

- **Last week we completed our journey through the Book of Acts. It has been 81 messages of in-depth exploration of these amazing stories. THAT SAID, an issue with such an in-depth journey- especially with a history such as Acts, is that it can be hard to wrap our arms around the entire story- the big narrative arc.**
- **SO, THAT IS WHAT WE ARE DOING TODAY. The entire book of Acts in ONE sermon.**
- **CAVEAT- This is HIGH LEVEL. BIG PICTURE. Details we won't cover. SO- READY? SEATBELTS FASTENED?**
- **And we will launch our flight today with THE FOUNDATIONAL lens of this entire story....**

† At first glance Acts is a story of the early church leaders and heroes, such as John, Peter, James, Stephen, Phillip, Barnabas, and of course, Paul. However, this is a very limited view. THE key character in Acts is **GOD**, His activity, and His plan.

- **In fact, the arc of the Acts storyline is less about individual characters than it is the growth and message of the Christian community. Acts is a narration of God's work in establishing the church through Jesus' activity, worked out through the lives of many disciples, whose lives were changed by the Gospel.**
- **THIS is our origin story, and the author, and originator, is GOD. To take this journey we will break the story into seven, well, ACTS. SO, ACTS, Act 1....**

† **ACT 1: What goes up will come back down!**

Acts 1:1-11 ♦ *Key verses- 1:8-11* ♦ **Timeline: AD 30**

- **The year is AD 30 and our story opens at Jesus' ascension- as He gives the great commission...**

Acts 1:8-11 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*"⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

- **This isn't the end of the story! It is the BEGINNING of the story- the story of how the Holy Spirit will work through you to take this message of the Gospel to all the world. JESUS WILL RETURN- but in the meantime, there is work to do.**
- **And so the disciples return to Jerusalem- which takes us to...**

† **ACT 2: The birth and early days of the church in Jerusalem**

Acts 1:12-6:7 ♦ **Timeline: AD 30-33**

- **Timeline: 30-33..**
First thing that happens is the Apostles raise up...
 - A new apostle. **Matthias**
- **This then leads to our second huge event- Birth of the church on the Jewish Holiday of...**
 - Pentecost! **Key verses-**
- **The Holy Spirit descends of the believers, they go out into the streets of Jerusalem where Jews of many languages and ethnicities from around the Roman world have gathered- Holy Spirit enables the disciples to preach in all the different languages present... after assuring the crowd they were not drunk, Peter launches into his first sermon, and he ends with this:**

Acts 2:36-40 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

– **From Pentecost Luke describes the growing community of believers- and essential to this community was...**

- **The fellowship. Key verses-**

Acts 2:42, 47b They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

– **As the church begins to grow in Jerusalem, we see...**

- **The first healing. OF MANY**

– **Peter and John see a crippled man at the temple gate...**

Acts 3:6 Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

– **The man entered the temple, walking, leaping, praising..**

– **When a crowd gathered at the scene, Peter...**

- **Peter’s second sermon. Concluded by saying**

Acts 3:19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

– **News of this event reached the religious authorities of the temple...**

- **Peter & John are arrested thrown in Jail, next day they testify.**

– **This leads to Peter’s third great sermon, ends by saying**

Acts 4:12-13,18-20 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.¹⁸ Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!²⁰ As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

– **Peter and John return to the believers and shared what had happened... in response...**

- **The believers pray for boldness. After their prayer**

Acts 4:31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

– **Next Luke describes how all the believers were of one heart and mind... they shared...**

- **All things in common,** enter Barnabas.

Acts 4:32 *All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.*

- **We are introduced to Barnabas, the son of encouragement, who sold a piece of property and donated it to the needs of the church.**
- **This leads us to the FIRST REAL CRISIS... story of**
 - **Lying to God: Ananias and Sapphira** **Didn't go well- God sovereignly protected the church from corruption- they were slain BY the spirit, great fear and respect gripped the church**
- **The community of faith continues to grow... day after day in the temple courts...**
 - **The apostles heal many**
- **This fills the religious rulers with Jealousy and they try bring the hammer down.**
 - **The apostles arrested... thrown in jail** wait, that didn't work!
- **But during the night an angel came and set them free, saying...**

Acts 5:20 *Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people all about this new life."*

