

Acts 28:23-31 (NIV)

²³They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

²⁴Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.

²⁵They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers 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.”

²⁷For 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!”

³⁰For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.

³¹Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

44-28-02-Paul in Rome, Us at Home

location, vocation, testimony, rejection, disputes, Kingdom
Acts 28:23-31

As Jesus came to speak for His Father, we’re here to speak for Jesus.

INTRODUCTION: (Text for Scripture Reading)

–“*Paul in Rome, Us at Home*” *aptly concludes* my series on Acts. I’ve emphasized an internal theme that I hear in the voice of Jesus, “*I’m not done yet!*” Because He indwells us, *we’re called* to be involved in His ongoing work in the world. It’s every believer’s divine vocation.

–[We hear “Location, *location, location!*” in *real estate*, but in God’s Kingdom, it’s “*Vocation, vocation, vocation!*”] What is our *vocation*, our *calling*? It’s what Paul demonstrates in this passage: **HOM.idea**. Paul exemplifies...

I. Our Call to an Authentic Proclamation– v.23b. *From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.*

- A. Whatever the *place* or *time of day*, Paul saw himself as a servant– 1 Cor 9:19. Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. (Paul followed Jesus, Who said, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.” The closer we follow Jesus, we’ll *also* see ourselves as *servants*, ready to serve.)
- B. Since Paul was addressing a large number of Jews, he “*tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.*”
1. The Jews believed the OT, so this was an effective method to tell them about Jesus. (We’re now able to use both the OT & NT!)
 2. Some today don’t believe the Bible. (They need to see a living Gospel in our lives or hear our own story of walking with Jesus.)
- C. That’s the central issue in our call to authentic proclamation! (We haven’t really “*explained and declared to them the kingdom of God,*” if we haven’t told them our personal experience of “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,” which they too can have by following Jesus.)

TRANS: *Paul was imprisoned in Rome; we are at home, maybe feeling imprisoned by certain limitations. But circumstances and location don’t alter our vocation: As Jesus came to speak for His Father, we’re here to speak for Jesus.* [I see prayer requests from *brothers and sisters* in lands where they’re persecuted for their faith, and often this is on their list: “*Pray for*

us to boldly share about Jesus, in spite of the persecution.”] If many didn’t accept the message Jesus Himself gave, neither will all who see or hear about our walk with Christ be receptive. That’s also part of our vocation...

II. Our Call to Acknowledge God’s Dividing Line— v.24, *Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.*

- A. When Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me,” He drew a dividing line between *salvation and perdition*. (Some try *adjusting* or *broadening the line*, to make it *less exclusive*, but we’re called to recognize it as *reality* and let it motivate us to get people across the line into God’s Kingdom.)
- B. Heaven or Hell isn’t just an afterlife separation. It divides us *now* between those choosing to *embrace* or to *reject* God’s Son, Who’s been “the **true light** that [gave] light to every man,” long before NT times.
1. This *division started with human history*, and Jesus described it in **John 3:19-21**, “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been **done through God**.” (What’s “**done through God**” shows that God’s grace alone can enable people to live out their responses to His moral “light.”)
 2. Paul elaborates on this division in **Rom 2:6-8,16**. God “will give to each person according to what he has done.” To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.... This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.
- C. God’s criteria for judgment, then, is *still* our response to Jesus, Who is “the light” of human conscience. Obeying His *inner “light”* makes people ready to receive His full “light” shown in the Gospel.

TRANS: But some who heard Paul weren’t ready. Jesus had told those who didn’t believe He was God’s Messiah, “unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins.” Paul also *drew the line* by quoting from Isaiah to the unbelieving Jews: “*this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes.*” So, Paul goes on to tell them in **v.28**, “*God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!*” Some may reject Christ, but others will be open. That’s what’s behind...

III. Our Call to Keep the Door Open— v.30, *For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.*

- A. Our door is to be open to everyone, including those previously rejecting Jesus. (Their minds may change today or tomorrow.)
- B. We can’t argue people into faith in Christ, but we can show them unconditional love— Rom 2:4 says, “God’s kindness leads [people] toward repentance,” but our “righteous indignation” at their unbelief may drive them away. (Hopefully, *our hospitable welcome will echo the loving welcome Jesus wants to give them into His Kingdom.*)

CONCLUSION:

—Acts 1 began with Jesus telling us about being His “witnesses” through the Holy Spirit. Acts 28 ends with Paul still doing exactly that. But the full story of Acts *isn’t over*, because the incarnational work of Jesus on earth—through us, His Body, the Church—won’t stop until He returns. —Our life at home and Paul’s time in Rome are quite different, but his calling and ours is the same: As Jesus came to speak for His Father, we’re here to speak for Jesus. Paul’s typical *ministry-style* is captured by the last verse of the book— v.31, *Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ*. Jesus used Paul’s unique ministry style, and He wants to use the one found in each of our redeemed personalities and unique biographical histories. —Paul’s ministry here is over, but ours isn’t! And because it isn’t, we need to pray a daily question: “*What are we doing together today, Jesus, that Your Father’s will be done on earth and that Your Kingdom come into people’s lives?*” Jesus wants us to ask that but also wants us to expect an answer, because **He’s not done yet!** He’s continuing His work on earth through us! So, let’s attune our spiritual ears to hear His voice and focus our spiritual eyes to see Him working. Then, let’s **WWJD—Watch What Jesus Does—and follow Him**.