches in his missionary work (see his Letter to the Philippians). What are the benefits of supporting pastors, preachers, teachers, evangelists, and others as they share the gospel in word and deed so they do not need to spend the major part of each day “tent making”?