**The Book of Acts Lesson 53**

Acts 28:16-31

“Preaching Christ with Confidence”

**Introduction:** The Apostle Paul finally reached Rome, where he would be for two more years. During these two years he would write the epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.

After he arrived, he was put into the custody of a watch-guard soldier and chained to him by the wrist. It appears that Luke stayed with him. He was kept separate from other prisoners because of his Roman citizenship. He was also given some special treatment for being Roman. Instead of being put into prison, he was under house arrest under guard each day. Paul summoned the chief Jews together to declare his innocence, reminding them that he was not against the Jewish people. The Jews in Rome were ignorant of Christianity, but wanted to hear more from Paul, because they had not heard of his case and they considered Christianity as heresy.

I. The Explanation from the Apostle Paul. (v16-23)

 A. He expounded Concerning Jesus.

 1. Jesus is the hope of Israel.

 2. Paul wanted to give them the Gospel.

 a. The hope of Israel was that the Messiah would come back from the dead.

 b. This made conclusive that Jesus of Nazareth was Israel’s Messiah and Savior.

 3. Paul chose to dwell on the kingdom of God and expounded upon Christ.

 a. Just as every message Paul preached was Jesus Christ.

 b. Paul confronted them with their need to be born again.

 B. He expounded from the Word of God.

1. Paul showed the Jewish leaders that the prophecies of the coming Messiah had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

 a. He referred to the Law of Moses and the books of the prophets.

 b. He used what he had learned from his debates with the Pharisees and Saducees.

 c. That which kept the Jews in their unbelief was a misunderstanding of the kingdom of God

 2. He not only expounded the kingdom of God, but he testified of it - plainly declaring it to them.

a. He confirmed that the kingdom of God by the Messiah's administration was come and was now set up in the world.

 b. He described the extraordinary powers in the kingdom of grace by which he lived.

 c. He testified by his own experience of the power and influence of grace upon him.

 3. Paul taught these people (who would listen) all day long.

 a. He was seeking that they would be convicted more than his own vindication.

 b. If they would have obeyed, they would have found true light.

 4. He persuaded them, urged it upon their consciences

 a. He pressed them with all earnestness to embrace the kingdom of God

 b. He urged them to submit to it, and not to persist in an opposition to it.

II. The Examination of the Word of God. (v24-27)

 A. The Response was Mixed.

 1. As always, when the Gospel was presented, some would believe and some would not.

 a. Paul’s responsibility was not for the outcome.

 b. His was responsible to faithfully proclaim the truth.

 2. The Gospel always divides.

 a. Some would place Jesus on the throne of the heart.

 b. Some rejected Him and died in their sins.

 3. This is the same for us today.

 a. We cannot dictate nor can we determine the outcome.

 b. We have a responsibility to faithfully share the gospel.

#  c. We cannot control the decisions that people make to accept or to reject Christ.

# d. We can control our accountability to at least give people the choice to decide about Christ for themselves.

#  e. If we fail to reach out to one in need, then we fail to at least give people the choice.

 B. The Response was Tragic.

 1. Many of the Jewish people still refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah.

 a. Even after they heard the truth from Paul.

 b. Even though many were convinced of the truth.

#  c. Some held to their religion or tradition over truth.

2. Paul refers to Isaiah 6:9-10, where God handed the northern tribes of Israel over to Assyria for judgment.

 a. He invoked the wrath of God on the Jewish people as a nation.

 b. He invoked God to transfer the Gospel to the Gentiles.

III. The Expansion of the Gospel Message. (v28-31)

 A. The Gentiles would now Receive the Gospel.

 1. One of Luke’s purposes was to show light on some truth.

 a. The Jewish nation rejected Jesus as their Messiah and sent Him to the cross.

b. But the leaders of the Jews (in Jerusalem and Rome) rejected the Gospel as well, because they rejected the truth of Jesus Christ.

 2. Everywhere Paul went, he was received by Gentile worshippers in the synogogues.

 B. Paul was not going to Stop Speaking the Gospel.

 1. Paul’s prison house became a center for world-wide evangelism.

 a. They could lock him up, but they could NOT shut him up!

 b. There were many guards saved while Paul was in Rome.

#  c. Paul wrote four epistles while in Rome.

1) These letters were needed in helping and teaching the leaders in the early and growing churches

 2) These letters are a great source of teaching for us today

 2. Paul kept souls at the forefront of everything he did.

**Conclusion:** Luke had followed the Gospel story from Jerusalem to Rome, thus fulfilling the prophecy that Jesus gave to the disciples in Acts 1:8

“*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”*

Paul was later imprisoned by Nero and wrote 2 Timothy before he was beheaded. The church is alive today in part because of men who were willing to obey God’s command through many distresses, dangers, and even death. May He find us in like manner being obedient to His call on our lives to make Jesus known. As Acts 1:8 came to pass, Acts 1:11 shall come:

 “*Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*