

Acts of the Apostles

49 – The Last Chapter

Acts 28

A BIG Story

- Big enough to include Jews and Gentiles (v.23-30)
 - The miracle of this cannot be overstated (why it was the first big church fight)
 - God has brought together ethnicities which have no reason for being together
- Big enough to span geographies
 - The book of Acts spans three continents – Africa, Asia, Europe – and expanded into each of those rapidly
- Big enough to unite strangers (v.15)
 - There may not be more than 100 Christians in Rome when Paul arrives
 - Hearts knit together proves there is more to it than familiarity
- Big enough to be carried on by us
 - The book just ends – no word on Paul, how he moved forward or died, nothing
 - Commentators: Luke ends here on purpose, making sure we know the Kingdom did not hinge on Paul – in this sense, it's too big to fail

A BIG Savior

- Jesus can save the religious and irreligious
 - Managing sin by religious people: religious think they can do God a favor by being on His team and need saving from their own self-righteousness (EARNING from God – the path of moral conformity ~ T. Keller)
 - Managing sin by irreligious people: running far away so that they can do what they want (SPURNING God – the path of self-discovery)
- Jesus can heal our sickness (v.7-10)
 - We can't hide it
 - He is not surprised
 - He gives healing away
- Jesus can deal with snakes (v.1-6)
 - They thought Paul was a goner because the snake bit him
 - They assigned Paul guilt because the snake bit him
 - The truth: he WAS a murderer
 - That which should have killed him didn't because of God's power (so much so they mistook him for a god)

Questions for Discussion:

1. Out of the four bullet points under “a BIG Story,” which one is the most miraculous to you? Why?
2. Read Acts 15.1-11 and Ephesians 2.11-17. Why was ethnicity such a big issue (and hurdle) in the early church? In what way(s) does it remain an issue today in the church? (in our church family?)
3. Paul preached the Gospel to the religious Jews and irreligious Gentiles. Both groups needed the Good News of Jesus. When you think about your own story, do you identify with one more than the other? Why? Was there a season of life where you leaned one way more than another? How does the Gospel speak to your temptation to “manage your sin” by religious performance for God or irreligious running from God?
4. Paul *was* a murderer. John Newton (author of Amazing Grace) *was* spiritually blind as a slave-ship captain and then given sight by the grace of God. If you were to write a similar story to Acts 28.1-6, how would you most honestly answer fill in the blank: s/he must be a _____ because s/he was bitten by a snake after escaping the sea? How does that set up your story and lead you to *what should have killed you did not because of the power of God?*
5. Think about your week that is coming up. What normal rhythms will put you in contact with people who need to know about the Kingdom and the King? If you can anticipate them, you can be ready for them. What are some names of people that you know you will see this week that you can pray for now?