

--We are studying the entire book of ACTS!

TODAY:

WEEK 30 – A SERVANT'S HEART

We are in our FINAL WEEK – finishing up an entire series on a study of the Book of Acts – Paul has been on a ship, sailing to Italy so that he can appeal his case to Caesar, in Rom, proving over and over again that as He stands in his purpose that God has called him to, He is doing incredible things in the name of Jesus

Ministering in temples, riots, prisons, and last week – saving lives in the name of God on a sinking ship..

Paul and all of the other prisoners, captain, and prison guards escaped safely to shore....and now we pick up in Acts 28

Acts 28:1-2 (NLT)

1 Once we were safe on shore, we learned that we were on the island of Malta. **2** The people of the island were very kind to us. It was cold and rainy, so they built a fire on the shore to welcome us.

Now Malta was popular, there was a major port for sailors, but they didn't realize they were on Malta until they were on shore, REMEMBER – the storm was so bad they didn't have sun, starts, NOTHING

And there were on the OTHER side of the island where there was no port in the COLD and RAIN

IT is significant that they ended up in MALTA – *why?*

In the early GREEK - the name meant honey, because the island was known for beekeeping

BUT IN the PHONECIAN language it had a different meaning - REFUGE

SO THE PLACE they WRECKED on – was a place of REFUGE even though they did not recognize it

AND SO MANY TIMES – we end up in places of REFUGE that don't look like refuge until you are IN the place for a minute...

Because the way you got there didn't seem fitting for the destination

"Well, kyle, you don't know why journey" – well thank GOD, He was with you on the journey, cause what LOOKED like a wreck, ended up being a place of REFUGE where you were met with KINDNESS and a people who gave WARMTH (fire)

The people didn't shove the prisoners and guards away – they build fire on the shore to WELCOME them

WE NEED to be that people – a welcoming body to provide warmth and the FIRE of God that they SO DESPERATELY seek out

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast. **10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

YOUR SALVATION in a place of REFUGE is not because of anything YOU DID
But it is FOR YOU to DO SOMETHING with... because you are HIS
WORKMANSHIP – HIS MASTERPIECE in the image of JESUS made to do
GREAT THINGS

THESE SAILORS and PRISONERS tried to DO all the things they knew to save themselves – BUT NOTHING WORKED

It was simply listening to the voice of God through PAUL that saved them

NOTHING you do saves you – but what you do is a response to what you received as a free gift for HIM GIFTING YOU refuge, peace, and redeemed identity in God

Acts 28:3 (NLT)

3 As Paul gathered an armful of sticks and was laying them on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand.

DUDE CAN'T CATCH A BREAK!!!!

PRISONS, STONINGS, TRIALS, DEATH PLOTS, SHIPWRECKS, and now
SNAKEBITES?!?!?!?

First of all I want to point something out

THE APOSTLE PAUL – who's ability to hear God and tell the unbelievers what to do that SAVED THEM ALL, was gathering sticks....

EVEN THOUGH, there were 276 crew members

YOU ARE NEVER TOO GREAT to stop serving....

Galatians 5:13 (NLT)

13 For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

YOUR SINFUL NATURE includes "I'm too good to serve" – that is an appetite of the flesh – wanting people to wash your feet and serve your needs, never wanting to SERVE ANY ONE ELSE'S needs...

And remember – we were GIFTED REFUGE and SALVATION – for us to DO good works to REPRESENT HIM in all things and on every island we end up on

AND SERVING IS DIFFICULT when people don't appreciate it

But it isn't "serve to get recognized or serve to get a thank you"

It is 'SERVE to DEPOSIT THE LOVE OF GOD WHEREVER YOU CAN'

AND WATCH WHAT THE PEOPLE DO – that PAUL is serving...

Acts 28:4-5 (NLT)

4 The people of the island saw it hanging from his hand and said to each other, "A murderer, no doubt! Though he escaped the sea, justice will not permit him to live." **5** But Paul shook off the snake into the fire and was unharmed.

THE PEOPLE OF MALTA – who were trying to help him, even though he was serving and was helping as well – they saw him as a prisoner and they thought 'Well, he got what he deserved!'

Funny – if you do a word study – that word "justice" is actually the word **DIKEE**
DIKEE is the GREEK GODDESS of JUSTICE

THE NATIVES SAID – **THE GODDESS WE WORSHIP WON'T PERMIT HIM TO LIVE...**

And all PAUL DOES it shake it off – he doesn't complain, he doesn't get made at God and say 'I'M SERVING YOU, WHY WOULD YOU LET THIS HAPPEN'

He simply carries on – HE SHAKES OFF the attack...

