

Paul – A Chosen Instrument**Text : Psalm 139: 1-16****A. God is the Good Shepherd who knows your most intimate thoughts.****S#1.****S#2.**

1. God knew you before He spoke the world into existence.
2. Being eternally aware of all time, God was aware of your life before it began.
3. Before you speak God knows what you will say and why you will say it.

S#3.**B. Just as He formed Adam from the earth, He formed you in your mother's womb.**

1. He knows every facet of your DNA.
2. God knows your potential and exactly how much of it you have developed.
3. NO EXCUSE works with God because He knows your true motives.

S#4.**C. God has a plan for your life and things He wants for you to accomplish for Him.**

1. God does not force anyone to follow Him.

- a. God calls people via the gospel.

II Thes. 2: 14 – It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

S#5.

- b. Each person chooses whether to accept or to reject the gospel.

Acts 17: 32-34 – Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this." **33** So Paul went out of their midst. **34** But some men joined him and believed, ...

S#6.

2. Providentially, God opens doors before us, but we must choose to walk through each

D. Christians are those who have been chosen by God to serve Him.**S#7.**

1. God uses Christians to accomplish His glory on the earth.

II Thes.1: 11 – To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, **12** so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The one who wove you in your mother's womb will never expect more than you have the ability to accomplish or to endure for Him. (*Won't accept less.*)
3. However, God commonly demands that we often face hardships to glorify Him.

II Tim. 2: 3 – Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ...

S#8.

11– It is a trustworthy statement : For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; **12** If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

E. God had a plan for YOU .. for everyone He called to serve Him.

1. When Jesus called the Apostles it was to make them fishers of men.
Mark 1: 17 – And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." **S#9.**
2. Jesus sent the Apostles out on the limited commission to Jews only.
Matt. 10: 5 – These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; **6** but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
3. Jesus taught that He would have followers who were gentiles.
John 10: 16 – I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them **S#10.** also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.
4. When Jesus sent us all out on the "Great Commission" He said go to every creature.
Mark 16: 15 –And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.
5. The Apostles and early disciples were preaching the gospel only to Jews.
 - a. **Acts 10** ... God sends a vision instructing Peter to preach to gentiles – Cornelius.
 - b. **Acts 11: 19** – So then those who were scattered because of the persecution **S#11.** that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone. **20** But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.

F. God needed a messenger to carry the gospel to the gentiles, who would be qualified to take the message to others cultures. The messenger had to : **S#12.**

1. To know God, know about God dealings with man and know the O.T. scriptures
2. Be able to communicate effectively with the gentiles
3. Have a good understanding of gentile cultures and religions
4. Be able to travel freely
5. Be well educated
6. Have a strong physical constitution to hold up under the stress

G. The Calling and the consequent ministry of the Apostle Paul is recorded in scripture as an example for us to follow.

I Cor. 11: 1 – Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

1. We will see how every event of Paul's life helped to prepare him to serve.
2. Paul had a plan for his life, but his plan was replaced by God's plan.
3. God's plan for Paul's life consumed Paul's life.

I. Every event of Paul's life prepared him to accomplish God's plan.**S#13.****A. Paul was born in Tarsus, a city that facilitated his future service for God. S#14.**

1. The Ancient city of Tarsus still exists.
 - a. Located in south-central Turkey
 - b. Part of the Adana-Mersin Metropolitan Area ... 3 million people
 - c. Fourth most populous area in modern Turkey
2. Tarsus had been an important, strategically located city for hundreds of years.
 - a. It played a major part in several wars.
 - b. It was ruled by the Hittites, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans
 - c. It had a protected port 12 mile upriver from the Mediterranean Sea.
 - d. It was at the intersection of major roads.
 - e. It was just south of the "Cilician Gates", the main pass across Taurus Mountains.
3. Tarsus was a wealthy commercial town.
 - a. It was in an agriculturally fertile area ... plain of Cilicia
 - b. It was famous for linen woven from locally grown flax
 - c. It was also noted for the black fiber spun from the hair of black goats which was used in the manufacture of tents.
 - d. It had the famous shipyard where Mark Antony and Cleopatra's fleet was made.
4. Tarsus was widely known as an educational center. (*college town*)
 - a. Schools rivaled those in Athens and Alexandria (Had own academy)
 - b. Had one of the best libraries in the ancient world ... 200, 000+ books
 - c. The philosopher Athenodorus Cananites, tutored of the Roman emperor, Augustus,
5. Tarsus was a politically important city.
 - a. In 66 BC Pompey the Great declared it the capital of the province of Cilicia.
 - b. In 42 BC it was declared a "free city." (*No insignificant city* , Acts 21: 39)
 - c. Tarsus did not have to pay tax to Rome.
 - d. Citizens born in Tarsus were Roman citizens.
6. Being from Tarsus was advantageous to the ministry of the Apostle Paul.
 - a. Being from Tarsus, Greek was Paul's native tongue. (*also mark of education*)

