

## FROM SATURDAY TO SUNDAY

Acts 20:7, "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..." Notice the Christians met to worship on the first day of the week.

Recall, for the prior 1500 years God's people, the Jews, worshipped on the Sabbath – the last day of the week. *Why the change from Saturday to Sunday?* Something dramatic must've occurred to alter such a time-honored and God-given tradition... and that's exactly what happened! Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday. The Church's weekly meeting became a *celebration of the resurrection*.

### Devotion Box - The Dangers Of Sleeping In Church

Paul ended up in Troas on a Sunday - and knowing he was scheduled to leave the next day - he decides to feed the believers the whole enchilada in a single sermon. Acts 20:7 tells us, "(he) continued his message until midnight." Church members today complain if a sermon runs over half-an-hour... Paul went until midnight. If they started at 6:30 like us... his was a 5½ hour sermon.

Notice too, the early Christians met on Sunday night, not Sunday morning. In the Roman empire Sunday was a work day. They came to church after work. This is why verse 8 says, "There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together." A heavy smoke had filled the room.

A man named Eutychus goes to sit in the windowsill to get some fresh air. But drowsiness overcomes him. Eutychus dozes off, falls out of the window, and drops three stories.

Don't laugh! At times we've all had to battle the Eutychus syndrome.

It reminds me of a man who fell asleep in church. The pastor asked an usher to wake him up. The usher shouted back, "You put him to sleep, you wake him up!"

And that's exactly what Paul does. Three floors is a pretty good fall. Verse 9 says, Eutychus "was taken up dead" - but Paul is a responsible preacher – if he puts you to sleep, he wakes you up! Verse 10, Paul "went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." It's not clear whether he raised Eutychus from the dead, or merely helped him regain consciousness. But verse 12 says, "they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted."

Guys, don't ignore the lessons. Those who fall asleep spiritually set themselves up for a serious fall. Be alert! And when you see a brother or sister in Christ who's taken a fall - you be first to go to them and bring them up alive!

## TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

In Acts 20:25 Paul says he has no regrets about his time in Ephesus. He's done his duty. Verse 27, "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God." Paul taught the whole Bible – not part and parcel. Pastors who preach only pet passages and favorite themes are not fulfilling their responsibility. A pastor's job is to teach his people the whole Bible – as Paul put it, "the whole counsel of God."

Listen to a poem... "I supposed I knew my Bible, reading piecemeal hit or miss – now a bit of John or Matthew, now a snatch of Genesis. Certain chapters of Isaiah, certain Psalms, the 23<sup>rd</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> of Romans, 1<sup>st</sup> of Proverbs; Yes! I thought I knew the Word. But I found a thorough reading was a different thing to do, and the way was unfamiliar when I read the Bible through. You who treat the crown of writings as you treat no other book – just a paragraph disjointed, just a crude, impatient look – try a worthier procedure, try a broad and steadier view. You will kneel in very rapture when you teach the Bible through."

I agree with AW Tozer when he wrote, "It takes nothing less than a whole Bible to make a whole Christian."

### Devotion Box - The Supreme Beatitude

Acts 20:35 contains *the supreme beatitude* - a quote from Jesus found nowhere else in Scripture. The passage reads, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Notice, it doesn't just promise a blessing, but *more blessing*. This is why it's called the supreme beatitude! If you want to be "more blessed" be a giver!

It Takes A  
Whole Bible To  
Make A Whole  
Christian !

## FAITHFUL UNDER FIRE

When Paul arrives in Jerusalem he visits James and the elders of the church. While on his missionary journeys, Paul refused to force the law on the Gentiles. Paul was adamant - the law should never be made a requirement for righteousness - but a Jew was still free to be Jewish, and observe the rituals out of respect.

James suggests Paul show the Jews his own love for the law by taking a voluntary vow. James was hoping Paul's participation in a Jewish ritual would diffuse the anger among the Jews that had been generated by Paul's doctrine.

The plan backfires. The mere sight of Paul in the temple triggers a riot. A mob grabs Paul, and starts to

drag him out of the temple to stone him. Roman soldiers stationed in the temple rush in to restore order. The soldiers save Paul from the pack by arresting him. They carry him back to their temple precinct for protection.

If I were Paul I would've been happy to escape the lynching. I'd want a quiet cell, but not Paul. No matter the situation, Paul doesn't lose sight of his purpose. He asks the captain if he can preach to the people who just tried to kill him.

