

WHEN IN ROME

I. [Acts 28:17-31](#)

A. This message will be the last of our *Sermons on the Sermons* series. Today we hear from Paul, a prisoner in Rome. Following his third missionary journey, he was arrested in Jerusalem, taken to Caesarea, and while in prison there he shared his testimony with governors Felix and Festus and also King Agrippa. Because Paul had appealed his case to Caesar, authorities send him to Rome to stand trial.

B. Paul's journey to Rome would be on board a ship of prisoners. Despite his chains, this venture should be called his 4th missionary journey. Paul had wanted to go to Rome for several years. [Romans 1:14-17 \(NIV\)](#) expresses Paul's heart: *I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

C. Paul's ship would be wrecked off the coast of Malta but his Maltese ministry proves extraordinary. [Acts 28:7-10](#): *"Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him. And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed."*

D. Acts 28:17-31 Luke's account of Paul as a prisoner in Rome...

1) [V17](#) *"After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against (NIV: nothing wrong to) our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans." (The Message of Jesus, preached by Paul, does not represent a veering off course from the Jewish faith. By rejecting Jesus *the Christ*, the Jews are the ones who went horribly off course. All the roads from the OT were headed straight for the cross. All the OT spotlights were flooding the cross with light; shining from the Garden, shining from Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob, shining from Sinai and the Promised Land, shining from the Judges and the Kings and the Prophets. The Gospel is not wrong. We are not wrong to share it.*

2) [V18-20](#) *"When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my nation. For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain." (Remember this: The Hope of Israel is not a concept or vague promise--The Hope of Israel is a Person--His name is Jesus!)*

3) [V21-24](#) *"And they said to him, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against." When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved."*

(Revival is not breaking out here. Some believe. Others don't. But Paul still expounded from morning till night! You thought my sermons were long!)

4) [V25-26](#) *"And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: "'Go to this people, and say, "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive." (These words are ripped right out of Isaiah 6:9-10. Jesus likewise leveled these same words at the Jews in the Parable of the Sower. [Jeremiah 5:20-21 \(ESV\)](#) is similar: "Declare this in the house of Jacob; proclaim it in Judah: "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not". Let this not be us! John Heywood, 1546: *"There are none so blind as those who will not see."* Matthew Henry's commentary: *"None so deaf as those who will not hear. None so blind as those that will not see."*)*

5) [V27-28](#) *"For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them." Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen." (PSB version: The Gospel, the Message of the Cross, it goes in one ear and out the other! You can't see the forest for all the trees but there's One Tree you dare not miss!)*

6) **V30-31** "He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance." (**Upon release, tradition has Paul going as far as Spain with the Gospel. He'd eventually be returned to Rome and beheaded for his faith.**)

E. It's been said that said, *sin is both a disease and a crime*. If you possessed the serum that could heal someone from an incurable disease but withheld it, what would that say about you? If you knew of a man on death row, his execution imminent, and you had knowledge that the judge had just cleared him of his charges and yet you let him go ahead and be hooked up for lethal injection, what would that say about you? Could genuine love allow such a thing to happen? Such is true for us and the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ.

II. Communion

A. Sin is indeed both a disease and a crime. Only God can heal that disease; by the wounds and stripes of His Son, the Great Physician, you can be healed. The Just Judge and Justifier declares, "*You are righteous, not guilty, fully pardoned, set free, forgiven!*" This is true because of His shed blood! Our crime of cosmic treason against God has been *paid in full* by Jesus on the cross. My terminal infirmity has a Remedy--His name is Jesus! He is the God of our salvation! The Bread & Cup proclaim this truth to our hearts today. The Bread & Cup declare both our cure and our emancipation.

B. Today is *All Saints Day (a.k.a. All Hallows Day)*, the memorial day for faithful believers now in Heaven. We especially commemorate those who lost their lives for faith in Christ. Isaiah and Paul both lost their lives for their faith because neither shrank back from declaring the truth about Jesus. The Scriptures and church history tell countless stories of Christian martyrs. With such a cloud of witnesses, it is fitting that we take the Bread & Cup on such a day as this.

* Pray and Serve Communion...

