LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Acts 27–28

Paul Journeys to Rome

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 26, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

It was sometime early in the year A.D. 57 that Paul found himself in Jerusalem. He went there because he felt the Lord had directed him to go. But while he was there, some Jews saw him and they began to make trouble. They made a mob scene and tried to kill him, literally on the spot.

The Romans intervened. Paul was taken into custody. They couldn't figure out what in the world was going on. But when they found that the Jews wanted to kill him, they moved him to Caesarea under the custody of the governor, a man by the name of Felix. And Paul remained there in custody in Caesarea for two years.

And nothing was done about his case. Eventually, another governor came into power, a man by the name of Festus. And it was under Festus that Paul eventually appealed his case to Caesar. And that was his right to do that. And it is now, when we get into chapter 27, sometime in late August or early September, we think, when they are ready now to take him to Italy so that he might await an audience with the emperor in order to appeal his case.

The fact of the matter is now it's getting to be late in the year. And the sailing season is quickly coming to a close. They're going to need to make a fast trip to Italy or they're going to need to stop along the way and winter somewhere. And that's what we're going to find out as we go through this passage. It is now late in the year, 59 A.D.

Chapter 27 begins with Luke telling us, and when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, notice the we in that passage. That tells you Luke was there and he was coming along. It says they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort. Your Bible may say the imperial regiment. And unto a man named Julius and embarking on a ship of Adramitium.

That's just simply a seaport in Asia Minor. That's where it was from, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia. We put to sea accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from

Thessalonica. So you can see here that Paul is being accompanied by two companions on his trip to Italy. The next day we put in at Sidon and Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for.

I want to remind you something about Roman prisoners. Can I get turned up just slightly a little bit? I want you to remember in a Roman prison, they did not feed or clothe their prisoners. And so the centurion allowing Paul to go and be taken care of by his friends was literally how he would eat. And if he needed clothes or something like that, that's how it was going to happen.

They felt no responsibility to take care of prisoners like that. As far as Rome was concerned, you did something to get yourself in trouble and that's your business. And so I hope you have a friend who is willing to bring over something to eat or whatever the thing might be. And so verse four tells us, and putting out to sea from there, we sailed under the Lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. When Luke tells us they sailed under the Lee of the island of Cyprus, it basically means to sail on the side of the island that would be shielded from the wind.

And typically that was that area between the island and the mainland, but not necessarily dependent on which way the wind was going. So you can tell that they're already starting to deal with some heavy winds in their sailing efforts, which tells you that we need to get going here because the year for sailing, the season for sailing is coming to a close. Verse five says, and when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia and there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board. Let me explain how people traveled back then. Ships that were out at sea making their way from port to port were typically cargo ships.

And if you wanted to travel, you had to pay a fare so that you could ride along with the cargo, whatever that cargo might be. That's where people made their money. And so, you know, you would leave, say like you're leaving from Caesarea and you say, I want to go to Italy. You're going to leave. You're going to hop on a ship that's going to get you partway there.

But then you're just going to have to trust that when you get to wherever that ship is going, you're going to find another ship that's going to get you a little farther down the way. And hopefully you'll find a ship that'll get you all the way there from your second or third port. But there's no guarantee. You know how it's interesting when we fly today, we have connections that we make. I hate making connections, don't you?

I don't mind. I like flying, but I hate airports. It's kind of a weird thing. But, you know, the more connections you have, the longer your trip is going to take, because there's always a layover of an hour or two or three or six. I never forget one time I had a layover in Salt Lake City of six hours.

And I was like, Lord, help me. I knew that I could get in a car and get home at about that time. But I didn't have a car, so I had to wait. I had to sit around the airport and listen to the Mormons talk. Literally, that's what I did.

And let me tell you, it's weird. Anyway, got off on that one. So, you know, this is the way they traveled. Again, these were cargo ships, and so you had to just trust and so forth. So, again, it says here in verse six that the centurion found a ship.

It's like, hey, good luck, guys. We found a ship that's sailing for Italy. So this is only a one layover stop, hopefully. So it says in verse seven, we sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Canidos. And as the wind did not allow us to go further, we sailed under the Lee of Crete off Salmone.

I'll show you in just a moment where all these cities are, these ports. It says, coasting along it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of La Silla. And since much time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous because the fast was over, Paul is going to go on to advise them. But let me just explain what it means when Luke says the fast was over. He's referring to the fast related to the Day of Atonement, which takes place either in late September or early October.

