



WEEKLY STUDY

The Book of Acts- Week 12

This is the final sermon in this year-long study where we've invited the Book of Acts to inform and inspire us as followers of Jesus Christ in the church of today. In the end, we find out that we are a living continuation of what Luke wrote about. When we see God showing up and welcoming the poor and the disconnected; when we see the healing and miraculous work of the Holy Spirit; when we see God supplying everything we need, we can see and know that the story of salvation is still being written through us!

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for those who live under the daily threat of war, including humanitarian workers.
- Pray for those who feel disconnected from God and the church. Pray that they would find hope, healing and wholeness through the church of Jesus Christ.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: ACTS 28.1-6 (NIV)

Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta.² The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold.³ Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.⁴ When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, “This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live.”⁵ But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects.⁶ The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

- Don't you love to see how dependent Paul was on the “unusual kindness” of others? There are examples of this at many points along his life. If it had not been for the many men and women who provided for him, the story could have turned out differently. We have those in our own lives don't we? We have people who God seems to send at just the right time, in just the right place to impact the direction of our lives. Who are some of those who have shown unusual kindness in your life?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13.2)**
- *God, I thank you for the many people who have shown surprising kindness—often when I was at my lowest and most vulnerable. Thank you for seeing me and providing just what I needed. Amen.*

TUESDAY: ACTS 28.7-10 (NIV)

There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days.⁸ His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him.⁹ When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.¹⁰ They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

- Healing took off like wildfire on the island of Malta! It would be difficult to overstate the euphoria that must have been felt by the residents of the island where Paul and his fellow travelers found themselves. First, Paul withstood the deadly venom of a viper (Acts 28.5), and then he began to heal the sick, beginning with his hosts' father. The people were so thankful that they furnished all the supplies needed for the voyage to Rome to continue. It was all set in motion because of Paul's belief in the healing power of Jesus Christ. Have you ever seen such joy and euphoria around God's ability to heal?
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- **Prayer Prompt: You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, (Psalm 30.11)**
 - *God, I thank you for the healing power that you have shared with your church. I lift up my places of hurt and brokenness and pray for miracles. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: ACTS 28.11-16 (NIV)

After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island—it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux.¹² We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days.¹³ From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli.¹⁴ There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome.¹⁵ The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged.¹⁶ When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

- This city of Puteoli was halfway between the “toe” of Italy and Rome. This must have felt like the other side of the world to these weary travellers, and yet, Paul and Luke found some brothers and sisters—some fellow believers in Jesus Christ—in this town. I’ve heard countless stories of Providence—people running into other Providence members in strange places around the world. Has that happened to you? For Paul, this was an indicator of just how much the gospel was already spreading throughout the region. For us, it can also be an indicator of just how much bigger this movement is than any of us! Where are you seeing evidence of the spread of the gospel?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. (Matthew 28.19-20a)**
- *God, I find it humbling that you would want to use someone like me to share the good news of Jesus Christ in this great big beautiful and broken world. Yet I trust in you. Amen.*

THURSDAY: ACTS 28.17-20 (NIV)

Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans.¹⁸ They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death.¹⁹ The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an

appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people.²⁰ For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”

- Paul was trying to hold the community together. He was called to preach to the Gentiles, but he has not forgotten the hope of Israel. He was compelled to call together the Jewish leaders to better explain what had happened in Jerusalem. Have you ever felt like you were constantly having to explain yourself and your situation? How many times have we seen Paul tell the story and explain his teachings about Jesus Christ? His example reveals our calling as the church today. We are still telling the story and sharing the good news. Where is God inviting you to share about Jesus Christ?
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- **Prayer Prompt: We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5.20)**
- *O God, I pray that you will prepare my heart, heighten my awareness of opportunities, and give me words to share about Jesus today. Amen.*

FRIDAY: ACTS 28.21-24 (NIV)

They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you.²² But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect.”

²³ *They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus.²⁴ Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.*

- It is clear that people were talking about Paul. Letters were being written about him, warnings had been put out, but there were no first-hand reports of anything bad about Paul. That fact alone, gave Paul the opportunity to share once again about Jesus. And again, some believed and some didn’t. Not everyone will believe even when given as clear an explanation as possible. Our job is not to cause belief in a person’s heart, but to share what we ourselves have come to believe about Jesus. Who were some of the people that were integral in your coming to belief?
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- **Prayer Prompt: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2.8-9)**
- *God, I thank you for all of those who have lovingly spoken about and demonstrated with their lives, the love which you have revealed in Jesus. Amen.*

SATURDAY: ACTS 28.25-31 (NIV)

Just They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

²⁶ *“Go to this people and say,
“You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.”*

²⁷ *For this people’s heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.*

*Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.’*

²⁸ *“Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!”^[29]*

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!*

- As we conclude the book of Acts, it’s easy to forget that Paul traveled to Rome as a prisoner. He talked about chains but the story reads as if he was in a position of privilege. People came to him because of his radical message that God’s salvation plan was breaking through into the whole world. What would it look like for you to proclaim the kingdom of God and teach about Jesus Christ “with all boldness and without hindrance”?

- **Prayer Prompt: In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. (Ephesians 3.12)**
- *God, I want to be more bold in sharing about the hope we have in your Son Jesus. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

Below are six things that were true for the church in Acts, and we believe that they are true for Providence too—so much so that we call them our core values. Walk through them together and share where you see these truths in Acts and today.

1. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

The church exists because of Jesus Christ. He is at the center of everything we do. His life, death, and resurrection give us hope for new life now and for eternity.

Examples of this truth in Acts:

Examples of this truth at Providence Church:

2. Every Person Matters.

Our vision is focused on seeing disconnected people connect with Jesus. So, we provide a welcoming environment that goes above and beyond expectations. We want each person to feel that they belong here, even before they fully believe.

Examples of this truth in Acts:

Examples of this truth at Providence Church:

3. Extravagant Generosity

We operate out of an abundance mentality. There is no scarcity with God. The generosity of individuals is reflected by the church as a whole. We regularly give away our biggest offerings. We are blessed to be a blessing.

Examples of this truth in Acts:

Examples of this truth at Providence Church:

4. God Did It Mindset

Every good thing that happens in and through Providence Church is a direct result of God's faithfulness. We strive to operate with authenticity and humility, putting our trust in God to do it again! God can be trusted!

Examples of this truth in Acts:

Examples of this truth at Providence Church:

5. Dependence on the Holy Spirit

We believe that Providence Church is a movement of God that is reliant on the Spirit of God poured out on believers at Pentecost.

Examples of this truth in Acts:

Examples of this truth at Providence Church:

6. We Believe in the Healing Power of Jesus Christ.

We have seen God work miracles at Providence Church and in the lives of people. We pray believing that God will continue to bring healing in Jesus' name.

Examples of this truth in Acts:

Examples of this truth at Providence Church: