THE GOSPEL CANNOT BE STOPPED

Acts 21–28 | Sermon 16 | August 30, 2026 | Dave Geldart | Tru Community Church

1. **[1] ACTS INTRO-BAPTISM**
    a. Aren't baptisms great?
        i. There's something about watching somebody go down into the water and come back up that never gets old —
        ii. and today we get to watch it happen twice!
    b. We'll hear a little of their stories and celebrate what Jesus has done in each of their lives.
    c. But notice something about what we're celebrating today:
        i. this isn't the end of their story. It's the beginning of a new chapter.
    d. Their baptism is a public declaration — *I belong to Jesus. I'm following Jesus.*
        i. *And I want my life to be part of what Jesus is doing in the world.*

2. **WITHOUT HINDRANCE (THE ENDING LUKE DIDN'T WRITE)**
    a. That's actually a pretty good way to end our journey through Acts.
        i. Because when you get to the very end of the book, something strange happens.
            1. Luke finishes his book. But he doesn't really finish the story.
    b. Turn with me to Acts 28:30–31:
        i. *[2] For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!*
    c. That's how Luke ends Acts.
        i. Paul is in Rome, under house arrest, waiting for his case to be resolved.
        ii. He has chains. He has opposition.
        iii. He has real uncertainty about what happens next.
    d. And Luke doesn't tell us how the trial turns out.
        i. He doesn't tell us if Paul is released or executed.
        ii. He doesn't give us the ending we'd expect.
            1. He simply tells us Paul is proclaiming the kingdom of God with all boldness and without hindrance.

2. And then Luke puts down his pen. That's it.

e. Why would Luke end the story there?
    i. Especially because the last eight chapters have been one long series of things that seem like they ought to stop the story —
        1. chapters we've been walking through together these last few weeks:
    ii. Paul goes to Jerusalem against every warning.
        1. There's conflict, arrest, a conspiracy to kill him.
    iii. He's transferred under guard and stands trial —
        1. first before governor Felix, then Festus, then before King Agrippa.
    iv. He appeals all the way up to Caesar himself.
    v. He's put on a ship bound for Rome —
        1. and it's caught in a massive storm, then wrecked at sea.
    vi. He washes up on the island of Malta, gets bitten by a deadly snake, and miraculously survives.
    vii. And after all of that, he finally makes it to Rome.
f. And through all of it — what happens?
    i. Paul is still preaching Jesus. The mission is still moving. Without hindrance.
g. [3] Now — "without hindrance" clearly doesn't mean "without hardship."
    i. Paul's life was not easy.
        1. Conspiracies, beatings, trials, shipwreck, imprisonment —
        2. none of it was comfortable.
    ii. But none of it had the power to stop what Jesus was doing.
h. That's the lesson this book has been teaching us:
    i. Jesus said the gospel would go outward, and we've watched it happen.
i. But we've also watched the people carrying that mission rarely know exactly how it's going to go.
        1. They make plans; the Spirit redirects them.
        2. They encounter opposition.
        3. And still, Jesus keeps moving his mission forward.
j. That's exactly where we left off last week —
    i. what happens when we're doing the right things,
        1. and Jesus takes the wheel anyway.
    ii. Sometimes what looks like a detour to us isn't a detour to Jesus.

1. We see one road; he sees the whole map.

k. And Acts 28 brings that lesson all the way to the finish line, because eventually you have to come to terms with something:
    i. [4] you are not in control of the mission.
    ii. And honestly, that's good news — because if the mission depended on me always having the right plan and the right outcome, we'd be in trouble.
l. Paul couldn't control any of it — not the leaders, not the storm, not Rome itself.
    i. But he could control one thing: his faithfulness.
m. Paul couldn't determine the outcome, but he could remain obedient in the middle of it.
    i. **[5] You may not be in charge of the outcome. But you are responsible for your faithfulness.**
n. Luke doesn't tell us how Paul's story ends, because Luke is showing us something bigger than Paul's story.
    i. You don't always get to see the outcome —
        1. the mission doesn't depend on knowing the ending.
    ii. The gospel keeps moving, unhindered.
o. So the question becomes: **what does Jesus want us to do with the part of the story we've been given?**
    i. Because Luke may have put down his pen. Jesus wasn't finished.

3. **[6] THE STORY DIDN'T END**
    a. Acts was never really a book about Paul — or Peter, or Stephen, or Philip, or Barnabas.
    b. **It's a book about what Jesus continued to do through his Spirit and his people.**
    c. Remember how Luke began it?
        i. His first volume, the Gospel of Luke, was about all that Jesus *began* to do and teach.
        ii. Acts is the continuation.
            1. Jesus ascended, but he didn't retire.
            2. He gave his Spirit to his people, and then he sent them.
    d. That's what Acts 1:8 — the theme verse of this series — was really about:

i. *[7] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

e. Not just a prediction — a picture of the mission Jesus was establishing through his church.
    i. And for sixteen weeks we've watched that map expand, outward and outward,
        1. until Paul is sitting in Rome, the heart of the empire, still talking to anyone who'll listen.

f. But here's what I want us to see before we leave Acts:
    i. we're not just looking at the map anymore. We're on it.

g. We've talked about Jerusalem as our city,
    i. Judea as our region,
    ii. Samaria as the wider reach of Kansas,
    iii. and the ends of the earth as the places around the world where Jesus is still sending his people.

h. Those aren't just four geographical categories.
    i. They're four ways of asking one personal question:
        1. **[8] Where has Jesus placed you?**
        2. Who's around you at home, at work, at school —
            a. the people you don't have to go looking for,
            b. because God already put them there?
        3. That's your Jerusalem.
            a. Your Judea's just beyond that circle.
            b. Your Samaria, a little farther, beyond your comfort zone.
            c. The ends of the earth — people you'll never meet unless someone goes.

i. You have a place on this map. Not someday, not when life's less complicated.
    i. Right now.
    ii. The question isn't just what God did in Acts.
        1. It's what Jesus is doing *through you.*

j. Sometimes people call this "Acts 29."
    i. There's no actual 29th chapter. We're not adding to Scripture.

ii. We're saying something simpler: Luke's story ended, but Jesus' mission continued.
    1. Generation after generation of ordinary Christians have stepped into it. And now it's our turn.

k. That's why those two baptisms matter today.
    i. They aren't just nice moments in a service.
    ii. They're two more people saying, *I'm in* —
        1. and wanting everyone to know it.
    iii. Their story isn't ending in that tank. It's beginning.

l. Sometimes we treat our ordinary lives like interruptions to God's mission.
    i. "I'm just raising kids." "I'm just working this job."
        1. "I'm just living in this little town."
    ii. Acts doesn't give us that category.

m. There are no insignificant places in the mission of Jesus, and no insignificant people.
    i. Philip was sent to one man on a desert road.
    ii. Barnabas went looking for Saul.
    iii. Paul sat in a prison and kept talking about Jesus.
    iv. It all happened through ordinary people willing to say yes wherever he put them.

n. So that's my question to you this morning: **where has Jesus placed you?**

o. In a few minutes — after we've heard from each other — you'll get a chance to physically mark that place with a pushpin on the map. Hang onto that.

p. Because I don't want us to leave Acts as people who watched the mission.
    i. I want us to leave Acts as people who recognize that we're part of it.

4. **[9] FAITHFUL, NOT COMFORTABLE**

a. The gospel being unstoppable doesn't mean following Jesus will be comfortable.

b. Acts never promises that — if anything, it promises almost the opposite.

c. There will be opposition, disappointment, closed doors, unanswered prayers, storms.

d. **There will be seasons where you ask, God, what are you doing?**

e. But remember where Acts ends.
    i. Paul himself is still waiting, still not knowing the outcome,

ii. and still faithful with the chapter he'd been given.

f. Maybe that's the word some of us need today.
   i. You don't need to know how your story ends.
   ii. You need to be faithful in the chapter you're in —
      1. even a chapter you didn't choose, don't understand, don't enjoy, or where nothing seems to be happening.

g. **[10] You may not be in charge of the outcome. But you are responsible for your faithfulness.**

h. So take the next step.
   i. Love the person in front of you.
   ii. Pray for the person God placed around you.
   iii. Open your home.
   iv. Disciple somebody.
   v. Go when Jesus sends you.

i. **[11] You don't need the whole map. You need the next step.**

j. Paul ends up in Rome — in the heart of the empire
   i. In chains rather than in power
   ii. Yet still faithful where God put him.