So it says now that the fast was already over. And so, again, it's much later in the sailing season. This is a time when, you know, you just don't sail. And this is where they are at this place called Fair Havens. Sounds like a nice place to stay.

But you can see here at the end of verse nine that Paul advised them, then moving on to verse 10, saying, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives. But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete facing both southwest and northwest and spend the winter there. All right. First map that we're going to show you here, which shows where they started off from Caesarea on the far right hand side of that map.

Moving out, it says, between Cyprus and the mainland, which is where we assume they sailed, where they finally came to Myra, Canidos. And then you can see they got into the open sea over to the island of

Crete, where they ended, first stopped at Salmone and then at Fair Havens. Now, Paul is advising them there at Fair Havens. Let's stay here. Let's not move on.

But again, Luke tells us that the harbor there wasn't really suitable for that type of a ship to stay there for the entire winter. So they thought, well, here's what we'll do. Let's creep along the coast and let's make our way to Phoenix. We're not talking Arizona, folks. This is just the west end of the island of Crete.

And they thought, well, if we just hug the coast and stay close to the mainland, maybe we can get there safely. And they decided by a kind of majority vote that that's what they were going to do. All right, let's find out what happens. Verse 13. Now, when the south wind blew gently, that they had obtained their purpose, which of course is to get there safely, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, that means along that Southern shore, close to the shore.

But soon a tempestuous wind, isn't that a great word, called the Northeaster struck down from the land. And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along, running under the lee of a small island called Kada, which is about 35 miles away from Crete, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat. See, this is a big ship. You don't go right up to the shore with a ship like this. You have to get into a boat and make your way to the shore.

And this is what they're pulling behind them, okay? And it says here that they managed with great difficulty to secure it because they thought, because of the wind and the waves, they were prone to lose it. And it says in verse 17, after hoisting it up, in other words, they brought it up out of the water, they used supports then to undergird the ship. Now, this is interesting. We find out that in order to keep the ship from literally falling apart, they ran ropes underneath the ship and tied them off so as to support the hull of the ship.

We're learning a lot about ancient sailing methods here from Luke's excellent description here. And then in the middle of verse 17, it says, then fearing that they would run aground on Sirtis, now, this tells you how far they believed they were off course. Because whereas the NIV calls this Sirtis, your Bible, if you have a different translation, may say the shallows of Sirtis or the sand bars of Sirtis. I think if you have an NIV, these are on the Northern coast of Africa, we're just off modern day Libya. So you see, this is way off course, they're going to Italy.

They're not going to Africa. So they believed they were pushed that far south by these winds. And the fact of the matter is, they didn't know where they were. They really had no idea where they were. So it

says, fearing that they would run aground on Sirtis or on those shallows or sand bars, they lowered the gear and thus were driven along.

And since we were violently storm tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. And this is where we find out how dire they believed their situation was. Because remember, this is a cargo ship. And the owner of this ship, the way he's going to make money is to get the cargo to the right port and sell it, right? To the people that are waiting for it.

To throw the cargo overboard, which is obviously what they needed to do to lighten the ship. And the reason they would lighten the ship is because they were taking on water. So for them to throw the cargo overboard is for the owner of the ship to say, I'm willing to let this entire trip be a total loss financially so that we might save our lives, okay? That's how dire this sort of a situation is. So they began to jettison the cargo.

Verse 19, and on the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. Well, you don't need the tackle because the cargo's gone. And the tackle was used to lower the cargo off the ship onto boats and get it to shore. It's a series of pulleys and ropes and things like that that would be used to offload their supplies. So, well, the cargo's gone.

We might as well get rid of the tackle too. So they throw that into the sea. Verse 20, when neither, listen to this, when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and remember, there's no GPS, the sun and the stars were the only means they have to determine their location. So when these things were completely obscured for many days, and Luke tells us, and no small tempest lay on us, very fancy way of saying it was a horrible ride, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned. In other words, they believed that they would perish in this storm.

So it's like, guys, we're not getting home. Verse 21, since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, "'Men, you should have listened to me "'and not have set sail from Crete "'and incurred this injury and loss. "'Yet now I urge you to take heart, "'for there will be no loss of life among you, "'but only of the ship. "'For this very night, there stood before me "'an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship.' And he said, "'Do not be afraid, Paul, "'you must stand before Caesar, "'and behold, God has granted you "'all those who sail with you. "'So take heart, men, for I have faith in God "'that it will be exactly as I have been told, "'but we must run aground on some island.'" Can you imagine being a sailor?