- **The next morning when the guards came to fetch the apostles... wait that didn't work!**
- **The Sanhedrin is furious and ready to kill them, when Gamaliel gives his famous speech....**

Acts 5:38-39 *Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."*

⁴¹ *The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. ⁴² Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.*

- **As we move into chapter six the church faces it's next crisis. Now numbering in the thousands and made of up multiple ethnicities, we are told some believers began to grumble because their widows were not being cared for as others were. In response, the apostles...**
 - **The raising up of the seven.** *Key verses-*
- **This growth of leadership insured the equal provision of benevolence and care, and allowed the apostles to focus on teaching... as a result...**

Acts 6:7a *So the word of God spread.*

- **Almost four years have gone by, and this takes us to...**

† **ACT 3: From Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and beyond**
Acts 6:8-9:31 ♦ Timeline: AD 34-38

- **Timeline- will space another 4 years to AD 38.**
- **HERE we are introduced to STEPHEN.**
 - **Enter, Stephen. Exit, Stephen.** *Key verses-*
- **He is a powerful witness to the gospel, so powerful that the religious rulers sabotage him, drag him from the city, and murder him. But before they stone him, Stephen gives the**

longest single sermon from all of Acts, demonstrating how everything Jesus had done was a fulfillment of God's promises and work through Israel. Stephen ends his speech by declaring a reality we will see multiple times- God had revealed his salvation to the Jews through Jesus, and just like their forefathers had rejected the prophets, so they were rejecting their own messiah. This didn't go over well.

Acts 7:59-8:1 *While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul approved of their killing him.*

- Enter, Saul. Persecution and the church scattered.

- **Saul began to destroy the church- but as people were driven from their homes they continued to preach the word wherever they went. This leads us to...**

- Enter, Phillip. The gospel in Samaria.

- **Samaria is the region north of Jerusalem, known to most people as where Jesus had his famous encounter with the Samaritan Woman. If you remember, the Jews hated the Samaritans and vice versa... and yet, when Phillip arrives shares the good news of Jesus Christ, the Samaritans receive the message with widespread enthusiasm. So much so that Peter and John also come to investigate what is happening. HERE we see the story of Peter's encounter with...**

- Simon the sorcerer

- **As the gospel continues to spread in Samaria, we next see the Holy Spirit direct Philip toward the road south to Gaza, where we have the story of...**

- Philip and the Ethiopian. Key verses-

- **The Ethiopian is reading from a scroll, and Philip asks "Do you understand..." This opens the door for Philip to explain the Gospel of Jesus....**

Acts 8:36-39 *As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" ³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.*

- **NOW we arrive at one of the great pivotal events- the conversion of Saul on...**

- The road to Damascus. Key verses-

- **Saul and his band of ruffians are headed to Damascus, intending to arrest any believers there, when Jesus appears to him in a vision of bright light....**

Acts 9:5-6 *"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."*

- **Saul is blinded by the light, but he gets up, is led into Damascus where he meets a believer named Ananias.**

- Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem. Key verses-

- **Paul's vision is restored and he is baptized by Ananias. He then travels east into Arabia where he receives direct revelation of his teaching from Jesus (Galatians).**

- *When he returned from Damascus, Paul's former friends and persecutors of the believers now seek to kill him, and Paul's former enemies help him escape Damascus by lowering him down the city wall in a basket.*
- *Paul travels to Jerusalem, meets with Peter and the church leaders, and when his life becomes threatened there, he is sent by ship back to his home region of Cilicia.*
- *At this point Luke tells us...*

Acts 9:31 *Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.*

- *We are now 8-9 years since Christ's resurrection- By this point the church has spread throughout all of Israel, and now, as we enter....*

✠ **ACT 4: The Gospel to the gentiles- *The door begins to open***

Acts 9:32-12:25 ♦ *Timeline: AD 39-44*

- *Timeline: 39-44*
- *Peter continues to travel about the country, and we see God work through two remarkable miracles, as...*
 - *Peter heals Aeneas and Dorcas*
- *THIS THEN LEADS to our next great milestone, which is the story of...*
 - *Cornelius and Peter's vision. Key verses-*
- *Cornelius was a gentile, more specifically a Roman centurion who lived in Caesarea. An angel appeared to Cornelius, instructing him to send for Peter who was currently staying just south in the town of Jobba.*
- *Meanwhile, Peter receives a vision three times, vision of a sheet full of animals that were unclean and forbidden to each according to the Mosaic Law. He is instructed to kill and eat, which he refuses, saying.. "SURELY NOT- these are unclean!"*