k. [12] Next week we start asking what faithfulness looks like right here — welcome, equip, send. Same mission, next chapter.

l. And in October, we meet someone else who had to stay faithful without being in control: Daniel.
   i. Different century, different empire, same question — **how do you keep following God in the middle of a culture that doesn't?**

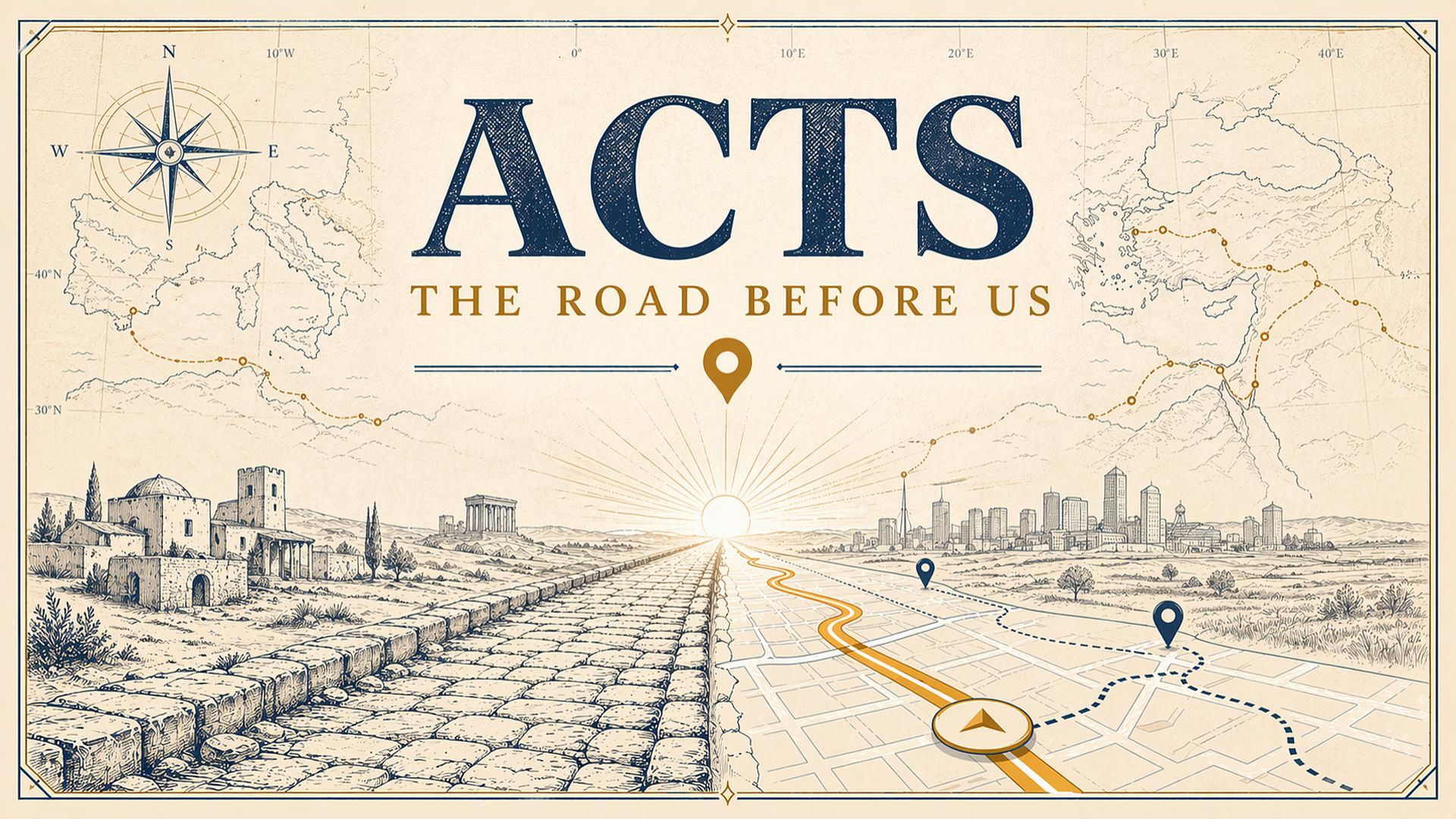
m. That's where Acts leaves us. That's where Daniel picks us up.