First of all, you're a pagan or a heathen, one of the two. And that means as a pagan, you believed in all kinds of gods, or as a heathen, you didn't really believe in any God. And this guy comes along, you're in the midst of this storm for which you have resigned yourself, we're not gonna make it out of this, we're gonna die. We will die. And this guy who claims to have a relationship with God, in fact, says he had a vision of an angel, stands up in the midst of this storm with this boat tossing and turning, I just about get seasick reading about it.

And he says, we're gonna make it, but the ship will be lost. Because, why? Because an angel told me. And you either think the guy is a nut, or you think, well, maybe there's something to this. Who knows?

We'll see. Verse 27 says, when the 14th night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight, and that's a rough time to be on the open seas in a storm, the sailors suspected that they were nearing land, and so they took a sounding and found 20 fathoms, and that's a depth of about 120 feet, or for the people living in the rest of the world, it's about 36 and a half meters. And a little farther on, they took a sounding again, and found 15 fathoms, and of course, that means they're getting closer to land. And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. Literally, they say, we're afraid we're gonna hit ground, so we're gonna drop four anchors off the stern of the boat, and hopefully we'll get to the place where it'll be shallow enough, those anchors will begin to drag along the sea bottom and slow us down, and maybe even stop us close to shore, who knows, with a little luck.

It might happen that way. So, you can see this is pretty intense here. Verse 30 says, and as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the ship's boat into the sea under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved. And then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go. So, you gotta understand, the boat is the way you get to shore.

The ship doesn't take you to shore, it's too big. You can't bring a ship right up to the shore. The boat is your last hope of getting there without getting wet, let's say. And so, these guys, some of these guys that weren't sure they should believe Paul or not, said, well, we're gonna go tie some more ropes down at the bow of the ship. But what they were really doing was getting the boat ready to drop it into the water and make their escape, hopefully, to land.

Paul finds out about it and says, listen, if these guys abandon ship, then nobody's gonna be saved. And so, they cut it away. They finally believe him enough that they cut away the boat and they let it go. Again, you have to understand, this is like throwing away your parachute from the airplane, right? Verse 33, as

day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, today is the 14th day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing.

Therefore, I urge you to take some food, for it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you. And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. And then Luke tells us, parenthetically, that we were in all 276 persons in the ship. That's a lot of folks in this ship.

So, this is a good-sized boat, right? This is not the minnow here. Some of you guys that lived in the 60s know what I'm talking about. Verse 38 says, And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship further, throwing out the wheat into the sea. And I suppose, you know, it's the last thing you throw away is your food, right?

Verse 39 says, Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach on which they planned, if possible, to run the ship ashore. So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders, then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. Now you guys, I'm sure you know a reef can be made of sand, it can be made of rock, it can even be made of coral, but it's usually right under the surface of the water. And you don't know it's there until you hit it.

And that's what happened. They did, they hit it, they struck it. And it says here in the middle of verse 41, that the bow stuck. So it was probably sand, but you know, so it is it stuck fast, and it remained immovable. And the stern or the back end of the ship was literally being broken up by the surf.

And you're thinking, wow, is the surf really strong enough to break up a ship? Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Do you do you know that there is no more powerful natural force on earth than moving water? Wind not as strong as water.

Water is the strongest force, which, you know, you need to have a respect for water. I think I've told you guys a few times when Sue and I went to the, saw the ocean, when I saw the ocean, you know, I was a landlocked kid growing up living in Minnesota, growing up in Minnesota, never seen the ocean. And so we took a trip, just a couple years, two, three years after we were married, to the East Coast. And I saw the Atlantic before I ever saw the Pacific. And I had an uncle living out there.

And he was going to, he decided he's going to take us out to hang out at the beach for a while. And I'd never, I'd only swam in pools and the 10,000 lakes that Minnesota had. So he started kind of explaining to

us on the way there how we needed to respect the water. And I was kind of like, you know, I was 23 years old, you know, I was bulletproof. And we got there.