Acts 10:15 *The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."*

- *Peter then travels to Cornelius home, where the household full of gentiles all believe, receive the holy spirit, and are baptized.*
- *After this Peter returns to Jerusalem where..*
 - *Peter defends his actions to Jerusalem leadership*
- *After hearing his testimony about what God had done, they reply "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life"*
- *As this metaphorical door to the gentile world slowly swings open, we see that believers who were scattered by Paul's persecution had traveled north all the way to:*
 - *The church in Antioch in Syria*
- *The church here grows, and Barnabas is dispatched from Jerusalem to investigate. After seeing how the church is growing and in need of leadership, Barnabas finds Paul in Tarsus and brings him back to Antioch.*
- *For an entire year they teach these believers, and as the church grows these disciples are called 'Christians' for the first time.*

- **Luke then tells us that a famine has broken out in that part of the world, specifically impacting Jerusalem, and it is these new gentile believers from Antioch who send aid to the believers in Jerusalem.**
- **We are NOW in chapter 12, and our attention turns to King Herod. He begins to persecute the church, including the martyrdom of James, the brother of John. Peter is also arrested, and here we see story of...**
 - **Peter's miraculous escape from prison.** *Key verses-*
- **In spite of the new persecution, Peter and the church persevere, but things don't work out so well for Herod. When he allows people to worship him as a God, the ACTUAL God strikes him down.**
- **As this section of Acts concludes, Luke tells us...**

Acts 12:24 *But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.*

- **Now we have arrived at...**

✠ **ACT 5: Paul's first missionary journey and the Jerusalem Council**

Acts 13:1-15:35 ♦ **Timeline: AD 44-48**

- **TIMELINE: 44-48**
- **The church in Antioch commission Paul and Barnabas to take the gospel west into the broader Mediterranean world. On this journey, which will span several years, Paul and Barnabas will plant churches in...**
 - **Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and back home to Antioch in Syria.** *Key verses-*
- **During this time, Paul will travel about 1,400 miles, visit 8 different cities, flee for his life from three major riots, and will be beaten to death once.**
- **At the end of the journey Luke tells us...**

Acts 14:26-27 *From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. ²⁷ On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.*

- **THIS LEADS US to our next HUGE PIVOTAL event, arguably one of the most important events in the history of the early church, which we know as...**
 - **The Jerusalem Council.** *Key verses-*
- **It is AD 48, and a contingency of the Jewish church came to Antioch, teaching these gentile believers that in order to become Christians, they must first become Jews- specifically, they must be circumcised and obey the law of Moses.**
- **This controversy leads to a gathering of church leaders- including Paul- in Jerusalem, where after prayer and deliberation the verdict is reached... NO, THEY DO NOT.**

Acts 15:10-11, 19 Peter: *Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? ¹¹ No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord*

Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

James *“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.*

- *To communicate this principle to the churches, a letter was written- stating- QOUTE “we don’t want to burden you with anything beyond following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.*
- *And as we discussed in depth, the issue of meat sacrificed to idols wasn’t about morality, it was about church unity, and the caution against sexual immorality would become fully articulated by upcoming church writings.*
- *KEY: In regards to being in a relationship with God and being obedient to God, at the Jerusalem Council the Mosaic Law- containing the full moral code of the OT- was SET ASIDE. As the writers of Hebrews would later say...*

Hebrews 7:18-19 *The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.*

- *This brings us to....*

✠ **ACT 6:** Paul’s second and third missionary journeys
Acts 15:36-21:16 ♦ Timeline: AD 49-57

- *TIMELINE: 49-57- 8 years...*

– *After the JC, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, and in the coming months Paul will write his first letter, which we know as the book of GALATIANS.*

- *At the end of chapter 15 Paul and Barnabas decide to visit the churches they had earlier planted, but...*

