



First Baptist Church Selmer

THE ROAD TO ROMANS • PAUL'S MISSION COMPLETE! • ACTS 28:1-31 • 2/22/2026

MAIN POINT

Christ calls us to make the most of every opportunity to share gospel with others.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What's the most memorable thing that has ever happened to you while sharing your faith?

In what circumstances is it easy for you to share God's love with others? In what circumstances is it difficult?

Perhaps you consistently engage others to share the gospel with them, or maybe you shy away from opportunities. But God's Word calls us to witness to His grace to the people around us, regardless of our circumstances.

We close out our series this week with the final years recorded about Paul (**See Timeline of Paul's Life on Page 4**). After his arrest in Jerusalem (Acts 21-22), his imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 23-24), and appeal to Caesar in Rome (Acts 25-27) (**See also Appendix E**), we move to the final chapter of Paul's life highlighted in Acts 28.

Paul could have easily let his circumstances override his proclamation of the gospel. Instead of throwing in the towel after being arrested and put under house arrest, he continued to proclaim God's love to all who would listen to him. We are commanded to do the same.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 28:1-10.

1 "After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. 2 The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. 3 When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. 4 When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, 'No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.' 5 He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. 6 They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

7 Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. 8 It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. 9 And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. 10 They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed." (ESV)

How do you see God's hand guiding Paul in these verses?

How did the manner in which Paul healed Publius' father demonstrate the source of Paul's power (v. 8)?

How did the people of Malta respond to witnessing this healing (v. 9)? How might this have provided Paul opportunities to share the gospel?

By praying prior to putting his hands on Publius' father and healing him, Paul demonstrated that the power to heal belongs to the Lord. In so doing, Paul leveraged this situation to share the gospel with the people of Malta. Whether he was shipwrecked, imprisoned, or caught in a deadly storm, Paul made the most of every situation the Lord set before him to share the gospel with the lost.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 28:11-22.

11 "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. 12 Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. 13 And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium. And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. 14 There we found brothers and were invited to

stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. 15 And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage. 16 And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him.

17 After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and 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. 18 When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. 19 But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar —though I had no charge to bring against my nation. 20 For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain.' 21 And they said to him, 'We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. 22 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.' " (ESV)

Do you think there is any significance that Paul reached out to these leaders to meet with him only three days after he arrived in Rome? Explain.

How might we regularly remind ourselves of what we have received in Christ? How might doing so help us be more active in sharing Christ with others?

How does your sense of urgency compare with Paul's? What initiative do you take to create witnessing opportunities?

Paul's life illustrates the principle that believers should create opportunities to share God's love with others. This is especially true when circumstances limit our outreach efforts.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 28:23-27.

23 "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 and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. 24 And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. 25 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:

26 "Go to this people, and say, 'You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.'

27 For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'" (ESV)

Paul demonstrated that Jesus was the Messiah, but his message received a mixed response from these Jews.

Do you think people are generally interested in Christianity? Why or why not?

Why do most of us fear rejection? In what areas do adults experience rejection? What responses can we make to rejection?

How can these five verses change the way you think about sharing your faith?

Paul quoted Isaiah 6:9-10, which described the Jewish leaders' forefathers, but also fit the Jews of Paul's time. God wanted to redeem them, but they refused the salvation He offered in Jesus. When we share our faith, we are not responsible for how others respond; Paul encountered many who rejected salvation, but it never stopped him.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 28:28-31.

28 "Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.' 29 (And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, having much dispute among themselves.)

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance." (ESV)

Pagans were welcoming the message of God's saving grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul contrasted the Jews' rejection of the gospel, "having much dispute among themselves," with the Gentiles' positive response, "they will listen."

What are the implications of verse 29 for you as a messenger of the gospel?

What deliberate efforts could you take to show hospitality to your nonbelieving friends and neighbors?

How might doing so provide us with opportunities for evangelism?

A significant period of time passes in Acts 28, perhaps 4-7 years. We have limited details of the end of Paul's life. We see Paul released from prison in Rome (AD 63) and perhaps a missionary journey to Spain (Recorded in Romans 15), although still highly debated among scholars. We see Paul's final letter, written during this period, which is the second epistle to Timothy, written approximately AD 66-67 (**See Timeline of Paul's Life on Page 4**).