And the first thing I saw was an emergency medical team tending to a young girl who'd been picked up in the breaker and slammed down on the beach and dislocated her hip. That was the first thing I saw going to the ocean. I was like, okay, you know, I, you know, I respect this stuff. You know, it was probably good for us to kind of see that, but wow, what the water can do, you know. So it literally is crashing against the back end of this ship.

And it's falling apart while they're on the ship. It is literally falling apart. So verse 42 says, the soldier's plan was to keep the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. Now, the reason they were going to do this is because under Roman law, if any of those prisoners were sentenced to die and they escaped, the soldiers would pay the price, right? For an escaped prisoner.

So they were just going to kill them. We don't know what you guys are up for or what your fate is or what your punishment might be. We're just going to kill y'all and be done with it. And so that was what they were planning to do. But it says the centurion wishing to save Paul kept them from carrying out their plan.

He ordered that those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land. And the rest of you guys, listen to, this just sounds so cool. It says, just rest on planks or on pieces of the ship and just pray. And so it was, look at this, that all were brought safely to land. Can you imagine being on a ship in the middle of the sea and there's a storm and your ship is breaking up and you're like, I can't swim.

You know, it's like, well, grab a piece of wood, pal, and just float. Because that's, we didn't pack any floaties here to blow up and put on your arms like the kids have. Chapter 28, Luke says, after we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. Here's the next map up on the screen, so you can see where they started off from at Fair Havens. Again, their goal was just to get to Phoenix on the other end of the island, but the wind caught them and pushed them out into the open sea and so I, you know, and then they ended up on this little island that is just a speck on the map called Malta.

You know, what's interesting about the island of Malta? It's still there. And not only is it still there, it's still called the same thing. So if you get onto Google Maps and just type in Malta, island of Malta, let me show you. Here's what you're going to find.

Still there. They didn't even, nobody even renamed it in 2000 years. You'd think, I could come up with a better name than that, couldn't you? But anyway, it's still Malta and there it sits and that's where they all

came to shore. Verse two, Luke says, the native people showed us unusual kindness for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all because it had begun to rain and was cold.

I can imagine what it felt like being out in the sea, swimming or floating your way to the shore and then you get to shore and it's raining and it's cold. Yeah. When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, no doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.

And this is typical pagan thinking. Today we call it karma. And the idea of karma, of course, is that if you did something bad, something bad will happen to you. Right? But it's a pagan sort of an idea.

And so they just assume that Paul must be a murderer. Oh, he's a murderer. Yep. See, look at that snake hanging from his hand. He is a murderer.

So what would you do if you were in their place? Let's just get some marshmallows and watch this guy drop dead. It says in verse five, he, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. And look at, they were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they waited a long time and they saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said, well, he must be a god.

Right? I mean, again, we're talking typical pagan thinking. One minute, you know, he's a murderer. And the next minute, oh, he's a god. You know, I think you've probably heard people say that if people choose not to believe in the Lord God creator of heaven and earth, then they're liable to believe in anything.

And they usually will and do. And that's just, again, that's pagan thinking. It just jumps according to circumstances. Guy's got a snake hanging from his arm. He's a murderer.

He doesn't drop dead. He's a god. You know, that's just the way it goes. Verse seven says, now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island named Publius who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery.

And if you know anything about dysentery, you know that is a terrible, terrible disease of the intestines and just awful. And it says Paul visited him and prayed and putting his hands on him healed him. And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured.

They also honored us greatly and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed. In other words, they gave us whatever supplies were needed.

Now how long were they there? Verse 11 tells us, after three months. So they wintered there. This is what they should have done at Fair Havens or they should have tried to find a place close, very close by. But they stayed there now for three months and he says, after that we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria with the twin gods as a figurehead.