* Benediction Verse: Matthew 13:13-17...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Acts 28:17-31 (ESV)

17 After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. 18 When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. 19 But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my nation. 20 For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain." 21 And they said to him, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. 22 But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against." 23 When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. 24 And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. 25 And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: 26 *"Go to this people, and say, "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive."* 27 *For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'* 28 Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen." 30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Romans 1:14-17 (NIV)

14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. 15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Quote by John Heywood

"There are none so blind as those who will not see."
- John Heywood, 1546.

Quote by Matthew Henry

"None so deaf as those who will not hear. None so blind as those that will not see."
- Matthew Henry, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, (1708–1710.)

Jeremiah 5:20-21 (ESV)

20 Declare this in the house of Jacob; proclaim it in Judah: **21** "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not.

Matthew 13:13-17 (ESV)

13 This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. **14** Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: *"You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive."* **15** For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.' **16** But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. **17** For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Film Clips & Other Links

"Do This in Remembrance of Me" - Francis Chan
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Z3BNBem0xA>

"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" - Lauren Chandler (Hymns for Selena)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuwsHp1ZZ9c>

Searching for Paul's Shipwreck on Malta - [CBN.com](http://www.CBN.com)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuLUjSI6P8>

Paul's Stormy Trip to Rome - Fr. Jeffrey Mickler
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJJUjELeV0>

What Was Rome Like in the Time of Paul? Josh Moody and Garrett Nates
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S92kMwfGYLY>

Acts 28:1-31 by Pastor Arnold Murray (Full Sermon)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqXdiQQ3Wlg>

Third Day Medley- ("Give", "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus", "Your Love Oh Lord")
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-8eZOHlltQ>

Bonus Stuff

Isaiah 6:8-10 (ESV)

8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." **9** And He said, "Go, and say to this people: "'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' **10** Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

Mark 4:9-12 (ESV)

9 Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." **10** When He was alone, the Twelve and the others around Him asked Him about the parables. **11** He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables **12** so that, "'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!'"

Luke 8:9-10 (ESV)

9 And when His disciples asked Him what this parable meant, **10** He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'

Matthew 5:11-12 (ESV)

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke 6:22-23 (ESV)

22 "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! **23** Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Quote by John Bunyan

"Then said the giant, *"Thou practices the craft of a kidnapper. Thou gatherest up woman and children and carriest them into a strange country, to the weakening of my master's kingdom."* But now Great-Heart replied, *"I am a servant of the God of Heaven; my business is to persuade sinners of repentance. I am commanded to do my endeavor to turn men, women and children, fro darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."*

- John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Quote by Tim Keller

"God's Kingdom is 'present in its beginnings, but still future in its fullness.' This guards us from an under-realized eschatology (expecting no change now) and an over-realized eschatology (expecting all change now). In this stage, we embrace the reality that while we're not yet what we will be, we're also no longer what we used to be."

Quote by George Eldon Ladd

"The mission of Jesus brought not a new teaching but a new event. It brought to people an actual foretaste of the eschatological salvation. Jesus did not promise the forgiveness of sins; He bestowed it. He did not simply assure people of the future fellowship of the Kingdom; He invited them into fellowship with Himself as the bearer of the Kingdom. He did not merely promise them vindication in the day of judgment; He bestowed upon them the status of a present righteousness. He not only taught an eschatological deliverance from physical evil; He went about demonstrating the redeeming power of the Kingdom, delivering people from sickness and even death."

- George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*.

Quote by Ronnie McBrayer

"We operate under the notion that America actually belongs to us Christians, and that we belong to it. We believe that the church and the state can make beautiful music together if only they would cooperate. We believe that the preaching of the Kingdom of God and the rallying around the red, white, and blue are always compatible. We believe the lie of the Serpent that we can hold to the sacrificial, life-giving, peace-pursuing, cheek-turning way of Christ and hold to the poisonous, domineering, power-hungry, least-of-these-abusing systems of the Empire. But this is impossible."

- Ronnie McBrayer, *The Jesus Tribe: Following Christ in the Land of the Empire*.

Quote by William Law

"If you have not chosen the Kingdom of God first, it will in the end make no difference what you have chosen instead."

Quote by David Livingstone

"I place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the Kingdom of God. If anything will advance the interests of the Kingdom, it shall be given away or kept, only as by giving or keeping it I shall most promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes in time or eternity."

Quote by John Calvin

"For though we very truly hear that the Kingdom of God will be filled with splendor, joy, happiness and glory, yet when these things are spoken of, they remain utterly remote from our perception, and as it were, wrapped in obscurities, until that day."