Although details aren't given in Scripture, according to church tradition, Paul would again be imprisoned in Rome around AD 67 and die a martyr while still proclaiming the gospel until his final breath. Charles Swindoll concludes on Paul's life, *"In that brutal moment, silently and invisibly, the soul of the great apostle - the man of grace and grit - was immediately set free. His spirit soared into the heavens: Absent from the body he was, at last, at home with the Lord."*

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

It is the responsibility and purpose of the church to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. How might you join in fulfilling this purpose through the ministries of our church?

What opportunities to witness might you be overlooking? What opportunities can you set up this week for relational evangelism?

Would anyone use the terms "boldly" and "without hindrance" to describe your witnessing? If so, what would lead them to say so? If not, how can you develop a bolder witness?

PRAYER

Pray that God would give us boldness like Paul to witness regardless of our circumstances. Ask that He would equip us to faithfully and lovingly share the gospel with the people around us.

COMMENTARY

ACTS 28

The ship on which Paul was traveling as a prisoner wrecked on the island of Malta, which is south of Sicily. Paul immediately impressed the island's inhabitants when God delivered him unharmed from a viper's bite. Paul carried out a ministry of healing among the islanders. In turn, they honored him in many ways (Acts 28:1-10).

After the winter had passed and the seas were again safe for travel, Paul's party secured passage to Italy on another Alexandrian ship that had wintered on Malta. They sailed from Malta to Syracuse, the capital of Sicily, and from there to Puteoli, the main Italian port for the large grain ships. From Puteoli, Paul's party proceeded on foot the 130 miles to Rome. South of the city, he was met by two separate groups of Roman Christians who had come out to greet him. Once in the city, Paul was allowed to live in an apartment rented at his own expense. He remained under military guard (vv. 11-16).

Paul probably was unchained in his rented quarters. Still, he was under guard and does not seem to have been able to leave the house. Paul therefore summoned the Jewish leaders in Rome to him. His usual pattern of witness in a new city was to begin with his own people, the Jews. Since he could not visit the synagogues of the city, he invited the members of the synagogues to himself. Paul explained to them his circumstances.

In this first meeting with the Roman Jews, Paul presents us with two lessons about witnessing. First, he was an example of adaptation in witness. He had his regular pattern of witnessing in a community: where a synagogue was present, he always began there. Confined to his quarters, he quickly adjusted to the changed circumstances; he had the Jews come to him. Second, Paul presented an example of consistent witness in all circumstances. In facing a trial where his very life were at stake, Paul was foremost a witness to Christ.

The Jewish leaders were a receptive audience. They told Paul that they had heard rumors about the Christians and wanted to know more. Perhaps some of them had already debated with Roman Christians, but they wanted to hear Paul's views.

On a prearranged date, a much larger group of Jews appeared at Paul's house to hear him present the gospel. He preached all day about the kingdom of God, which is God's sovereign rule in the hearts of individuals. He showed how God's rule came to us supremely through Jesus Christ. They were Jewish and would be familiar with the Scriptures. Paul sought to convince them through all the Scripture, both the Law and the

Prophets, that Christ is the long-awaited Messiah. The Jewish response to Paul's testimony was mixed. Some believed, but others rejected the gospel.

When many of the Roman Jews failed to accept Paul's witness, Paul responded in a familiar manner: he turned to the Gentiles. Paul was not giving up on his fellow Jews. The question was not one of excluding Jews but rather of including Gentiles.

For two years, Paul awaited his trial before Caesar and spent his time witnessing to all who came to see him. This had been the story of Paul's entire ministry. Paul witnessed from his rented quarters both boldly and without hindrance. Throughout Acts, bold witness involves the power of the Holy Spirit. The story of Acts is largely about how the gospel came to be preached without hindrance. Gradually, the barriers that separated people from Christ and from one another in Christ were removed. No one gave himself more selflessly to removing those barriers than Paul. Paul would live to make his defense before Caesar. God also had preserved the lives of all on board, just as He had said He would.