Too often we lose our composure in a chaotic situation. Our own survival takes precedent over God's calling.

We need to be like Paul - *faithful under fire*.

### Devotion Box - Wisdom For Witnesses

Throughout Acts 22 Paul is perched on the steps of the temple stockade preaching to the Jews. He's waited a lifetime for this very moment... And now that the opportunity has come, it's interesting how he handles it!

Rather than debate doctrine, or focus on philosophy, or even quote Scripture, he tells the Jews what happened to him. He recounts his own personal testimony. Guys, never underestimate the power of a changed life. The skeptic can argue with theology, but not with a testimony. It's been said, "A person with an experience is never at the mercy of a person with an argument."

Understand, Paul had finally preached to the Jews, but no one had listened. It wasn't the result he had hoped to achieve.

Guys, it's good to remember we are not rewarded on commission. We're evaluated as witnesses not on how many deals we close, but whether we're faithful to make the calls. And Paul was faithful.

The night after his trial, we're told in 23:11, "the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome." Jesus is faithful to encourage discouraged witnesses. Jerusalem is not the end of the road for Paul. Rome is next.

## REACTIONS OF TWO RULERS

### FELIX

In Acts 24:10 Paul is given an opportunity to defend himself. He reminds Governor Felix that Christianity was not a departure from Judaism. Paul worshipped the Hebrew God, and followed the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus came not to undermine the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them.

Felix ends up placing Paul under house arrest, and holds him for two years. He might've been inclined to release Paul, but he kept him under raps for a number of reasons... 1) he wanted to hear more of the Gospel. 2) he hoped for a bribe from Paul. And 3), he wanted to appease the Jews.

Verse 25 says Paul's presentation of the Gospel included three ingredients - *a right standing with God, personal victory over sin, and the future judgment*. Leave out any of the three and your doctrine is deficient.

Despite the fact he was looking for a bribe - when you read Acts 24, it seems that Felix was genuinely intrigued with Christianity and wanted to hear more. Sadly, Felix was content to tiptoe around truth. He was never willing to take a stand. Verse 25 says he looked for "a convenient time" to make a commitment to Jesus. There is no such thing as a *convenient time* - but the crucial time is now!

### AGRIPPA

In Acts 26 Paul knows Agrippa is close to conversion. In verse 27 Paul gets aggressive... "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

Look at Agrippa's response - Acts 26:28 is one of the saddest statements in the Bible, "Agrippa said to Paul, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian.'" I wonder how many of hell's inhabitants will make the exact same statement. As the saying goes, "Almost only counts in horse-shoes and hand-grenades." *Almost* isn't enough when it comes to faith in Christ. The "almost" will be the left out!

### Devotion Box - A Clean Conscience

In Acts 23:1 Paul claims to have a clean conscience - something obedience to the Law could never produce. Legalism leaves a nagging feeling that there's got to be more to do. Paul's conscience had been permanently cleansed by the finished work of Jesus.

# PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

When Paul appeals his case to Caesar, Governor Festus has a problem. For two years Paul has been in prison for no real reason. He's sending Caesar a captive, but without substantial charges.

Festus is new to the governorship, so he invites Mr. and Mrs. Herod Agrippa to hear Paul's defense. They've been around a while and have a greater sensitivity to Jewish matters. They'll help him formalize charges.

Festus turns the interview into a social extravaganza. He probably hosted the event in the amphitheatre on the beach of Caesarea. Paul was kept in the dark of the dungeon below while the bleachers filled with VIPs. Suddenly he was thrust onto center stage - in the bright, blinding sunlight. What an intimidating situation...

But I love the first words that come out of Paul's mouth. Acts 26:2, "I think myself happy, King Agrippa..." In other words, I'm happy to be here, King! Make yourself comfortable while I set the record straight. Paul refuses to be intimidated by the spectators or the situation.

In the rest of Acts 26 Paul serves up a sermon to the king and his court. Again he recounts his own testimony.

His most compelling evidence for the resurrection was his changed life. A blinding light opened his eyes. Jesus became His Lord - and Paul was sent to open the eyes of others.

In verses 22-23 Paul tells King Agrippa that what he preached was nothing new. Both Moses and the prophets had predicted that Messiah would suffer and die - then rise from the dead, and proclaim light to both Jews and Gentiles.

The Roman were like the Saduccees - to them a resurrection sounded preposterous. When Paul mentions the resurrection of Jesus, Festus shouts at Paul in verse 24, "you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" In other words, "You've flipped out - gone nuts - wiggged out."