Acts. 21: 37 – As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to S#15.
the commander, "May I say something to you?" And he said, "Do you
know Greek? 38 "Then you are not the Egyptian who some time ago

- b. Being from an important city gave Paul credibility with authorities.
Acts. 21: 39 – But Paul said, " I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city; and I beg you, allow me to speak to the people."
- c. Being from Tarsus gave Paul the civil rights that accompanied Roman citizenship.
Acts. 22: 24 – The commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, **S#16.** stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.
25 But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?"

S#17.

B. Paul's birthplace made him more suitable for the work of reaching gentiles

- 1. In Tarsus Jews were a minority so He knew how to interact with gentiles.
- 2. There were many pagan religions in Tarsus so Paul dealt with pagans.
- 3. People from many cultures did business and studied in Tarsus so Paul knew cultures.
- 4. Tarsus was a large college town so Paul grew up interacting with educated people.
- 5. A famous library in Tarsus gave Paul the opportunity to be well read. (*quoted Greek*)
- * 6. The place where YOU were born gives you the ability to communicate with peers.

C. Paul's early education and training prepared him for his ministry.

S#18.

- 1. Paul's family taught him a valuable trade that helped facilitate his ministry.
 - a. As Jesus was a carpenter, Paul was a tentmaker.
Acts 18: 3 – He came to them, **3** and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers.
 - b. Paul's trade was profitable enough to support others as well.
Acts 20: 34 – You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were **with me**.
 - c. Having grown up dealing with customers, Paul knew how to talk to people.
- 2. Paul spoke three languages fluently and was at least familiar with a fourth.
 - a. He grew up speaking Greek in Tarsus.
 - b. Being in a Jewish household he spoke the Jewish common tongue .. **Acts 21: 37f**
 - c. He spoke biblical Hebrew .. **Phil. 3: 5** .. "Hebrew of Hebrews"
 - d. Tarsus was a Roman provincial capital .. Latin was the official language.
- 3. Paul's family gave him a good religious education.
 - a. He was raised to be an active Pharisee.
Acts 26: 4-5 – So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, **S#19.** which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and

at Jerusalem; **5** since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.

- b. His early education was such that he was accepted to be a student of Gamaliel.

Acts 22: 3 – I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, **S#20.** educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.

- c. Gamaliel.

- 1) One of the 71 member of the Sanhedrin ... Jewish high court
- 2) Most highly respected teacher in Jerusalem.
- 3) Quoted as being against killing Peter and John. ... **Acts 5: 33-39**

4. Advantages of a Jewish education AFTER Paul became a Christian.

- a. He knew the one true God and had a deep faith.
- b. He knew the Old Testament scriptures very well and could teach from them.
- c. He was a duly ordained rabbi so he could teach in any synagogue.

D. Applications :

S#21.

1. God has a plan for every person born .. God has a plan for **you**.
2. When God calls you by His gospel He calls you to serve Him.
3. Every aspect of your life has prepared you for God's purpose. (*Blind man* – **Jn 9**)
4. God requires for us to use what HE put **in** us to serve Him.

CONCLUSION :

S#22.

A. Your life experience has prepared you to lead some specific people to Christ.

1. There are few special people in the world.
2. Most are just like you ... the average Joe.
3. God has invested years preparing you to reach people like yourself.

B. God will call upon each of us to account for His investments in us.

S#23.

1. Parables : Talents , Ten Minas , About stewards Luke 16 & Luke 12
2. Each of us will give an account ... **WHEN**

II Cor. 5:10 – For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, **S#24.** so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

INVITATION :

S#25. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :

Psalm 139: 1-16

1 O Lord, You have searched me and known me.

2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
You understand my thought from afar.

3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down,
And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

4 Even before there is a word on my tongue,
Behold, O Lord, You know it all.

5 You have enclosed me behind and before,
And laid Your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is too high, I cannot attain to it.

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?

8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.

9 If I take the wings of the dawn,
If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,

10 Even there Your hand will lead me,
And Your right hand will lay hold of me.

11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me,
And the light around me will be night,"

12 Even the darkness is not dark to You,
And the night is as bright as the day.
Darkness and light are alike to You.

13 For You formed my inward parts;
You wove me in my mother's womb.

14 I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Your works,
And my soul knows it very well.

15 My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;

16 Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Your book were all written
The days that were ordained for me,
When as yet there was not one of them.