

From the message on June 25

The Church The World Needs: Witness Works Outward

Text Acts 27:1-28:18

From the Sermon

Rome—cosmopolitan capital of the western world, splendid arts and architecture, political, symbol of power. The book of Acts ends with the apostle Paul in this ancient city, though the story of the church moves on beyond Acts. Paul dreamed for years of taking the gospel to Rome. He must have thought often of what it would be like for this city to be evangelized and transformed by the gospel. Yet the journey to Rome was filled with danger. Satan did not want Paul and his fellow coworkers to reach Rome. The enemy of Christ did not want Paul to fulfill Jesus' plans.

Opening Interaction.

Share with your group ... What is your favorite summer activity?

Read the passage and Discuss

1. What dreams do you have concerning taking the gospel to others?¹
2. What did Paul and the others have to go through to get to Rome?
3. How do you see Paul reaching out to those around him while they traveled to Rome? How did Paul model faithfulness and confidence in the midst of horrific circumstances?
4. What does the relationship between Paul and Julius the centurion tell you about the apostle Paul? With whom do you have such a relationship? How can you develop such a relationship with nonchristians around you?
5. What promises from God were the foundation for Paul's great confidence that they would all arrive safely in Rome? What promises from God are the foundation for your dreams about taking the gospel to other people?
6. Acts 27-28 teaches us about the providence and protection of God for his people who are on mission with the gospel. Ephesians 1:11 later referred to God who "works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will." It was not so much that Paul had said, "I must visit Rome," as that Jesus had said to him, "You will testify in Rome." How do you see God's protection in this passage?
7. How have you experienced God's protection in your life? In what ways do you need God's protection right now?
8. Many people were profoundly affected by God's protection of Paul. God protected them just as he protected his apostle. What do you learn about God's care for others even as he cares and protects us? In what ways do you see that protection of others in your life?

¹ We are grateful for the questions this week from John Stott, *Acts: Seeing the Spirit at Work*, Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1998.