

Read: Acts 23:1-11

Jesus Gives Us Courage to Share His Word

Acts 23:11

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, “Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Morgan was so nervous. She was tossing and turning in bed. She tried counting sheep, counting her stuffed animals, even counting to a thousand. Morgan still couldn't sleep because she knew that the next day was going to be hard!

Some of Morgan's friends were going to hang out and sleep over that next day. But Morgan determined that it was finally time for them to have a big talk. She was going to tell her friends that she knew they were not making very good choices. They had been doing things that were not very God-pleasing, and Morgan was finally going to tell them that it was wrong. She loved them so much but wanted them to do what God says is right.

But what if they wouldn't listen? What if they got angry? What if they left the sleepover and never wanted to be friends again?

Sometimes speaking the truth about God's Word can be very difficult. Even family or friends may not want to hear what God says at times. But because we love others like God loves us, we still want to share the truth with them—even if it may be scary.

Today we have an amazing example in the apostle Paul. He was rejected, beaten, hurt, and put in prison many times. In Acts 23, Paul was boldly preaching about Jesus despite being on trial and in trouble again. However, his own Jewish people didn't want to listen to him and put him in jail for the night. How frustrating and sad! But that night, Jesus appeared to Paul and told him, “Take courage!” Paul could be brave because Jesus was going to be with him and bless his preaching. They weren't going to listen to Paul in Jerusalem, but soon he would go and preach far away in Rome!

It is very sad when other people don't listen to what God has to say. Sometimes it hurts us very much to see loved ones reject Jesus. But even though it can be tough, God also tells us, “Take courage!” We can be bold and brave when we share God's Word because Jesus will be with us and will bless our message in just the right way.

So Christian friends, keep sharing God's truth! Some may listen, some may not. But Jesus will *always* be with us and bless our work, so take courage and boldly share his Word!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- Do you know someone that doesn't know Jesus? Discuss together as a family people you might know.
- Why is it so important for other people to know Jesus?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- As you continue to grow older, where are places that you think you could talk to others about Jesus?
- What made Paul so eager and so brave to share the good news of Jesus?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- What is the scariest thing about sharing the good news of Jesus? Can you think of promises from God that could help you?
- How could someone use technology or social media to share about Jesus?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, sometimes I'm afraid to share your Word with other people. Help me to be bold and give me courage to share the good news about you with anyone and everyone! Amen.

Hymn: CW 542:1,3 – Dear Lord, to Your True Servants Give

Dear Lord, to your true servants give
The grace to you alone to live.
Set free from sin to serve you, Lord,
They go to share your living Word,
The gospel message to proclaim
That all may know your saving name.

When all their labor seems in vain,
Revive their sinking hopes again;
And when success crowns what they do,
Oh, keep them humble, Lord, and true
Until before your judgment seat
They lay their trophies at your feet.