5. **(YOUR TURN — OPEN MIC TESTIMONIES)**
   a. But before we move on, I don't want to finish Acts by doing all the talking.
   b. We've spent sixteen weeks hearing what God did through his people in Acts —
      i. and I believe he's been doing things in us.
      ii. So we're going to make room for that.
   c. [13] I invite you to share:
      i. something God showed you through this series,

ii. a story of his faithfulness,
iii. a step of obedience you're taking,
iv. a question you still have

d. There's a list of the sermons from this series on the back of your handout if you need something to jog your memory.
e. Just raise your hand and we'll bring a mic to you.
    i. Keep in mind: shorter is better. Just tell us what God's been doing.
    ii. Those are Acts 29 stories too.
f. **[TESTIMONIES — 10 MIN]**

6. **[14] CLOSING (THE GOSPEL CANNOT BE STOPPED)**
    a. Luke put down his pen. But Jesus didn't stop working.
        i. Acts 28 is the end of the book. It isn't the end of the story.
    b. The gospel cannot be stopped.
        i. [15] So let's take our place in it.
    c. As the band begins to play, I invite you to come and place your pin in one of the maps on this south wall.
        i. And as you push it in, do it as an act of worship and faith:
            1. This is where Jesus has placed me.
            2. I am part of his mission.
    d. Come.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ACTS
THE ROAD BEFORE US

WITHOUT HINDRANCE

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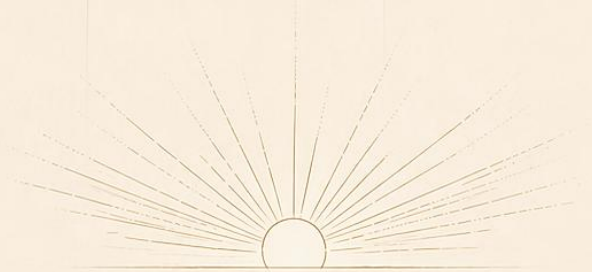

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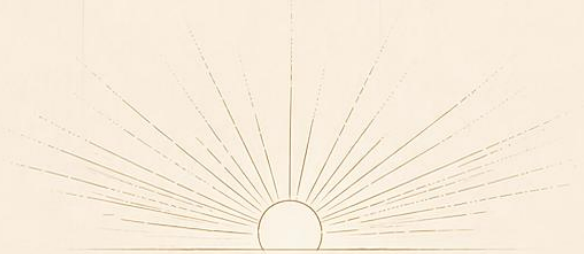

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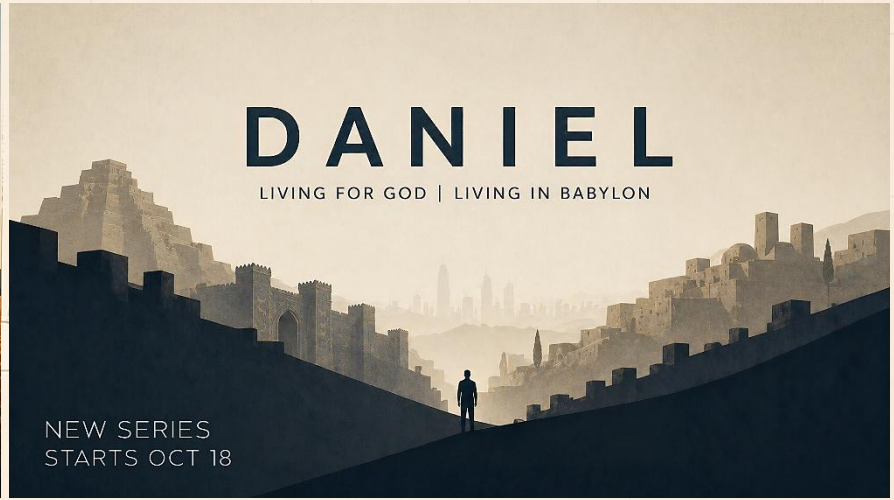
You need the next step.

