

Losing an Election



Talia never thought she would lose to Kenneth. Who would believe her if she came forward with an accusation of cheating during the election? Talia had heard the counters laughing in the counting room. She'd gone back into the room after they'd left, and there among the bits of trash were about 60 votes that had been cast for her. She picked the crumpled ballots out of the trash before she left.

She thought about reporting what had happened. Would she be seen as a traitor? The counters were the ones in the wrong. They would be expelled for cheating. But everyone would blame her for telling what had happened. Nobody would want to hang out with her if they found out that she had reported them. Was the election worth that? She was torn between losing the respect of her peers and gaining her elected position.

As Talia walked down the street, she prayed for an answer, but she already knew what she had to do. She went back to the principal's office. The secretary called her into his office. Talia placed the ballots on the desk as she finished telling her story. Being president did not seem so important anymore.

The next morning, Talia felt all eyes on her. She did not look up as she walked down the halls.

"Congratulations, Madam President," she heard Kenneth say. "Sorry my campaign people got out of hand. You deserved to win."

Everyone applauded her. Standing up for herself wasn't so bad after all.

In My Heart

"I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable"
(Acts 26:25, NIV).

WORD!

Acts 26:19–32, NIV—"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. **20** 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. **21** That is why some Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. **22** 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—**23** 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." **24** At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane." **25** "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. **26** 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. **27** King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do." **28** Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" **29** 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." **30** The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. **31** After they left the room, they began saying to one another, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment." **32** Agrippa said to

Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

SIDEBAR

Paul before King Agrippa

King Agrippa, who was the brother of Felix's wife, Drusilla (Acts 24:24), had been designated as the ruler of the northern part of Judea and had no power in the region governed by Festus. However, because of his expertise in Jewish affairs, he gave advice to Festus regarding Paul's case. Festus needed something in writing to substantiate Paul's case before he brought it to Caesar. In fulfillment of the prophecy in Acts 9:15, Paul delivered his defense with conviction as he told of his conversion and call to preach. King Agrippa rejected Paul. This did not stop Paul from appealing to all of his listeners there to believe in Jesus. Nothing could be found against Paul that called for death or imprisonment.

How to Stand Up for What You Believe In

1. Reaffirm within yourself your belief.
2. Resolve to stand by your belief no matter what.
3. Do not hesitate to speak the truth concerning your belief.
4. Stand firm, even if people do not agree with you. Continue to speak the truth.
5. Pray to God for strength during difficult times.

GOT IT!

A. Truth be Known

Use Word! to help you match the names and phrases. Draw a line from column A to the phrases in column B.

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
1. Festus	the ruler asked to hear Paul's case
2. Paul	accused Paul of being insane
3. King Agrippa	preacher of the Good News of the Messiah

B. Defend It!

- Revisit the facts of the lesson concerning Paul going before King Agrippa.
- Divide into pairs.
- Create a skit about Paul defending himself before King Agrippa (one person portray Paul and another person the king).
- If there's time, switch the character you portray.
- Express how you felt as you portrayed each character.

JAM SESSION

Taking a Stand

It is difficult to stand by our convictions when other people think we are crazy. Confident that he spoke the truth, Paul did not back down from sharing the story of his faith in Christ. In his time, it was not popular to speak of faith in Jesus, the Messiah. Like Paul, we should not let popular opinion or a crowd of our peers deter us from the truth of our faith. Talia had proof that the loss of the election was through cheating. At first she did not want to stand up for what was right if it meant the loss of her popularity. After seeking God in prayer, she used the power of her conviction to face the difficult situation and share the truth, no matter the cost. Christians must take a stand for the truth, even when in the minority.

JAM ON IT!

A Letter of Faith

God provides us with the strength to stand when we are in the minority. Write a letter to God to thank Him for enabling you to defend your faith and to stand your ground. Put it in your journal or choose to share it with the class next week.

LAST JAM

STAND! God's got your back!

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS

Use this space to write down questions you have about this lesson.

A Minute To Talk



Class was dismissed, but Kelly sat still at her desk as the rest of the students headed to lunch. Mrs. Walker noticed and went over to speak to her.

