

Recap of 10/9/22 message by Chris Sommerfield – Acts 28:16-31

1. **Acts 1:8 serves as a road map for the book of Acts as well as the mission of the church.** The expansion of the gospel to all people. God reaches across cultural boundaries and forms one new completely new group of people, the church, made up of believers in Christ (Ephesians 2:13-16). As the book of Acts comes to a close, we see the Gospel reaching Rome which was considered “the ends of the earth,” in the first century. When we consider this last passage in Acts in light of the book, we see truths relating to God’s plan, how we are to live, and who the gospel is for.
2. **God’s Plan Doesn’t Always Match Expectations.** Acts moves from focus on Peter and the ministry to the Jews to focus on Paul and ministry to the Gentiles. Even the disciples just before Jesus ascended in Acts 1 still did not understand God’s plan. They were asking Him if it was time for Him to come into the fullness of His kingdom. Was it time to come as a military savior, defeating the Romans and freeing Israel from oppression? God’s plan wasn’t a military victory in this moment, God’s plan was the expansion of the gospel beginning with the disciples as witnesses. The rest of the book of Acts records that expansion, and all the hiccups along the way. God’s sovereign plan always comes to fruition. Yet it doesn’t always meet our expectations. In Acts we see the messengers beaten, killed, and arrested. We see the turmoil that comes with forming one new group of people from two very different groups. The cultural issues that arose are still present today in many ways even though we see the early church leaders dealing with them in the very beginning of the church. Paul is shipwrecked and now preaches the gospel in Rome while chained to a guard. Surely no one could have expected this is how the gospel would reach Rome, but God’s plan doesn’t always match expectations. The messenger may be bound, but the gospel is never in chains.
3. **Believers Should Live with All that they are for Christ.** Paul demonstrates for us a life completely surrendered to Christ. With all the difficult circumstances he has learned contentment (Philippians 4:11-13). He belongs to Christ (Acts 27:23). He refers to himself repeatedly in his letters as a slave of Jesus Christ. Paul lives with all that he is for Christ, even willing to give his life for Him (Philippians 1:21). How is he able to do this? Jerry Bridges commenting on Paul’s life says this, “There’s a direct correlation between faith in the righteousness of Christ and zeal in the cause of Christ. The more a person counts as loss his own righteousness and lays hold by faith of the righteousness of Christ, the more he’ll be motivated to live and work for Christ.” Paul referred to himself as the worst of all sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). He recognized that he had been forgiven much. The realization of the cost of this great mercy and grace drove Paul to live with all that he is for Christ. The same should be true for us. We should live with all that we are for Jesus Christ.
4. **The Gospel is for All.** The book of Acts ends with an emphasis on Paul receiving “all.” He preached to all who came, explaining the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ as Messiah from the scriptures. The gospel transcends cultural barriers, political barriers, all barriers. The gospel is for all people. When we think about our lives, do we receive all people? Are we willing to share the goodness of God with everyone, or do we create barriers with groups of people because in our minds they may not be receptive, or it may be too difficult to share our faith? We should be inviting people into our homes, living our lives with people and spending time with them explaining the kingdom of God and who Jesus Christ is. As the book of Acts comes to a close, let us remember that the Acts of God or the Acts of the Church do not end, they continue in us. Let’s pick up the baton and faithfully share the message of Jesus Christ and the hope that He brings to the world.