Sermon Date: April 13, 2014 Paul Arrives in Rome – Acts 28:1-22 Doug McBride

Read Acts 28:1-22

- 1. How is Paul received by the natives in Malta (v. 2)?
- 2. In Acts 28:2-10, Luke is intentional in giving his readers a picture of believers and non-believers working side-by-side and living in community. Doug referenced the following verse: "Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles... Live such good lives among unbelievers that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us" (1 Peter 2:11-12). How might this be a good model for how we can coexist with non-believers in our own lives? Think through some examples of how this might look in your life?

## Paul's Arrival in Rome

In order to gain some perspective about Paul's heart for the church in Rome, see the following introduction to the book of Romans which was written from Corinth several years earlier than his visit (Acts 28:15):

It is believed that the church in Rome was not founded by Paul, but rather the gospel message was initially carried to Rome by converts at Pentecost or converts of Paul or, perhaps that other apostles founded the church there. Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2) in particular were Jewish Christians originally expelled from Rome (Acts 18:2) but who later returned there (Romans 16:3). Paul was eager to visit and minister to this church which was already widely known (Romans 1:8), so he wrote the letter to prepare the way for his visit (Romans 15:14-17). It is widely believed that Paul wrote Romans 15:24). These plans were changed by his arrest in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27+). Paul does indeed make his way to Rome, not as a free man, but as a man in chains (Acts 28:20).

## 3. Who greets Paul as he arrives in Rome (v. 15)? What is Paul's reaction?

*N.T.* Wright comments "the believers have come several miles to meet Paul at two towns further south (v. 15) and for Paul this is a real sign of God's grace and blessing. They had read his letter; they have been waiting for him; they are here to welcome him."

4. With regard to Paul being in chains, see Philippians 1:12-13 and comment.

5. Some believe that God does His most profound work when we're "in chains." What do you think that means? Do you agree or disagree? Why? See Romans 5:2-4 and 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Have there been a time/times in your life when you have experienced or seen God work when you or someone you know have been figuratively in chains?

6. How does Paul appeal to the Jewish leaders in Rome (v. 17-20)?

7. How do the Jewish leaders respond to Paul (v. 21-22)? If you had to guess, why do you think they were so open to Paul after he had met so much opposition and hostility in Jerusalem and elsewhere up to this point?

## Concluding Points – Take Home Message

Doug continues to bring home a continuous theme in Paul's journeys: though he continuously faces tremendous opposition and hostility as he labors for the gospel, Paul continually looks beyond his circumstances to see the thumbprint of God. We have that same challenge. When we face hardships and obstacles in life, do we have eyes to see and ears to hear the Resurrected One breathing life into those circumstances, or are we so focused on our expectations not having been met that we shut our eyes, keep our head down and can no longer see what God is imprinting right in front of us? That's a good question to ponder and to bring before God the Father and through His grace and mercy allow Him to lift up your head and show you His thumbprint.