WHAT'S NEXT

NEW SERIES STARTS SEPTEMBER 2026
WELCOME | EQUIP | SEND
TRU.CHURCH


DANIEL
LIVING FOR GOD | LIVING IN BABYLON
NEW SERIES
STARTS OCT 18

TESTIMONIES

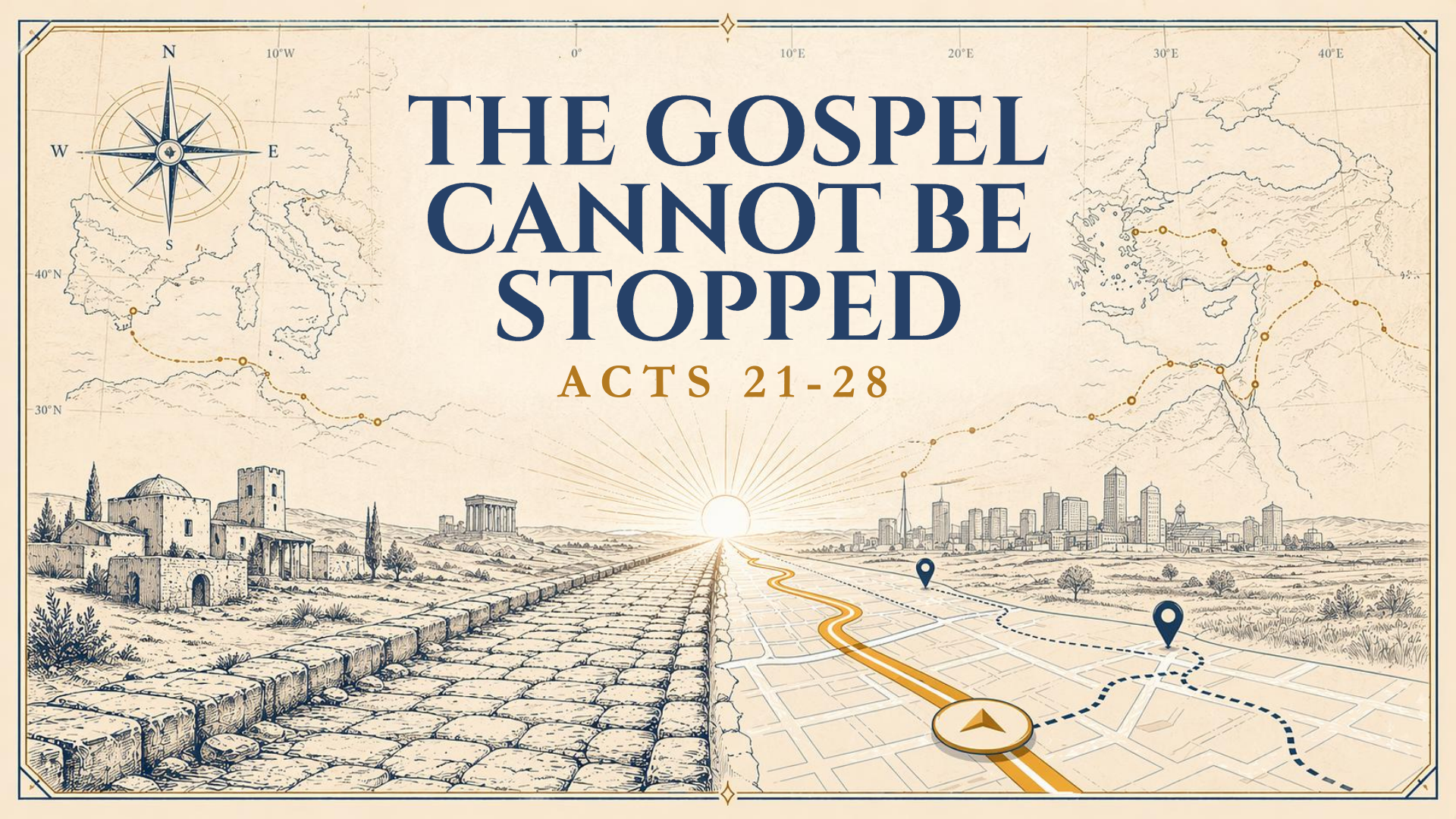
Share…

something God's showed you

a story of His faithfulness

a step of obedience you're taking

a question you still have



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ACTS 21-28

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So let's take our place in it!