

2-20-22 Be an Acts 29 Church

Acts 7-16.

Last week's points were:

Allow others to minister when you are in need.

Be available/ready to minister to people in need.

Build a fire.

Building a fire comes with a cost.

F is for faith. **I** is for Indwelling. **R** is for renewing, revival. **E** is for empower.

Did anyone allow others to minister to them? Made themselves available to minister to people in need?

Worked on their fire building in the lives? Noticed the cost involved with it?

I. **Stay humble when facing adversity or prosperity.**

- Remember the native's thought Paul was a murdered before they thought he was a god.
- They stood by waiting for Paul's hand to swell up or fall dead.
- They did nothing, but criticize, determine, and eat popcorn while waiting for something bad to happen to Paul.
- Friends, there are people that want you to fail, they are stalking you to watch it unfold. There are some out there that don't necessarily want you to fail, but when misfortune happens, they can't help but watch and comment.
- We cannot do anything about someone else's actions, but we can do something about our own.
- **Read verse 7.**
- Publius, another great baby name for 2022. Most likely a Roman appointed leader of the region ***"receive us, entertained us, courteously for three days."***
- Paul accepted God's blessings that came through others. Paul had laser focus and his priorities were God's will.
- Again, the Bible makes no mention of Paul or anyone in his circle of friends holding any bitterness or animosity towards the native's mischaracterization of him.
- Nor does the Bible lead us to believe he felt deserving or entitled to being treated like the guest of honor.
- Quite the contrary, God's Word draws us into Paul's humility whether facing adversity or prosperity.
- **Read verse 8.**
- Paul left the party to minister to someone in need. Publius father had Covid, and Paul went to him and ***"laid his hands on him and healed him."***
- Again, we see that God's servants should be ready to get involved, regardless of whether someone deserves it or not. Who wants to leave being entertained and help someone in need.
- Paul laid his hands on a sick man with a fever and dysentery. Do you know what dysentery is? An infection of the intestines resulting in severe diarrhea with the presence of blood and mucus in the feces. (Yummy! Who is ready to sign up?)

II. Honor God by serving others over yourself, winning!

- **Read verse 9.**
- If you love people, truly, they will come. People can see right through fakeness. When they see that you truly care about them and want the best for them, they will come to you.
- **Matthew 20:20-28** and **Mark 10:35-45 (read Mark 10:35-45)** shows us that there are basically two options open for people. Either we will seek to serve ourselves, a choice that nullifies our capacity to live as disciples, or we will learn to live as servants out of a faith relationship with God through Christ.
- In **Matthew 6**, the Lord stated it this way, ***“No one is able to serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. No one is able to serve God and possessions” (Matt. 6:24).*** When we serve money, we are really serving ourselves and our own desires for what we think money will purchase like significance, power, pleasure, security, or status.
- God isn't trying to get the money out of your pocket, He is trying to get the idol out of your heart. Same with our time, our conduct and how much we know about the bible. You can have the entire Bible memorized and come to every church service there is. If the principles, precepts from God's Word aren't pouring out in your everyday life, what gain is there?
- **Read verse 10.**
- People are God's instruments to providing for others, ***“honored us in many ways... they provided such things as were necessary.”***
- In what ways has God used you to provide for someone else? Prayer, serving, a listening ear, godly advice, or a shoulder to lean on?

III. Serve the Lord through normal ordinary routines in life.

- **Read verses 11-13.**
- Why in the world would God bother to put these trivial details in His Word? There are probably some wonderful reasons I don't know, but here's what it says to me: Just because we serve the Lord doesn't mean we won't go through the ordinary routines of life.
- We still must go through the everyday humdrum of life. We still must take care of the house, the yard, and the car. We still hit traffic jams. We still have fender benders, still must wait on the plane, and still get stuck at the airport.
- Sometimes we will have to sail into the wind, and some of our best service can come through these ordinary things of life. One way is to have a godly reaction to setbacks and disappointments.
- **Galatians 5:22-23** tells Christians that the fruit of the Holy Spirit in us is ***“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.”*** That should make a big difference in the way we react to everyday irritation and frustration in life.
- We can shine the light of Jesus Christ **IF** we react in a Christlike way when we must sail into the wind. Those situations also give us opportunities to help other people stuck there with us. And we get new opportunities to tell people about our Savior Jesus Christ.
- Sometimes our best service can come through the ordinary activities of life. I think of the Lord in **John 4** when He witnessed to the Samaritan woman at the well. Let's turn to **John 4:1-14**.