- *Disagreement between Paul and Barnabas*

- *Barnabas wants to take John Mark, but Paul refuses since Mark had abandoned them on their first journey.*
- *So, Barnabas takes Mark and sailed for Cypres, and Paul takes SILAS- enter Silas- then they travel west into Cilicia. This is the beginning of Paul’s second MJ.*
- *In Lystra Paul recruits a young believer named Timothy. When the group arrives on the border of ancient Asia, Luke tells us the- so interesting...*
 - *The Spirit prevents them from entering.*
- *So, they head north to the border of Bithynia, and the Spirit stops them there as well.*
- *So they head west again towards Troas, where Paul- in a vision- sees...*
 - *Man of Macedonia asking for help.*
- *And so, they leave for the region of Macedonia, which requires crossing the Aegean sea. This leads them to...*

- **Philippi**

- **Philippi had almost no Jewish population at all, and as Paul and Silas search for a synagogue, they meet a group of women praying. Specifically, they meet...**
 - **Lydia, who welcomes them into her home.**
- **In the coming days Paul will begin to preach in Philippi, and he will cast a demon out of a slave girl who was being exploited by her owners. As a result Paul and Silas are arrested, beaten, and thrown in jail.**
 - **Paul and Silas in Prison. Key verses-**
- **Here we have the incredible scene- P&S are in chains, in the middle of the night....**

Acts 16:25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

- **In one of Acts more famous stories, there is an earthquake, Paul and Silas are free but they DO NOT flee, and as a result the Jailer and his entire household believe and are baptized.**
- **After pointing out to the local Roman authority that they had just flogged a Roman citizen without a trial, Paul and Silas are very politely escorted out of the city.**
-
- **From Philippi our team travels to**
 - **Thessalonica where Paul plants a church and flees from a riot.**
- **They then travel to**
 - **Berea**
- **Luke tells us the Bereans received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed. BE LIKE BEREANS**
- **AND NOW, from Berea Paul travels on his own to ...**
 - **Athens where he gives his famous Mars Hill speech.**

Acts 17:22-23 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

- **From Athens Paul travels to...**
 - **Corinth, where he meets Priscilla, Aquila**
- **Paul stays in Corinth for a year and a half, during which time he writes 1st and 2nd Thessalonians.**
- **After this Paul travels to...**
 - **Ephesus with Priscilla and Acquilla.**
- **He stays in Ephesus for only a short time before returning to Caesarea, Jerusalem, and then back home to Antioch. This ends his second missionary journey.**

- Priscilla and Acquilla, in the meantime, meet a believer named **Apollos** who is a powerful preacher of the Gospel. In a fascinating detail, we are told that Priscilla and Acquilla (emphasis on Priscilla) meet with Apollos and explain the way of God to him more adequately.
- After some time in Antioch, Paul departs on his...
 - **THIRD missionary journey:**
- He once again traveled west through the northern Mediterranean regions of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening the churches there.
- This time unimpeded by the Spirit, Paul travels straight into the region of Asia, finally arriving...
 - in Ephesus
- Here Paul is once again run out of the synagogue, and instead he begins to preach daily-likely during the heat of the day when rent was cheap- in a place called...
 - The lecture hall of Tyrannus. Key verses-

Acts 19:8-10 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

– **During his time in Ephesus Paul will write 1st Corinthians AD55**

- The ministry in Ephesus is so effective that the believers begin to destroy the items of idol worship. This is a direct threat to the artisans who make the idols of Artemis... which leads to
 - The riot in Ephesus
- which may be the largest riot of Paul's career.
- From here Paul begins a long...
 - The trip home:
- He travels into Macedonia, where he writes **2nd Corinthians in late AD 56.**
- From there Paul travels through Greece, likely wintering in Corinth, where he will write **the book of ROMANS in AD57.**
- In the spring Paul and his companions sailed back to Troas, where Paul preach so long that a young man named Eutychus fell asleep, fell out of a window, and was killed. In the second resurrection miracle of Acts, Paul raises Eutychus back to life.
- Paul then traveled by ship down the coast to the port near Ephesus where Luke describes
 - a tearful goodbye between Paul and the elders of the Ephesian church
- From here we begin
 - Paul's journey to Jerusalem
- As he traveled and stayed in the homes of different believers, they consistently said to him "DON'T GO TO JERUSALEM!"... But led by the Spirit, Paul continued, and this bring us to the big finale...