This is interesting that Luke would tell us this, that they got onto a ship that had been there for the winter and this ship had carved in its bow the images of two pagan gods. And these are the gods Castor and Pollux. They were considered to be brothers and they were also considered to be the patron gods of mariners. And of course, so if you're a pagan, this is something you'd want carved in your bow. into your boat because it's going to give you luck right so it says here that Paul with his companions got onto the ship now you might be wondering why I'm calling attention to this well the reason is because I want you to know that Paul didn't have any trouble getting on a ship that had pagan images carved into the vial and the reason I make that point is because I think there are a lot of Christians today who would I think they would refuse you know I'm not getting in a ship with pagan gods on the front no way no how either they would refuse to do it out of some sort of a sense of self-righteousness or they would be afraid that if they did get on that boat somehow God would be angry with them but did you notice Paul had no qualms about getting on a boat like that he got on and he sailed for Italy he didn't care I gotta tell you guys I think that's I think that's important and the reason Paul didn't care is because first of all he knew who his God was and he knew he was living in a fallen world he knew that do you do you know that you're living in a fallen world do you know also that that fallen world is full of fallen people I mean you're one of them but I'm talking now about unbelievers unbelievers the world is full of unbelievers and unbelievers are going to think and act like unbelievers Paul knew that I hope that you do too but sometimes we forget that and we somehow think that the way we're going to display our Christian faith is by rolling our eyes and sticking up our nose at all of the unbelievers and what they do you know I I came to know Christ as my Savior when I was a teenager I didn't really start walking with him till much much later but as a teenager I was a very new Christian and I was a very immature Christian and I thought that the way I was supposed to display my Christianity was by letting the world know that I wanted nothing to do with them and I found out later that was nothing more than self-righteousness I found out much later that the the way I'm supposed to display my Christianity is with the righteousness of Christ that would lead them to a knowledge of the Savior because you see the issue with unbelievers in a fallen world is that all of our disdain for the ways of the world is not going to save people it's not going to convict people you know if

we turn up our nose at all the things in the world that the world has and does as a way of saying we're better than this that's not going to bring anybody to a saving knowledge of Jesus you know it's just not what's going to make a difference is us living the way Jesus wants us to live and when we have opportunity to share what the cross means and what they can do to take advantage of it that's what's going to change the world one heart at a time you know I've told you guys before in the past I had this stupid t-shirt when I was a teenager said lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine and that was all part of that self-righteous I'm not going to I'm not going to be part of your world I thought that was what my Christianity meant and oh you know what no one ever came to Christ because of that t-shirt and no one ever stopped drinking in fact I'm sure I probably pushed a few people away it's it's it's not disdain for the world that we're supposed to show yes we're supposed to be the salt of the earth yes we are supposed to help arrest that process of decay that the world is involved in right now yes yes yes but how do we do that we do that by sharing the gospel the message of Jesus Christ crucified risen and coming again that people might come to faith in him and that their lives might be transformed through the power of that gospel amen that's that's how we're gonna that's how we're gonna make a difference in this world not by turning up our nose you know the world is full of sinners of which I am one and and and and so there you go Paul got on the boat all that to tell you Paul got on the boat all right verse 12 putting in at Syracuse we stayed there for three days and from there we made a circuit and arrived at Regium and after one day a south wind sprang up and on the second day we came to put the only I love that word because see you there in Italy now put the only then that sound Italian sounds like something you put on your pizza or in your spaghetti right just shake a little more put the only in there for me verse 14 there we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days and so we came to Rome and the brothers there when they heard about us came as far as the forum of Appius and three taverns to meet us on seeing them Paul thanked God and took courage and when he when we came into Rome Paul also was allowed to stay by himself with the soldier who guarded him here's the last map I'm going to show you in our study of the book of Acts this is a map showing you where they took off from Malta you can see how close they were to their destination right the Lord through that storm led them toward their destination not away from it and they landed on Malta stayed there for three months until the weather was better and then made their short distance over there to Syracuse up to Regium and then on up into the boot of Italy there so there you go verse 17 says after three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews you'll remember we've seen this the whole way through Acts where Paul first goes to the Jews in a new area and when they had gathered he said to them brothers though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans when they had examined me they wish to set me at liberty because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case

but because the Jews objected I was compelled to appeal to Caesar though I had no charge to bring against my nation for this reason therefore I have asked to see you and speak with you since it is because of the hope of Israel that I'm wearing this chain and they said to him we have received no letters from Judea about you and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you but we desire to hear from you what your views are for with regard to this sect and they're referring there to Christianity we know that everywhere it is spoken against so the Jews were not speaking highly of the Christian faith when they had appointed a day for him they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers from morning till evening he expounded to them testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets and some were convinced by what he said but others disbelieved and a disagreeing among themselves they departed after Paul had made one statement the Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet go to this people and say you will indeed hear but never understand you will indeed see but never perceive for this people's heart has grown dull and with their ears they can barely hear and their eyes they have closed lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn and I would heal them in other words what what Paul is doing in quoting this passage from Isaiah is he's expressing the futility of speaking any further he has just talked with them from morning to evening and some of them have believed but others simply chose not to believe but why because Paul said there was a dullness that had come over their lives both their ears so that they could now barely hear and their eyes that even though they might see they're not truly perceiving in other words this speaks of a very serious condition that can come over a human heart when you say no repeatedly to the gospel say no repeatedly to the Holy Spirit there comes a point where you enter into just an irrevocable condition of hardness and and refusal and it's serious therefore let it be known to you verse 28 that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles they will listen he lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God, and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance." So Paul spent two years just teaching, ministering, and so forth.