- The Samaritan woman got saved that day, and so did many of the other Samaritan villagers. But one of the small things that stands out to me in this story is that Jesus was tired and thirsty. The omnipotent Lord God of the universe allowed Himself to get tired and thirsty.
- Jesus took one of the most average, ordinary, smallest of things, getting a drink of water as an opportunity to lead this woman to salvation.
- Early in my walk with God I looked for the divine appointments, overlooking everyday interaction and not realizing that every moment can be a divine appointment. (Example of Kim at the boys wrestling practice.)

Matthew 10:42, Whoever helps any of these little ones because they are my followers will definitely get a reward, even if they only give them a cup of cold water. ESV

1 Corinthians 10:31, So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Hebrews 6:10, God is fair, and he will remember all the work you have done. He will remember that you showed your love to him by helping his people and that you continue to help them.

- While serving God through everyday routines, also, serve God/others with or without recognition.
- God is ever working to give comfort, truth, light, and life. God is working in and through His people to share the good news about Jesus Christ. And thank God, we don't need the world's recognition! We can faithfully serve the Lord without it.

IV. We (Christians) are to be refreshing.

- Anybody who tries to serve Jesus Christ will need rest, encouragement and help along the way. God will make sure we get all the help we need, and often it comes from other believers.
- **Read verses 14-15.**
- What a treat for Paul. To be encouraged by fellow believers.
- This godly fellowship greatly encouraged Paul in **vs. 15**, and the same fellowship belongs to us, because we belong to Jesus!
- Christians: We are all part of the family of God! We could all share stories of the blessings, joy, help and strength we have received from other believers.
- We can help other believers to continue serving by being refreshing, a place or rest and encouragement.
- Are you refreshing to other believers? Or do you act like you have been baptized with pickle juice? All pruned faced up, full of negativity, anger, bitterness, and cranky pants?

V. Our focus is the gospel.

- Paul was always trying to reach people for Jesus Christ, and we can see this happening again in **vs. 16-20**.
- **Read verses 16-20.**
- Paul was always trying to reach people for Jesus Christ.
- Our witness is crucial. Mankind' greatest needs are forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration. Look at **verse 17** again.

- As soon as he got settled in, he tried to tell them the truth about Jesus. And Paul could not go to them, but he didn't let that keep him from witnessing. Paul invited the Jewish leaders to come to him.
- Our witness is crucial. And it must be tactful. There was a lot Paul could have said to accuse both the Jews and the Romans for the terrible way he had been treated. But Paul did not do that. Paul convinced them to at least listen to the gospel more by what he left unsaid than by what he said.
- We must try our best to reach people for the Lord. Because as Christians we have the only real hope for the world! Paul reminds us of this truth in **vs. 20**, where he told those men: **"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."**
- Jesus Christ is the real hope of Israel. Jesus Christ is the only real hope for the whole world! There is no hope without Jesus.

Ephesians 2:11-14, Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.

Romans 5:1-2, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:13, for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law

- I. Stay humble when facing adversity or prosperity.
- II. Honor God by serving others over yourself, winning!
- III. Serve the Lord through normal ordinary routines in life.
- IV. We (Christians) are to be refreshing.
- V. Our focus is the gospel.

If we are going to be an **Acts 29** church our mission must be to stay humble (no matter what we are facing), Honor God (serving others over yourself), Serve the Lord (through everyday routines), be refreshing (encourage each other), and keep the gospel as our focus.

Let me ask you, have you trusted in Jesus Christ as you Lord and Savior?

If so, have you been baptized like Jesus was, fully immersed?

Are you living humbly, serving others, through out your normal day, are you a zest bar? Are you deliberate about the gospel?

(Stop Here, first week)

Acts 29 Church

Verses 21-31.

I. Keep speaking about our Savior.

- **Read verses 21-23.**
- Back in **verse 20** Paul talked to them about the hope of Israel. He wanted them to know that the hope of Israel -- the only hope for the world is Jesus!
- In **verse 21-22**, the Jews say that they hadn't heard any evil news regarding Paul, but they did hear about "**this sect**" and wanted to know what Paul thought about them.
- Then in **verse 23** when the Jewish leaders came back, they marked it in their calendars. Paul talked to them all day long about Jesus. The heart and soul of Paul's message was always Jesus Christ.
- Some years earlier Paul had written a much-needed letter to the church at Corinth. They were having all kinds of problems, and Paul dealt with many of these issues. But it is telling to see the intense focus Paul put on Jesus as he opened his letter. Look at **1 Corinthians 1:1-10** and count the number of times we hear the name Jesus Christ.
- **Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-10.**
- Ten times! Paul mentions Jesus 10 times here! He always kept the focus on Jesus. -- And so should we.
- For Bethel to continue moving forward, to be an **Acts 29** church, it happens with us continuing to talk about Jesus. The name of Jesus is the only name worthy to be bragged about.

