

## **House Arrest: Making the Best of a Bad Situation** **An Opportunity for Boldness**

Acts 28:11-31

On April 12, 1963, while carrying out a non-violent protest in Birmingham, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr was violently arrested & thrown into jail for the crime of fighting injustice & calling for equality. Yet, making the best of his bad situation, he gave us some of the greatest lines on equality & human dignity ever written...

*"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."* **Martin Luther King, Jr**

*"We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."* **MLK**

*"The early Christians rejoiced when they were deemed worthy to suffer for what they believe. In those days the Church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas & principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society."* **MLK**

*"Let justice roll down like waters & righteousness like a mighty stream."* **MLK**

### **Main Idea: House Arrest provides a Great Opportunity for Boldness**

*"After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria, with the twin gods as a figurehead. Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. And from there we made a circuit & arrived at Rhegium. After one day a south wind sprang up, & on the second day we came to Puteoli. There we found brothers & were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius & Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God & took courage. And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him. After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, & when they had gathered, he said to them, 'Brothers, though I had 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. When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar – though I had no charge to bring against my nation. For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you & speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain.' And they said to him, 'We have received no letters from Judea about you, & none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.' When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God & trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses & from the Prophets. And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: 'The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: 'Go to this people, & say, 'You will indeed hear but never understand, & you will indeed see but never perceive.' For this people's heart has grown dull, & with their ears they can barely hear, & their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes & hear with their ears & understand with their heart & turn, & I would heal them.' Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.' He lived there two whole years at his own expense, & welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God & teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness & without hindrance."* **Acts 28:11-31**

### **I. God's Sovereignty Over our Circumstances – Acts 28:11-16**

The Bible reveals to us a God who is:

- **Omnipotent** (All-powerful)
- **Omniscient** (All-knowing)
- **Omnipresent** (All-present)
- **Immutable** (Never-changing)

*"Great is our Lord, & abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure."*

**Psalms 147:5**

*"Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases."* **Psalms 115:3**

*"Yours, O LORD, is the greatness & the power & the glory & the victory & the majesty, for all that is in the heavens & in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, & you are exalted as head above all. Both riches & honor come from you, & you rule over all. In your hand are power & might, & in your hand it is to make great & to give strength to all."*  
**1 Chronicles 29:11-12**

**Sovereignty of God:** Simple definition is that God is In Control!

*"Over the years, as a pastor & as a sufferer, the thing that has helped my heart is that Jesus has suffered, he understands. I don't have a God who is remote; He must have a good reason why he hasn't stopped suffering yet. It can't be that he doesn't love me, because look at what he did on the cross."* **Tim Keller**

**Boldly Trust in the Sovereignty of God. Paul wanted to go to Rome as a Preacher, but God sent him as a Prisoner instead.**

### **II. Our Response to our Circumstances – Act 28:17-31**

**Paul's Response:**

- **Take Initiative**
- **Start in the Right Place**
- **Let God Take Over**

*"He lived there two whole years at his own expense, & welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God & teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness & without hindrance."* **Acts 28:30-31**

**Our Response:**

- **Take Initiative:** Start a Bible plan, a devotion routine, organize the closet/basement, establish family meal times, journal your thoughts
- **Start in the Right Place:** This is an opportunity to influence spouse, kids, siblings, parents, roommates this season more than ever before!

*"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works & give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* **Matthew 5:16**

- **Let God Take Over:** We can't go to work, school, out to dinner, church, but God is still working, & His kingdom is moving.

*"Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. **But the word of God is not bound!**"* **2 Timothy 2:8-9**

*"I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard & to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear."* **Philippians 1:12-14**

**Now is not a time for timidity & fear; it's time to Boldly Trust God!**

**Sources & Further Reading Opportunities:**

- *1001 Humorous Illustrations* – Michael Hodgkin (1994)
- *Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *New American Commentary: Acts* – J.B. Polhill (1992)
- *The Acts of the Apostles* – William Barclay (1975)
- *Holman Commentary: Acts* – K.O. Gangel (1998)
- *Acts: The Church Afire* – Kent Hughes (1996)
- *MacArthur NT Commentary: Luke* – John MacArthur (2011)
- *Word Pictures in the New Testament* – A.T. Robertson (1933)
- *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* – W.A. Elwell & P.W. Comfort (2001)
- *A Man of Grace & Grit: Paul* – Charles Swindoll (2002)
- *Reason for God* – Timothy Keller (2011)