And it's interesting, isn't it, that the book of Acts ends this way. We would expect it to kind of go on and tell us more. We kind of expect things to be written in novel form, you know, like we pick up a book and it begins at the beginning and it ends at the end and it tells us the story and we close the book and we go, ah, that's how it ended. But we're not told. You know, this story was to tell us how God faithfully brought, you know, Paul to Rome like he said he would.

But, so the question naturally arises from people, you know, what happened to the apostle Paul? What happened from this point onward, right? Well, all we can do is piece together the clues from Paul's

writings. And from his writings, we believe that the apostle Paul, after two years of awaiting an audience with Caesar, eventually got that audience and then was acquitted. And then we believe he went on what we refer to as his fourth missionary journey.

You'll remember here in Acts, it only covers three journeys by the apostle Paul. And the reason we believe that he went on a fourth journey is because in Paul's letters, he talks about people and places that the book of Acts knows nothing about. And so we believe that he went to other places, including Spain. We believe that he had a fruitful ministry, but what we don't know is ultimately why, or for that matter, when or where he was ultimately arrested a second time. We know that he was brought back to Rome.

We know from church tradition, and frankly, even from the word of God, that his second incarceration at Rome was much more difficult. Here, Luke tells us that he had great liberty, freedom, and his friends were there to take care of him. But you'll notice in Paul's second letter to Timothy, he explains that all of his friends had deserted him. And by the way, you remember what I said about that. That means no food or clothes.

And we know that Paul believed that his death was imminent because he says as much in that second letter to Timothy. And it is then through church tradition that we learn that Paul was ultimately beheaded by the Romans outside the city of Rome sometime in late 67 or 68 AD. And he went to be with the Lord at that time. But I love how the Apostle Paul, in that second letter to Timothy, summarizes his own life, because there's something we can learn from this. Up on the screen from 2 Timothy 4, it says, for I am already being poured out as a drink offering.

If you know anything about the Jewish drink offering, it was after the drink offering was poured out, there was nothing left to show that an offering had been made. He said, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith.

Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day. And not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing. Isn't that beautiful? That crown of righteousness. Did Paul believe that that was going to be something that God would give him because he deserved it?

No, no. The righteous standing that we have before God is given to us from Jesus. It's his righteousness, not ours. He is the one who declares us righteous by faith in his shed blood on the cross. I hope that all of us one day will be able to see the end of our days, should the Lord tarry, and be able to say, I fought the good fight.

I've finished the race. I've kept the faith. And thus we finish our study of the book of Acts. Let's stand together, we'll close in prayer. And no, I don't know where I'm going next.

Sue even asked me, she said, do you know what you're gonna teach after this? And I'm not sure, I'm still praying about it, so we'll see. But we'll just keep going through the Bible until Jesus comes, right? Yeah, so. If you need prayer this morning, we'll have some folks up here to pray with you and for you.

So take advantage of that. Father, thank you so much for this study of the book of Acts. It truly has been wonderful. We thank you, Lord. We learn something new every time we go through it, every time we stop and pause and think about those things.

Lord, we're impressed with the life of the apostle Paul. I see in him, Lord, a determination. To walk with God, no matter what the cost. And I wanna have that same determination. I wanna have that same attitude.

To go where you want me to go, do what you want me to do, say what you want me to say. Lord, as we go out now in this week into our places of work, into our homes, into the marketplace, wherever, we ask you, God, humbly to use us. First, that we might live our lives in such a way that people would be drawn to the Savior. And second, that you would open a door and an opportunity for us to share our faith about the cross of Jesus Christ and the power of the gospel to transform a life. Lord, we thank you for every opportunity that comes our way.

May we be found faithful. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and all God's people said together, amen. God bless you, have a good rest of your Sunday.