II. Keep studying the scriptures.

- In **verse 23**, it says that 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.
- This is the very same thing the Lord did on the day of His resurrection in **Luke 24**, first with two of His followers on the road to Emmaus: "**Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.**" (**Luke 24:27**) Then when Jesus appeared to the eleven, He ate with them and then said, "**These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.**" And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. (**Luke 24:44-45**)
- God wants us to understand the Scriptures -- Old Testament and New. There will never be a time in our Christian life when God wants us to stop studying His Word. And one of the things God wants us to see in this verse is that we can certainly find Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.
- Jesus is found in OT prophecies. Isaiah 53.
- There are Old Testament pictures of Jesus. For example, in **Gen 3:21** after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, an animal was killed; its blood was shed to provide covering for their nakedness. In **Gen 7**, we have a picture of Christ in Noah's Ark. There was only one way of salvation. Noah and his family were safe in the Ark, as we are safe in Jesus. In **Gen 22** we have the picture of Abraham and Isaac, where God commanded Abraham to do what our Heavenly Father would do one day -- Allow His only Son to be sacrificed. There on the mountain, God

provided a ram. And He provided His Son as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

- The story of Joseph is another Old Testament picture of the coming Messiah. Joseph was loved by his father, hated by his brothers, sold for price of a slave, taken to Egypt, tempted, falsely accused, bound in chains, placed with 2 other prisoners -- one saved and one lost, and exalted after his suffering.
- Of course, the Passover lamb was a picture of Jesus with no broken bones, and his blood spread on the door posts of the homes. They were protected by the blood of the lamb, and so are we.
- There are many other Old Testament pictures of Jesus, but we also have Old Testament appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ. Remember that in **John 6:46** Jesus told us that no one **“has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.”** So, every Old Testament appearance of the Lord was Christ pre-incarnate. For example, He appeared to Hagar (**Gen 16:7-13**), Abraham (**Gen 18-19:1**), Jacob (**Gen 32:28**), Moses (**Exodus 33:11**), Joshua (**Joshua 5:13-6:2**) and Gideon (**Judges 6:11-23**), as well as others.
- Who did all these people see? It was not God the Father; it was God the Son. Jesus Christ is most certainly in the Old Testament!
- We could spend a hundred lifetimes and never learn all that Jesus is to us. Church, how can we keep moving ahead? Keep studying the Scripture.

III. Keep believing some will get saved.

- **Read verses 24-29.**
- Many, in fact most will surely be lost. That’s no surprise to God. The Holy Spirit spoke about these unbelieving Jewish leaders in the Old Testament book of Isaiah, but in **verse 24**, some did believe! -- And they still will today.

John Phillips wrote, “Thus the gospel always divides. Its message is one on life unto life, or of death unto death. Whenever it is preached the Holy Spirit drives His plowshare through the audience. Some believe, some do not; and between the two henceforth is a great divide, a great gulf fixed. Every time the gospel is preached, heaven and hell are in the balance, eternal issues are at stake.”

- I have looked back on my life and can now see how God was working that would lead to my salvation.
- Some will be saved. And we must keep trying to reach them, even though many will reject the message, just like they did here.
- We must try to reach as many people as we possibly can! God’s not through saving people yet! The fields are still white unto harvest! Be encouraged. Some will be saved! We can keep moving ahead by believing that some will be saved.

IV. Keep striving to serve the Lord.

- We are right back where we started. Be humble in adversity and prosperity and serve Jesus.
- **Read verses 30-31.**
- God wants us to boldly go forward with all confidence. Be like Paul. Keep striving to go as far as you can as long as you can for Jesus. Do your best! Make every effort.
- The Savior Went Up
- The Spirit Came Down

- The Church Went Out
- The Lost Came In
- The church is still to go out, and the lost will still come in. The story's not over yet! Let's keep going forward for Christ.

Conclusion

Paul did two stints in Rome's prison system. He was released from the 1st stint from AD 63-67. He was rearrested in AD 67 and beheaded sometime in AD 67 or AD 68. His first imprisonment was house arrest and the second time he was chained in a dungeon prison. **(2 Timothy 1:16; 2:9)**

The first prison stint he was visited by unbelievers and believers alike. The saddest part of his second imprisonment was Paul was forsaken. By believers in Rome **(2 Timothy 4:16-17)**.

The family of Onesiphorus and John Mark still ministered to him. **(2 Timothy 1:16-18; 2 Timothy 4:11)**

While in Rome's prisons Paul wrote: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, 1&2 Timothy, and Titus.

Paul knew his earthly life was coming to an end. **(2 Timothy 4:6-8)**

The book of Acts.

The Savior Went Up

The Spirit Came Down

The Church Went Out

The Lost Came In

The church is still to go out, and the lost will still come in. The story's not over yet! Let's keep going forward for Christ.

Stay humble, and serve others.