HE stands in the truth of the JUSTICE of the PROMISES of HIS GOD

AND I WONDER how many of us give worship to DIKEE more than our FATHER

"JUSTICE WILL PREVAIL" – you better be careful when you say that – who are you allowing JUSTICE to be handled by?

WELL, I GUESS I GOT WHAT I DESERVED
WHO YOU GIVING GLORY TO???

We have FAR TOO LONG, not understood what we are saying because our culture has been INTERMINGLED with culture of other gods that THE ONE TRUE GOD – and you can tell by how you react to an attack

CAUSE you trust God, but when an attack comes – we panic and reason – I guess I got what I deserve – NOT NECESSARILY – **PRAISE GOD no matter what so the attack is either SHAKEN OFF – or so He can show you how to navigate out of you paying for a circumstance you created...**

BUT DON'T GIVE GLORY to a false God of "justice"

EVERYONE WANTS all these bad people to "DIE AND GET WHAT THEY DESERVE"
I SURE AM GLAD PAUL didn't die and "GET WHAT HE DESERVED" before Damascus...

PAUL DIDN'T PANIC – cause he remembered the PROMISE of God

GOD SAID- I AM GOING TO ROME – and **a SNAKE surely can't stop God**
A SERPENT surely can't stop God

LET us let the serpent, SATAN, stop God's PLANS for our lives ALL THE TIME cause we give more faith to a suggestion of the enemy than the PROMISE of the FATHER

Acts 28:6 (NLT)

6 The people waited for him to swell up or suddenly drop dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw that he wasn't harmed, they changed their minds and decided he was a god.

PEOPLE always like to see extremes – Paul was either EVIL or a GOD

And I LOVE that PAUL knew – IT ISN'T ME who is unstoppable

IT IS GOD'S PLAN that is unstoppable and I HAPPEN to be a part of it
THAT IS WHY WE ARE TOLD NOT TO BOAST

Proverbs 27:1 (NLT)

1 Don't brag about tomorrow, since you don't know what the day will bring.

CAUSE God can use ANYONE to carry out HIS PLANS..

AND LET'S GO BACK to verse 3...

Acts 28:3 (NLT)

3 As Paul gathered an armful of sticks and was laying them on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand.

HE GOT BIT from a serpent being driven out by the heat of the fire

Hebrews 12:29 (NLT)

29 For our God is a devouring fire.

Luke 3:16 (NLT)

16 John answered their questions by saying, "I baptize you with water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

IF we develop a culture in this house where we pursue GOD, HIS FIRE will DEVOUR us and we will be CONSUMED by it

And the HEAT of that FIRE will DRIVE OUT SERPENTS and the first thing they will try to do is come back to bite you

SO DON'T BE SURPRISED by attack as we go DEEPER in HIM

YOU GOTTA LEARN – to SHAKE IT BACK IN so that the SERPENT is destroyed by the FIRE it tried to escape..

HOW do you destroy an attack of a serpent

LOVE – HUMILITY – SERVICE – FAITH – BOLDNESS

NOT LETTING AN ATTACK MOVE YOU....

NOT ONLY DID THIS ATTACK NOT MOVE PAUL... But their worship of DIKEE didn't move Him or their judgmental spirit move him either...

THE ONLY THING that moved Him – was His purpose and identity in God
WATCH....

Acts 28:7 (NLT)

7 Near the shore where we landed was an estate belonging to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us and treated us kindly for three days.

Publius was the person that represented ROME in Malta...

SO PAUL, in SERVING in the middle of SHIPWRECKS and SNAKEBITES and INJUSTICE....

GETS INVITED in to THE ROMAN officials home for 3 days of REST and REPLENTISHING – **and PAUL is a prisoner!!!!**

Do you see the FAVOR out of humility?!?!?!?!?

Proverbs 22:4 (NLT)

4 True humility and fear of the Lord lead to riches, honor, and long life.

RICHES in this case – FAVOR – and then Paul is honored by a ROMAN official

Acts 28:8-9 (NLT)

8 As it happened, Publius's father was ill with fever and dysentery. Paul went in and prayed for him, and laying his hands on him, he healed him. 9 Then all the other sick people on the island came and were healed.