Paul senses that God has a grip on Agrippa's heart, and doesn't want to let the king slip away. In 26:26 he challenges him, "I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner."

Agrippa read the Jerusalem Post. He'd been around when Jesus was crucified and resurrected. Agrippa knew the truth! Better than anyone, Agrippa understood— the Gospel wasn't a *mystery religion* - but a *fact of history!*

# PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY AND HIS TRIP TO ROME



# Bible Scan - Acts 20-28

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - [sandyadams@calvarychapel.org](mailto:sandyadams@calvarychapel.org)  
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: [www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm](http://www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm)

Calvary Chapel Announcements - Men's Raft Trip, Sunday, May 19th—Monday, May 20th  
Middle School Retreat, Monday, June 17th - Friday, June 21st  
Kid's Camp: 1-2nd grade, Tues, 7/16—Thurs 7/18; 3rd—5th grade, Thurs, 7/18—Sun, 7/21  
Tickets available for Good Friday Walk-Through at the Information Counter

Next Bible Scan - April 14, 2002 - Romans 1-5

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." - Acts 20:35

Bible Scan Memory Verse

## STAY IN THE BOAT

They say in an average year 4.6 million people will take their vacation on a cruise ship. The old saying, "Cruises are for the overfed and almost dead" is no longer true. Everybody wants to take a cruise - especially a cruise to Rome.

Well, in Acts 27 Paul and his pals get that opportunity. They board a boat for Rome - not as partiers, but as prisoners. This is a cruise to refuse - a cruise for the blues. Paul is one of several prisoners entrusted to a centurion named *Julius*.

After mid-September, sailing on the Mediterranean Sea became dangerous. By mid-November, it was prohibited. The ship that carried Paul finally docked at the port of Fair Havens on the island of Crete sometime in mid-October.

In verse 10 Paul warned the ship's captain not to take the 45 mile voyage up the coast of Crete - but the tiny hamlet of Fair Havens would be a boring place to spend the long, cold winter. They set sail for a more luxurious layover, but they should've heeded Paul's warning. A 45 mile voyage turns into 645 mile detour.

When all hope is lost Paul asks to speak to the crew. In 27:23 he reports that an angel assured him that though the ship would sink all its passengers would be preserved - *with one condition...* as long as the men remained in the boat they would be saved.

There's a lesson here - life is like a storm-tossed sea - it can be rough. The safe place is *in Christ*. We'll make the heavenly shore only if we stay in the boat.

Paul's peace in the midst of uncertain circumstances inspired the others. As the ship broke up in the churning sea, faith was building in the hearts of those who saw the word of God fulfilled.

Both God's providence and the broken boards from the ship are what rescue the crew and the passengers.

Guys, the same is true for us. The broken boards of our past - the shrapnel from the storms of life - *the lessons learned, the pain endured, the hurts healed* - are what God uses to keep our heads above water today. Stay in the boat of God's will and He'll provide the deliverance you need.

## Devotion Box - Shaking Off The Serpent

As we serve the Lord, we'll also find snakes in the woodwork. They'll take a bite out of our joy. They'll try to poison our attitude toward ministry. Satan is the serpent who'd love to poison your service to God.

Notice how Paul handles the snake bite - he just shakes it off and continues to serve. He doesn't grab his hand and fixate on his hurt. He doesn't handle it the way John Wayne would -

pull out a knife, slice the skin, suck out the venom. The best way to handle this type of attack is to just shake it off and carry on.

Yes, the bite hurts. Sure, it's pain. But if you sit down from service to nurse the wound - you just play into Satan's hands. That's what he wants you to do. Just shake it off and keep serving God. The bite won't be as bad as you think. Jesus will neutralize the poison. It'll be no big deal... if you keep serving Him.

THE  
END  
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The theme of Acts is not the life of Paul, but the spread of the Gospel. This is why Luke ends the book so abruptly. He's fulfilled his purpose and charted the spread of Christianity. What began on the edge of the empire - in the far-away province of Judea - in less than 3 decades worked its way to the capitol city of Rome. Luke could've ended Acts, "We've come a long way, baby!"

Yet we've still got a long way to go. I still know people who don't know Jesus. It's been said, "Every generation of Christians is responsible for reaching their own generation of unbelievers." Jesus wants to continue His acts through us. Let's walk by faith and trust in the Spirit's power.