"What's going on, Kelly? Do you have any questions about class today that you need me to answer?"

"No. I just needed to sit still for a little bit and I wanted some peace and quiet. I'm not ready to be in the lunchroom."

"Do you need to talk? If you want to sit in the room while I plan for tomorrow, that's okay too."

"If you have a minute, Mrs. Walker, I actually do need to talk."

"What's going on?"

"My parents separated at the beginning of the school year and it looks like they are going to divorce." Kelly sighed. "I was just hoping they'd work it out." She looked at Mrs. Walker with tears in her eyes.

"Awww, honey." Mrs. Walker sat down next to Kelly. "You can only take it one day at a time. How are you sleeping? Have you eaten anything today?"

"No, I'm not sleeping much and I really don't have an appetite." Kelly put her head down on the desk.

"You can't control how your parents handle their marriage, but you can take care of yourself and pray that God will work out the rest. I want you to visit the school counselor. She has a group for children of divorce that may give you some support. Take every moment as it comes and keep breathing." Mrs. Walker gave Kelly a hug.

"Thank you, Mrs. Walker."

In My Heart

"Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head" (Acts 27:34, NIV).

WORD!

Acts 27:1–2, 33–44, NIV—When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. **2** We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

27:33 Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything.

34 Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." **35** After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.

36 They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. **37** Altogether there were 276 of us on board. **38** When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea. **39** When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. **40** Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. **41** But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf. **42** The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. **43** But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's

life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. **44** The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely.

SIDEBAR

Paul Sails for Rome

Paul and the other prisoners on the ship are in a difficult place. They feel hopeless and frightened. It is Paul's faith and hope in God that allows him to move forward without fear and encourage fellow prisoners as well. Paul trusts that God will care for him and the rest of the passengers on the ship. He then goes on to encourage the other passengers to eat for their strength and so they can survive. Paul faith in God also earned him the respect of the centurion, who then stopped the soldiers from attacking the prisoners. Regardless of the outcome, Paul led by example and showed the prisoners how to find peace in God.

How to Find Peace in the Storm

1. Be still.
2. Know that God has the best plans for you.
3. Talk and pray with trusted friends and family.

GOT IT!

A. Confidence in God

Use Word! to help you fill in the blanks.

1. Now I urge you to take some _____.
You need it to survive.
2. They were all _____ and
ate some food themselves.
3. The soldiers planned to _____
the prisoners to prevent any of them from
swimming away and escaping.
4. But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's
_____, so he kept them
from carrying out their plan.
5. He ordered those who could swim to
jump _____ first and
get to land.

6. The rest were to hold on to planks or pieces of the _____
to get to shore.

7. In this way, everyone reached _____ in safety.

B. Rap It Up

- Divide into two groups.
- In your group, write an eight-lined rhyme about confidence in God in the face of challenges.
- Work together to create a hook for your song.
- Perform the rap during another class.

JAM SESSION

Weathering the Storm

In times of crisis, our panic can lead us to behave irrationally. Paul's confidence in God's faithfulness enabled him to act calmly and assure all the ship's passengers that they would survive the storm. Paul had encouraged the passengers to hold off on the trip due to the storm. In spite of his knowledge that the ship would surely crash, Paul was still able to encourage the other passengers. Confidence in God doesn't guarantee smooth sailing, but you can still have that faith when waters are rough. When Kelly approached Mrs. Walker, the teacher didn't comfort her by promising that everything would be okay, but she did encourage her to care for herself and take it one day at a time. Both Paul and Mrs. Walker were encouraging because of who they were. Their faith allowed those in need of comfort to feel confident in their presence. We are all called to be ambassadors of God, to radiate God's love and peace, especially to those in need.

JAM ON IT!

Lend an Ear

Sometimes the most difficult thing for someone in crisis is to be able to talk about it. They may just need a little company and the chance to take their mind off things. If you have a friend who is going through a rough time, take some time out to spend with them and give them some support. Use the phone if you are long distance. Don't attempt to give true support using social media. Make your presence a present.

LAST JAM

**Somewhere someone is praying for a friend to listen;
remember, you can be an answer to a prayer.**