Paul did let an offense harbor any feelings about "well 3 days ago yall saying I deserved that snakebite and now yall wanting me to heal"

NO – he SAW an opportunity and he LISTENED to GOD

Cause ALL THAT MOVED HIM was His purpose to Glorify GOD

THIS PRISONER – surviving everything, proving himself over and over..

BLESSES a roman official's father and HEALS him...

And it says – then ALL OTHER sick people on the island came and were healed..

NOW I WANT TO POINT OUT SOMETHING....

We would assume that meant – they were ALL healed in the same way by a miracle...but if you look, the word for HEALED in verse 9 was different than 8, it means "to receive medical attention"

WHO WAS WITH PAUL – LUKE

THE MIRACLE DREW THEM IN – and GOD used MIRACULOUS and KNOWLEDGE to bring healing to ALL

AND we want to put an expectation that GOD wants to do ALL THINGS through miracles, but what if the MIRACLE is the draw, and some healing come through a hug, or a conversation, or a relationship, or a counselor....

What if the LOVE of the HOUSE is the healing agent needed and a person's healing came through GENUINE ACCEPTANCE instead of a touch at an altar call – **SEE – IT IS NOT ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER it is BOTH**

Acts 28:10 (NLT)

10 As a result we were showered with honors, and when the time came to sail, people supplied us with everything we would need for the trip.

THEY WERE STILL destined to get to ROME

But in a PITSTOP in a place of REFUGE they were never supposed to be in, they got EVERYTHING THEY NEEDED because they SERVED and HONORED

Luke 6:38 (NLT)

38 Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.

THEY GAVE all they had – gathering sticks, healing disease and healing sickness and giving a WORD for ALL to survive a shipwreck...

And they got a NEW SHIP and ALL THE STUFF NEEDED for the trip to ROME

Acts 28:11-14 (NLT)

11 It was three months after the shipwreck that we set sail on another ship that had wintered at the island—an Alexandrian ship with the twin gods as its figurehead.

12 Our first stop was Syracuse, where we stayed three days. 13 From there we sailed across to Rhegium. A day later a south wind began blowing, so the following day we sailed up the coast to Puteoli. 14 There we found some believers, who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome.

They waited 3 months, waiting for winter to end, sailed to Syracuse, Rhegium, and finally caught the right wind where they sailed to Puteoli...

They spent time with believers and FINALLY got to Rome...

FINALLY – after years upon years – PAUL finally sees Rome...

And even though HE IS STILL a prisoner awaiting trial....

Acts 28:15 (NLT)

15 The brothers and sisters in Rome had heard we were coming, and they came to meet us at the Forum on the Appian Way. Others joined us at The Three Taverns. When Paul saw them, he was encouraged and thanked God.

Even though he was a prisoner...he was encouraged and thanked God...

WHAT IS COOL ABOUT THIS – is the way he was greeted by the believers in Rome...who had received Paul's letters to the Romans a few years before...

SO THEY PROBABLY felt like they knew PAUL already....

THEY WANTED TO HONOR HIM.... So they met him at the FORUM on the APPIAN WAY and at the THREE TAVERNS

THIS WAS HOW EMPERORS were welcomed when they visited a city...

He was a prisoner – HONORED as a KING.... **WHAT HAVE WE READ...**

Proverbs 22:4 (NLT)

4 True humility and fear of the Lord lead to riches, honor, and long life.

Luke 6:38 (NLT)

38 Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.

LOOK at the HONOR and the GIFT of BLESSING pouring in to PAUL's LIFE
AS A PRISONER by human means

Acts 28:16 (NLT)

16 When we arrived in Rome, Paul was permitted to have his own private lodging, though he was guarded by a soldier.

HONOR – FAVOR....

**AND YOU THINK you have to GET OUT
of your situation to receive the promises of God????**

Acts 28:17-20 (NLT)

17 Three days after Paul's arrival, he called together the local Jewish leaders. He said to them, "Brothers, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Roman government, even though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors. **18** The Romans tried me and wanted to release me, because they found no cause for the death sentence. **19** But when the Jewish leaders protested the decision, I felt it necessary to appeal to Caesar, even though I had no desire to press charges against my own people. **20** I asked you to come here today so we could get acquainted and so I could explain to you that I am bound with this chain because I believe that the hope of Israel—the Messiah—has already come."

THE FIRST people he calls together – is the JEWS

Have you noticed a pattern throughout ACTS?

He goes to the JEWS first in every city he came to as an evangelist....

