

Acts 28 Off Course, On Purpose
9/28/25 Calvary Chapel Titusville
Pastor Paul Andris

Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. (Acts 28:1 NKJV)

God uses those storms to get us right where we need to be.

And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. (Acts 28:2 NKJV)

Even the world can practice hospitality, but how much more should we, who have been loved by Christ?

But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid [them] on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. (Acts 28:3 NKJV)

When life bites—and it will—what comes out of us? Fear? Complaining? Or faith?

So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live." (Acts 28:4 NKJV)

This is what I'd call 'karma theology'. It's pagan thinking.

But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. (Acts 28:5 NKJV)

Paul knew the promise and trusted in the plan.

However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god. (Acts 28:6 NKJV)

Don't build your identity on people's opinions.

In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. (Acts 28:7 NKJV)

God plants favor wherever you go.

And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. (Acts 28:8 NKJV)

You don't need a formal title to operate in the power of the gospel.

So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary. (Acts 28:9-10 NKJV)

Never underestimate what God will do through your detours.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to [His] purpose. (Romans 8:28 NKJV)

After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. (Acts 28:11 NKJV)

Spiritual maturity is knowing how to engage a broken world while staying anchored in grace.

And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome. (Acts 28:12-14 NKJV)

Don't measure God's faithfulness by ease.

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And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage. Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him. (Acts 28:15-16 NKJV)

Christian community strengthens us.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as [is] the manner of some, but exhorting [one another], and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25 NKJV).

We aren't just bodies showing up— We are spiritual encouragement.

And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: "Men [and] brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, (Acts 28:17 NKJV)

Even when the hurt runs deep, how we respond matters.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. (Romans 10:1 NKJV).

That's a posture of humility and gospel-centeredness.

"who, when they had examined me, wanted to let [me] go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. (Acts 28:18 NKJV)

People may misjudge you, but God knows the truth.

"But when the Jews spoke against [it], I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. (Acts 28:19 NKJV)

Too many Christians try to fight culture wars instead of waging spiritual warfare.

"For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see [you] and speak with [you], because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." (Acts 28:20 NKJV)

This is what motivated Paul.

for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, [even] to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. (2 Timothy 2:9 NKJV).

Paul might be chained, but the gospel is still moving forward.

Then they said to him, "We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. "But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere." (Acts 28:21-22 NKJV)

God was working ahead of Paul's arrival.

So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at [his] lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. (Acts 28:23 NKJV)

When a door opens to share truth, take the time, walk people through the story of Scripture.
And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. (Acts 28:24 NKJV)

You can preach from Moses to Malachi, and still, some hearts remain closed.

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So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, "saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. [Their] ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with [their] eyes and hear with [their] ears, Lest they should understand with [their] hearts and turn, So that I should heal them." ' (Acts 28:25-27 NKJV)

Spiritual dullness is real. And it's tragic.

"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves. (Acts 28:28-29 NKJV)

The door that was cracked for the Jews has swung wide for the Gentiles.

Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him. (Acts 28:30-31 NKJV)

This is how Acts ends—not with Paul's death, but with the Word alive and moving.

Paul was released after his hearing with Caesar, and continued more missionary work.

During that final imprisonment, Paul wrote 2 Timothy.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:6-8 NKJV)

What a way to finish. He didn't just start well—he finished well.

As the Book of Acts closes—it opens a door: your story, my story, the Church's ongoing story.

Never forget—your story is still being written by the Author of life.