

"To the Ends of the Earth": Paul Arrives in Rome

Acts 28:11-31

Icebreaker: *What are you willing to stand up for?*

One of the messages we have heard over and over again in the book of Acts was the great boldness the apostles had as they proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The book of Acts ends on a note of boldness as Paul finally finds himself in Rome and is able to preach to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

Acts 28:11-16

Again, Paul finds encouragement on his journey to Rome. It is remarkable that Paul runs into Christians on many of the stops of his journey.

What promise had God made good on?

- That Paul would arrive in Rome to share the gospel there as well.

God promised Paul a destination but he didn't guarantee it would be an easy trip. *How is that similar to our lives?*

Acts 28:17-22

Who was it who originally brought these false charges against Paul?

- The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem

Why would Paul be interested in explaining himself to the Jewish leaders in Rome?

- Because he cares about them and knows they are important to God.
- Also, Paul's usual way of doing things was to go first to the Jews in an area before talking to the Gentiles (Romans 1:16 and also in Acts 19 when Paul preaches in Ephesus first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles)

Acts 28:23-25.

Is it any wonder that Luke ends the book of Acts with Paul preaching about Jesus Christ? Notice he started with what they knew. *What did Paul use to prove Jesus was the Christ?*

- Law of Moses and the Prophets

Why is it important to start with what people already know about God and Jesus?

What questions could you ask someone to find out what they already think about God and Jesus that could open a door to a conversation about their relationship with God?

Why is it important to teach others about Christ even though not everyone will believe?

- Because God loves everyone.

- Because some will believe and you never know who that is going to be.

Acts 28:26-28

The people who had been waiting for generations for the Messiah to come didn't get it when it finally happened. They disbelieved, rejected it, and even crucified the Messiah. They knew the prophecies. They knew the Old Testament. If anyone should have known Jesus was the Messiah it was the Jews.

How is it possible to have vision but not be able to see or hearing but not be able to understand?

- Paul is talking about spiritual things. These people had perfectly good eyes but were not able to recognize the Messiah. They saw the miracles but they didn't really see that God was the one doing it. They heard Jesus teach but did not understand that he was from God.

How is it possible that we can make the same mistake today?

- When the Bible tells us something we are doing is wrong or sin but we don't listen to the warning.

What does Paul say can result from that kind of thinking?

- He says their hearts' became calloused or hardened.

Obviously that is not how God made us to live. When we see something is sinful we must avoid it and when we see something is righteous we need to live it out. When we do we will be living with eyes that see and ears that hear and our hearts will be softened.

Luke doesn't tell us what happened to Paul because Acts is not about Paul. Acts is about the spread of the Gospel to the Jews and Gentiles alike all around the world. The prophecy at the very beginning of Acts (Acts 1:8) has come to pass—the Gospel has reached Rome, which was the capital of the civilized world of their day and figuratively the “ends of the earth.” God made good on his promise to Paul and he will make good on his promises to us.

We carry on the apostles' mission to carry on the Gospel to the ends of the earth with great boldness.

Application:

[Only one question but try to really spend time discussing them as it sums up how we respond to the entire book of Acts.]

How would you define the mission of the early church?/How can we live out the mission of the early church today?

Prayer:

Prayer for boldness and commitment to continue the mission Jesus set in motion in the early church. Pray that our mission will match their mission and that our boldness will match theirs. Pray that God will use us as instruments for his Kingdom for the people we come in contact with on a daily basis.

Next Series:

Let the group know that coming up next in our LIFE groups: **Practical Christian Living**. This series will focus on issues we face in the world. We will study what scripture has to say about a variety of topics that will help inform us on living out our Christianity in our everyday lives.