THEY ARE STILL God's people – even though they deny HIM.....

PAUL was called to JEWS, GENTILES, and KINGS

EVERYONE – and he HONORED THAT ORDER

EVEN THOUGH THE ORDER caused him to get locked up most of the time!

CAUSE he was a SERVANT to GOD, not to anything else..no matter the consequence

And he says "THE REASON IM IN THESE CHAINS, isn't because of a crime, its because I believe that the MESSIAH that YOU STILL PRAY FOR has already come"

Philippians 1:13 (NLT)

13 For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ.

EVERY AUDIENCE HE HAD KNEW

I AM HERE because I DON'T SERVE ANYONE but CHRIST

WHAT DOES YOUR AUDIENCE know you for?????

Acts 28:21-24 (NLT)

21 They replied, "We have had no letters from Judea or reports against you from anyone who has come here. **22** But we want to hear what you believe, for the only thing we know about this movement is that it is denounced everywhere."

23 So a time was set, and on that day a large number of people came to Paul's lodging. He explained and testified about the Kingdom of God and tried to persuade them about Jesus from the Scriptures. Using the law of Moses and the books of the prophets, he spoke to them from morning until evening. **24** Some were persuaded by the things he said, but others did not believe.

Know why they had no letters? The religious leaders in Jerusalem had no case so they made no effort to send documents

THEY DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING about PAUL, so they wanted to listen to him and hear what HE HAS TO SAY....prob cause of the HONOR he received as a prisoner

AMAZING – how you are HONORED has a lot to do with how people receive you, but the HONOR you get is based on the HONOR you give, not the honor you demand.....

SO PAUL shared the KINGDOM of God and some rejected, but SOME believed...
Of course some did – ROME was the DESTINATION!!!!
Of course some didn't – they were too caught up in religion...

Acts 28:25-28 (NLT)

25 And after they had argued back and forth among themselves, they left with this final word from Paul: "The Holy Spirit was right when he said to your ancestors through Isaiah the prophet, 26 'Go and say to this people: When you hear what I say, you will not understand. When you see what I do, you will not comprehend. 27 For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes— so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.' 28 So I want you to know that this salvation from God has also been offered to the Gentiles, and they will accept it."

Acts 28:29 (NLT)

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.

LOOK AT THIS - THE JEWS started to argue among themselves...cause some believed and some didn't....

And PAUL pointed out a prophesy they all knew about...from ISAIAH...

And it remains true today – MANY HEAR and REJECT simply because they don't want to turn to GOD and truly be healed...

THEIR HEARTS are hardened and they CAN NOT SEE or HEAR and because of that – THEY WILL NOT TURN TO GOD and LET GOD HEAL THEM

SO PAUL SAYS – I've shown you, I've told you, and now I will go offer it to EVERYONE ELSE.... And then the JEWS LEFT

And some of us PREACH to the SAME person over and over...

LISTEN – give truth, and then serve in love, but don't make your life's goal about THAT ONE while turning your focus from EVERYONE else

Mark 9:35 (NLT)

35 He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."

NOT JUST ONE – EVERYONE

PAUL SAID – IVE SHOWN YOU, IVE TOLD YOU

ILL PRAY and ILL BE HERE – BUT I CANT STAY AND TRY TO CONVINCE YOU

Acts 28:30-31 (NLT)

30 For the next two years, Paul lived in Rome at his own expense. He welcomed all who visited him, 31 boldly proclaiming the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. And no one tried to stop him.

HE LIVED in ROME for the NEXT 2 years...WAITING for his case to be heard before CAESAR....

HE PAID HIS OWN WAY and HE RECEIVED ALL who visited him

SLAVES, MASTERS, JEWS, GENTILES – ALL - HE WAS A SERVANT OF - ALL

BOLDLY PREACHING and teaching

AND NO ONE TRIED TO STOP HIM – not even the JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS WHO JUST HEARD HIM OUT

AND REMEMBER – HE was STILL a prisoner of ROME allowed to work and preach...

HIS CHAINS and CUSTODY matterd nothing

He was completely unhindered by his chains...

And the GOSPEL WENT FORTH

WHEN WE LEARN how to FULLY rely on GOD and become like PAUL, the heart of a humble servant – NOTHING will hinder the purpose of a CHURCH ON FIRE

Mark 10:45 (NLT)

45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

THAT is the image of CHRIST we should take on as a CHURCH ON FIRE

AMEN