

A DEEPER DIVE

Acts 28
December 8, 2024

Micah 6:8—He has shown you, oh mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. – NIV.

Monday: Here is a link to the Bible Project's summary/explanation of Acts. As Pastor Ron finishes up his study of Acts, you might want to take some time to watch the videos in here.

<https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-acts>

Reading— Prayerfully review Acts 28.

Here is an interesting map of all of Paul's journeys. <https://viz.bible/journeys>

As you begin reading Acts 28, think about these two points. First, how do the "native people" (ESV) show "unusual kindness." I have occasionally heard the phrase, "the kindness of strangers." What does this event show about these people? Second, how does Paul act as a servant? How does God use Paul's act of service to show his power, and give Paul the chance to witness to these people? In a different vein, have you ever, when trying to be kind to someone or perform an act of service, had trouble arise because of it? What reaction did you have?

Prayer Focus— Spend today in personal prayer. What are you in need of? What is weighing on your heart? Health concerns? Financial issues? Dealing with sin? Are there family members and friends who are lost? Pray for them by name and ask the Lord to give you more opportunities to act in love and speak with grace to them. Lay everything you are dealing with before the Lord.

Tuesday: (Re)Reading— Acts

Consider this— Acts 28:1-10

A new audience and new miracles. What is the reaction of the people to the first miracle that Luke tells us about? Luke does not tell us how Paul felt, or what he did when the people acted in this way, but we can imagine. What previous story in Acts does this remind you of? What do you think Paul might have said to these islanders? The second miracle is Paul's healing of Publius' father. How does Luke use this incident and the aftermath to remind us of the ministry of Jesus (read Matthew 4 and Luke 4). How does God use these miracles to bring honor to his own name, and also to help Paul and the rest of his shipmates prepare for the rest of their journey?

Prayer Focus— Keep it local. Spend today in local prayer. We are reading in v 15 that Paul gave thanks to God for sending the brothers. They encouraged Paul. Think about this as you remember the prayer requests and needs from Sunday (refer to your prayer list if you keep one on Sundays). Think of individuals that you can pray for and encourage. Lift up the fellowship at NUBF. Pray for your pastors and elders. Pray for the workers at the church and the ministries. Pray for financial blessing so that the reach of the church can increase. Remind the Lord about what you prayed for yesterday.

Wednesday: (Re)Reading— Acts

Consider this— Acts 28: 11-22

In v. 11-16 Luke gives us a summary of what is happening. What do you make of Paul boarding a ship with the figureheads that Luke describes? It's been a long and treacherous voyage. As they approach Rome, how does God show his favor to Paul

and his companions through encouragers (v 15)? How do you serve as an encourager? How can you take extra steps during this Christmas season to be an encourager?

In v 17-22 Paul speaks to the local Jewish leaders. What does he tell them? Why do they want to listen to Paul?

Prayer Focus– Pray for our nation. Pray for our leaders. Pray for the victims and survivors of the fires, floods, hurricanes, and other disasters. Pray that in each community the churches can come together to show the grace and love of God through helping the recovery. Remember to pray for your personal needs, and the local needs.

Thursday: (Re)Reading– Acts

Consider this– Acts 28: 23-31

Paul fulfills his desire to preach in Rome. First, he expounds on the kingdom of God. What does he emphasize? What does he use as proofs? Why is this audience particularly suited for this message? Luke tells us that some believed and some did not. Paul was pretty good (understatement) and explaining the gospel message, no matter the audience. Does the fact that some didn't believe help you in trying to relate a gospel message and find people unwilling to accept what you say? Paul quotes Isaiah. What is ironic about the passage he quotes and the unbelief of some of his hearers?

Prayer Focus– Spend today in prayer for the world. Pray for those in war zones like Ukraine and Russia, Israel, Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan, and any other place you know of. Pray for our missionary partners, and pray for each of them by name! Pray for those in disaster areas. Pray for a united, active, and gospel preaching church all around the world. Remember to pray for your personal needs, the local needs, and our country.

Friday: (Re)Reading– Acts

Consider this– Acts 28

Luke closes his narrative saying that Paul spent two years teaching to anyone who came to listen to him, and he did so without hindrance. Acts 1 started with the comment that the risen Christ told the apostles not to depart from Jerusalem, but to “wait for the promise of the Father” (ESV). Think back on all that has happened, ending in Acts 28. What events and themes stand out? Do you think God still is working today? In what ways do you think God is still advancing His kingdom? Can you see God's hand in your life, and his Spirit working through you to advance His kingdom?

Prayer Focus– Spend today praying for the soon return of Christ. Pray that while Christ's coming is still in the future, God will use you to expand His kingdom. Lift up all of the needs from the week and pray for wisdom and readiness.

Saturday: (Re)Reading– Acts

Consider this– Reread Acts 28

N.T. Wright says that, “The book of Acts has one of the strangest endings of any biblical book ... How do you react to the way the book actually ends?” He continues by saying, “There are many possible explanations for the book's seemingly unfinished nature. But perhaps it is deliberate. Perhaps it is an unfinished story that leaves the reader facing this question: ‘What are you going to do about this?’ How would you answer that?” In other words, is Luke's last statement directed toward us?

Prayer Focus– Spend today praying for the Pastors of NUBF and the people who are making things happen on Sunday. Include the teachers, the behind-the-scenes workers, the worship team, the regular attendees, and that there will be new people who come to the service and maybe meet Jesus for the first time.

Sunday: Go to church with the anticipation of hearing from the Lord.