

## INTRO

- What are you most looking forward to doing with the weather warming up this season?

## READ

Acts 22:1-22

Paul arrives in Jerusalem to visit the church there, knowing he will face persecution. One day at the temple the crowd arrests him on false accusations because of his fame for spreading the gospel.

Rescued from the mob by Roman soldiers, Paul asks the authorities to let him speak to the people. In his defence, Paul explains that he had once been just like them, zealous for the law to the point of killing Christians. But he met the Messiah in person, and that changed him forever. Having understood his need for forgiveness of sins, he was called to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to all the nations.

## REFLECT

**1. The calling of God's people**

When God called Abraham, he promised him that *all nations of the earth* would be blessed by his offspring (Ge 22:17-18). Later, the Law was given to this people to help them be a light and a blessing to the nations (Dt 4:6-8).

Paul explains in his letter to the Galatians that we who have faith in Christ are Abraham's offspring (Ga 3:7-9). It is our calling to be light and salt in this world, for the blessing of all nations. Paul's personal calling is our calling too.

*Qu: What do you understand being salt and light in the world looks like? Do you live as one being called for that mission?*

**2. Failing to follow the call**

Throughout the Scriptures we see the people of God failing to be a light to the nations in two ways. The first one is by becoming just like the world, as it happened many times to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament.

The other way to fail that call is by rejecting the world to the point of not wanting the world to be saved at all. Jesus himself suffered persecution for suggesting that God was interested in saving Gentiles (Lk 4:24-29). Now, the crowd in Jerusalem wants to kill Paul for saying that he was called to preach salvation to the Gentiles as well.

*Qu: In what ways do we repeat Israel's mistake in becoming like the world? How does that hinder our calling to be a light to the nations?*

*Qu: And in what ways do we make the same mistake as the people of Paul's time, rejecting the world rather than wanting to see it saved?*

Central to Paul's understanding of God's will for his people was the work of Jesus Christ at the cross for the forgiveness of sins. No amount of obedience to the law could make Paul someone who deserved salvation. Even the most zealous for the law needed forgiveness, but it was offered for free in Jesus Christ. This was the key of the good news he had for the Gentiles.

*Qu: In light of what Jesus did for our salvation at the cross, what does it mean to be a blessing to all the nations?*

## RESPOND &amp; PRAY

- What encouraged/challenged you the most from this discussion?
- Spend time praying for one another and those you know who need to hear the good news of salvation.