

Sermon Date: April 20, 2014
Paul Arrives in Rome – Acts 28:23-31
Doug McBride

Read Acts 28:23-31

1. For a frame of reference, read the section just prior to this, particularly Acts 28:17, 21-22. Who are the “they” in verse 23 that “came to hear him (Paul) speak in large numbers”?
2. In Acts 28:26-27, Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah, chapter 6:9-10. See Acts 28:25 and comment as to why Paul might have chosen these verses from the Old Testament prophet to say as his parting line to the Jews (vv. 26-27).
3. It is very interesting to note that Jesus quoted these verses from Isaiah (see Matthew 13:14, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10 and John 12:40). What is the context of Jesus having said this? What might be the connection to Paul now repeating it? What do you make of this?
4. Doug has challenged us in his sermons to pray for “eyes to see and ears to hear.” What are the parallels in this verse from Isaiah both here and from Jesus having said this? What might be the challenge to us today?

5. Does the end of Acts leave you with many questions? Does it seem like a story without an ending?
- N.T. Wright comments: “Luke has reminded us once more that this is a drama which we ourselves have been called to belong to the cast. The journey is ours, the trials and vindications ours, the sovereign presence of Jesus is ours, the story is ours to pick up and carry on. Luke’s writing, like Paul’s journey, has reached its end, but in his end is our beginning.” (N.T. Wright, Acts for Everyone, Part 2, p. 249). How does this grip you?

6. Doug asked two very compelling questions at the end of his sermon:

Paul is a man who had vehemently detested Jesus followers, then was changed so radically that he endured beatings; imprisonments; dangerous, treacherous journeys; shipwrecks to this deep level because he was not only convinced Jesus was the Messiah but he risked his life to get that message to others? (See 2 Corinthians 11:21-30)

- What *drives* someone like Paul?
- What *changes* someone like Paul so deeply? In other words, how was Paul so dramatically changed?
- It begs worth asking ourselves – how has the gospel of salvation through believing in Jesus Christ as LORD and Messiah *changed* you? And not necessarily for the next life, but for this one?

Personal Application:

Doug challenged us to live as an extension of the story. Acts ends quite abruptly, almost as if the author Luke needed to get it into his editor on a deadline. But what if we are the extension of the story? What if the narrative of Acts is the continuation of what Jesus continues to teach and do in the church today? What if it’s really our story? If that’s true, what will be written in your personal story as you journey with Christ?

How are you part of “all that Jesus continued to do and to teach”?