

Providence in the Storm - Acts 28:11-29
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Paul's arrival in Rome from our passage this week signifies a couple things for us. First, it means that our journey through this amazing book is nearing an end. Only one more sermon from Acts. Second, this represents the culmination of a goal that shows up multiple times in Acts and in Paul's writings. For multiple years it has been Paul's goal to arrive in Rome so that he could preach Christ and then be sent on to Spain. (Acts 19:21, 25:10, Romans 1:8-15). Furthermore, Christ has appeared to Paul at least twice confirming that he would make it to Rome and stand before Caesar. Of course, getting here has not been easy, but Paul makes it to Rome, fulfilling his desire and proving the faithfulness of God's promises. Yet, upon his arrival, the story takes one more odd turn.

Our text this week includes the final sailing voyage from Malta to the key Roman port on the western side of Italy, and then a foot journey along a road called the Appian Way to Rome, around 142 miles. But not before spending a week with fellow believers in the port city Puteoli. When Paul arrives in Rome we learn that he is put under house arrest, meaning that he was allowed to find a place to live in Rome rather than being put in a jail with other prisoners. He is guarded by a single guard, and is free to have people visit him as he awaits his opportunity to stand before Caesar. He is not free, he is in chains, yet, he is treated fairly and is allowed to have his needs met by fellow believers.

So, what we expect at this point is for Paul to make the most of the first days of his trip to Rome. He has been waiting for years to arrive in this amazing and important city. What would you do on your first day? Go to the Colosseum and see a sporting event, to the Pantheon and see the amazing architecture? Maybe a trip to Palantine Hill to see Caesar's palace and the seat of power in the world, and then grab some good pasta. What we expect is for Paul to reach out to the church in Rome and meet with the Christians there. He knows many of them (see the list in Romans 16). What he actually does is surprising. He calls for the leaders of the Jews in the city of Rome to come see him, and they do.

Why is this shocking? Of course, Paul is a Jew, a Pharisee, steeped in the Law and drenched in the tradition of his faith and heritage. Yet, after Paul's conversion, it has been those who share his ethnicity, culture, and religious heritage who have been his most staunch and dangerous persecutors. It was Jews who sought to kill him in Damascus after his conversion leading to his being let down in a basket through the city wall. Jews had been his tormentors throughout Asia and Greece, resulting in his being thrown in jail multiple times and even stoned and left for dead. And of course, the culmination of Paul's suffering happens in Jerusalem resulting in his being beat up in the Temple, rescued but arrested by the Romans, followed by an assassination plot and subsequent departure to Caesarea. Paul then spent two years in prison in the Palestinian port as the Romans sought to appease the Jewish leaders even though the Roman Governors knew Paul was innocent. So why in the world would Paul then meet with Jews in Rome upon his arrival. This seems to be a dumb and dangerous decision for a man awaiting a trial in Rome. Kind of like poking a sleeping bear hoping it won't spring to life. The last thing he will need are local Jews who join the case against him before Nero, sending their attorneys to bring the accusations. Yet, this is exactly what Paul does. So why?

What we see is that Paul gains a hearing and then does the one thing he always does. He proclaims Jesus to them, Jesus the hope of Israel, Jesus the King of the

Kingdom of God, Jesus the fulfillment of the prophets. More important than his safety and even release from prison is the reality that these people who are religious will spend eternity separated from the God they claim to follow if they do not hear the Gospel and respond with repentance and faith. So Paul proclaims the Gospel of Jesus in Rome to these Jews first, just like he always did in every city he visited. He then warns them from the prophetic book Isaiah that their rejection of Jesus is evidence of their hard heart and blind eyes. Yet, the Isaiah text is also a reminder that if they would turn to Christ, God would open their eyes and heal them.

Oh that we would be like Paul. We have one message, the Gospel. But do we feel the urgency and need to proclaim Jesus to our people with the knowledge that if they do not hear, if they do not see, if they do not respond to Jesus they too are in danger of God's judgment?

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Nehemiah 4	Nehemiah 5	Nehemiah 6	Nehemiah 7	Nehemiah 8	Nehemiah 9	Nehemiah 10

Reading from this past week: Acts 28:11-29

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Acts 28:30-31

Family Worship

Song - *Day by Day*

<https://youtu.be/8jb5N-9zsbq>

Gospel Project

Unit: In the Beginning

Story: Jesus was born

Big Picture Question: What did Jesus do to save us?

Answer: Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

Scripture: Matthew 1, Luke 2, John 1

New City Catechism

Question #10: What does God require in the Fourth & Fifth Commandments?

Answer: Fourth, that on the Sabbath day we spend time in worship of God. Fifth, that we love and honor our father and our mother.

Verse: Leviticus 19:3

Acts 28:11-29

- If you had spent several years waiting to get to Rome, what do you think the first thing you would have done when you got to town? Why is what Paul did when he got to Rome so striking?
- Why does Paul so desperately want to share the Gospel with the Jewish leaders in this city?
- What is the Gospel? How would you share it?
- Why is the Gospel the only hope for all people?

Prayer

*Pray that we would know the Gospel deeply and share it with anyone we meet.

*Pray for our MOMs Next ministry serving mothers in our community.