† ACTS ACT 7: Jerusalem, Caesarea, and the journey to Rome

Acts 21:17-28:31 ♦ *Timeline: AD 57-62*

- **The year is AD 57. Paul arrives**
 - **In Jerusalem.**
- **Jerusalem is a city on the verge of explosion. Simmering tensions between Jewish zealots and the Roman authorities have everyone on edge. If Jerusalem was a fuse, then Paul was the match.**
- **After undertaking a week long ritual in an attempt to calm his critics, a group of Jews from Asia spot Paul at the temple, and within minutes a riot erupts that consumes the entire temple mount.**
- **Paul is rescued by the Roman guards, and when they prepare to ‘flog the truth out of him’, Paul claims his Roman citizenship for only the second time.**
- **Not sure what to do, the Roman prefect sends Paul to be heard before the Sanhedrin- where this happens...**

Acts 23:6, 11 *Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead.”*

- **At this the Sanhedrin explodes. Barely escaping with his life, Paul is protected by the Roman guards yet again. Luke then tells us...**

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, “Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”

- **When a plot to assassinate Paul is uncovered, the Roman commander delivers Paul out of the city and to Caesarea, under the cover of darkness with the protection of 470 Roman soldiers.**
 - **In Caesarea...**
- **Paul we be held in captivity for over two years, during which time he will be put on trial before the three most powerful men in the region of Palestine- Felix, the Roman Governor of Palestine, Felix’s successor Festus, and King Herod Agrippa the second, the last monarch of the Herodian Dynasty.**
- **Paul has a thorough understand of the local political dynamics, and he knows that if he is turned over to the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, he is as good as dead. When it becomes clear this is about to happen, Paul claims his right of last resort as a Roman Citizen...**

Acts 25:10-12 *If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!”*¹² *After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: “You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!”*

- **Days later Paul is sftanding bound with chains before King Agrippa, a person we know from history to have been thoroughly corrupt. Facing this court after over two years of injustice, instead of responding with anger and bitterness, Paul tells his story. He shares**

the Gospel. Finally, Agrippa finally says... “Paul! Do you think in such a short time you are going to convince me to be a Christian?”

Acts 26:29 Paul replied, “Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”

- **AND SO, Paul is sent to Rome. They depart Caesarea by ship, with 276 men on board including the ship's owner, the captain, the Roman centurion in charge of Paul, his soldiers, and many slaves.**
- **They begin their journey late in the season, and before too long find themselves caught in...**

- **The storm.** Key verses-

- **As the situation goes from bad to worse Paul gathers everyone on the ship to hear him- and it a statement that profoundly relates to all of our lives, he said...**

Acts 27:22 But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed.

- **This ship IS destroyed, but they all make it safe to the shore on the island of...**

- **On Malta**

- **Here the island natives show them unusual kindness- literally, the kindness of God for humanity- and in the early spring they are fully supplied and sail for Italy, ultimately completing the journey to Rome, in the year AD 60.**
- **And as we saw last week, Paul immediately invited the leaders of the Jewish community in Rome to hear him- some believed, but many missed it- just as they had missed the message of Christ some 30 years earlier.**

- **AND YET, we end the narrative with Paul still in his room, and for at least two years...**

- **The gospel is preached.** Key verses- 28:28-31

- **During this time Paul will write Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon**
- **But through it all, even with his Roman guard standing there in the room, Paul continued to share the good news of NEW LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST to all who would come hear him.**

Acts 28:28-31 “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!”³⁰ For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.³¹ He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

- **And that is the end of Luke’s history- the narration of God’s work to establish the church through Jesus’ activity, worked out through the lives of many disciples, whose lives were changed by the Gospel.**
- **THAT is the end of Acts chapter 28. AND FRIENDS, we now live in the age of ACTS CHAPTER 29. God is still at work, and he is doing his work THROUGH US.**

- ***FOR, if you have come to the place - even in the simplest of understandings- to agree with the Spirit's work in your heart that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God, that God raised him from the dead, defeating the power of sin and death- and that HE IS LORD....***
- ***Then all of us who would say- YES, that is who I am- every day may we remember- that WE HAVE RECEIVED POWER, because the HOLY SPIRIT has come into us, and we are called and enabled to be a witness- a living testimony- to the goodness, freedom, love, and life giving hope of the Good News of Jesus Christ... that is TO AND FOR ALL PEOPLE... in our families, our work, our communities, our churches, and even unto the ends of the earth.***