

I. Intro

A. Today, we finish our study in Acts

1. Luke traced God's work – *from Jerusalem to the outskirts*
2. More than just God's work – *God's fulfilled promise*
 - a) *"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." – Isaiah 49:6*
 - b) Events of this book are evidence – *God always does what He says He will do*

B. Last week, we examined a detailed account of Paul's journey to Rome

1. Turmoil, storms, rough seas, shipwrecks, and sorrow
2. Looked very similar to the world today – *hopeless*
3. However, Paul was not hopeless – *he modeled Christian witness by sharing hope*

C. We pick up our story on the shipwrecked island of Malta

1. Here is a map of journey today
2. Let's read together...

II. Text

A. Acts 28:1-10

1. Let's summarize what is happening
 - a) Paul's desire is to preach the gospel, get to Rome
 - b) He is currently shipwrecked – *so, he helps out with the chores*
 - c) His hard work is rewarded with a snake bite – *so, he shakes it off*
 - d) His lifestyle impacts the people – *God blesses the people through Paul*
2. We talked last week about the impact one Christian can have on society
 - a) This is what I'm talking about – *one guy, who loves Jesus, leads others to Jesus*
 - b) The whole island is impacted by Paul's faith in Jesus
3. One more theme I would like to visit before we move on
 - a) We talked about the ancient worldview of the sea in Isaiah 30 and 51
(1) Rahab, Leviathan - sea chaos represents spiritual darkness, violence
 - b) Our ancestors in the faith saw the sea as a playground for demonic forces

(1) *This is why the disciples were astonished when Jesus calmed the storm*

(2) *This is why Isaiah exalts Yahweh as the one who conquers the sea in Isa 51:9*

c) I mention this because Acts 27-28 contains many of these elements

(1) God told Paul "You will testify about me in Rome"

(2) Cue – trials, beatings, prison, chaos storms at sea, and...a serpent bite

(3) It is Biblical to look at these chapters through a spiritual lens

(a) The devil is throwing everything at Paul – *it does not matter!*

(b) Even if the devil slows God's plan with a shipwreck – *God uses it*

(c) The people of this island were healed by the power of God

4. Main point – *the events of this trip, demonic or not, did not stop God's promises*

a) Paul WILL testify in Rome – *God said it, it will happen*

B. Acts 28:11-16

1. Paul finally arrives in Rome

a) Brothers met him before he even reached Rome

b) Vs 15 uses *tharsos* to describe what this did to Paul – *filled with encouragement*

2. Daily life can be a long journey – *something special about sharing it with others*

a) Our weekly gathering should be a source of encouragement

b) Our small group gatherings should fill your sails with wind to keep going

c) This is why we gather – *take courage, to thank the Lord, and to keep going*

C. Acts 28:17-23

1. Paul is coming off a really rough 2-3 years

a) Prison, house arrest, 4 trials, storms, shipwrecks, snake bites

b) What does he do when he reaches Rome? – *he relaxes...for 3 DAYS!!!*

(1) After 3 days, he gathers the crowds and starts preaching

(2) He preaches while he is handcuffed to a Roman soldier

2. I don't know about you, but this puts some things in perspective

a) Think about how much self-care we need these days

b) Think about how we schedule *ministry* around normal life

c) Paul seems to be running on different fuel – *certainly not comfortable, safe fuel*

3. He gathers everyone together and preaches the gospel
 - a) However, he does it using the Law and the prophets
 - b) There was no New Testament yet – *still being written*
 - c) Early church leaders studied and preached from the Old Testament
4. This should stir our hunger to also study and speak boldly from the OT

D. Acts 28:24-28

1. Seriously? This is what we get from the Jews in Rome?
 - a) Paul, a prisoner, finally makes it to town and preaches his guts out
 - b) And we get – *some were convinced and some disbelieved*
 - c) What a let down! What a ministry killer! What depression invitation!
2. Except, that isn't what happened...

E. Acts 28:30-31

1. Paul's response to the hard hearts in Rome was – *keep preaching!*
 - a) In fact, he preached for two years to everyone that would listen
 - b) Also, he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon
 - c) These letters make up a portion of our New Testament
2. We may not always see the outcome we we want – *not an excuse*
 - a) God might be doing something even greater

III. Conclusion

- A. It is very easy to look at the world and lose hope
 1. However, we have this example staring at us – *inviting us to not lose hope*
 2. The Holy Spirit is saying – *Look at Paul. Don't lose hope. Keep going*
- B. Acts 28 ends in a strange spot – what happened to Paul?
 1. Tradition tells us that he was released, traveled to Spain, arrested again, martyred
 2. However, that isn't the point of Acts – *it is not Paul's story*
 3. Acts is God's story, and it ends like an invitation
 - a) What will God do next in the lives of His people?
 - b) What is He doing right now in your life?
- C. Don't lose hope, look at Jesus and accept His invitation – *get to work!*