

THE BOOK OF ACTS: THE WORK AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

February 2, 2014

56. Paul Ashore on Malta and Arrival in Rome

Acts 28:1-16

A mindset or an open-mind: which do you possess? A mindset is a mind closed to receiving and responding to spiritual matters thereby depriving one from spiritual growth; whereas an open mind is receptive and responsive to the things of God thus enhancing your spiritual growth relationships. The truth is that as you travel in this pilgrim's journey and you endeavor to do the work of the Church for its growth you will find favors along the way but at the same time you will encounter storms. Storms will come to test the genuineness of your faith for the purpose of building your testimony and enhancing your spiritual growth relationships; other storms will come because you have failed to listen to godly counsel so you can learn from the experience to really always listen to godly counsel. Listening to godly counsels helps to renew your mind to build a testimony that reflects godly character as an evidence of the transformation process than comes through the renewing of the mind which is open, receptive and responsive to the things and ways of God. A mindset will make you reach conclusions before you even learn from your storms and/or experiences. The scriptures admonish believers to be transformed by the renewal of their minds rather than just conforming to the things of the world. Your transformation begins with an encounter with Jesus. Paul had his transforming encounter with Jesus on the way to Damascus where he was going to persecute Christians. Following that experience, Paul's testimony became his defense. When he was falsely accused and taken to trial, and because of the unjust procedures, he made an appeal to Caesar. Festus the Governor of the region in conjunction with King Agrippa after hearing Paul's testimony in his defense granted his appeal to appear before Caesar in Rome because they could not find him guilty of anything deserving death or imprisonment. On the way to Rome, Paul offered a godly counsel to the crew on the ship he was on board with but the captain and the owner of the ship ignored him and went out on sea for the trip. Afterward, they encountered a horrifying storm. This storm lead to a shipwreck but as Paul testified, no live was loss. Every passenger survived until they got safely on shore.

Thus our text for today reads, "Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. 2 The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. 3 Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. 4 When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live." 5 But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. 6 The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. 7 There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. 8 His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. 9 When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. 10 They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed. 11 After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island—it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. 12 We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. 13 From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. 14 There we found some brothers and

sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. 15 The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged. 16 When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him” (Acts 28:1-16).

Mt Traveler members, as we conclude this sermon on today please allow me to summarize it as follows. The work and growth of the church involves:

- Being born again or accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and savior; and becoming part of the household of God as a believer.
- Every believer knowing that the Holy Spirit resides in them.
- Every believer allowing the Holy Spirit to do the work of the church through them.
- Engaging in a pilgrim’s journey requiring determination to walk by faith and not by sight to fulfill your purpose.
- Building and sharing your testimony to persuade your audience to believe in Jesus Christ.
- Believing God’s promise to be with you wherever He takes you to testify of His Name
- Using the status of your citizenship of heaven as well as common sense and wisdom in sharing your testimony
- Faithfully using your God given gifts to minister to others with gratitude wherever God sends you, knowing that He has your back.
- Open-mindedly receiving godly counsel. You must listen to godly men sounding the warning rather than relying on so-called “experts”.
- Enjoying the favor God provides along the pilgrim’s journey and learning from the storms and even perhaps from the shipwrecks!
- This is what the work and growth of the church is all about. And let the church say, “Amen!”

To become part of the household of God as a believer, and be saved, have peace and happiness; and do the work of the church to cause healthy church growth, you must first know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and savior and then allow the Holy Spirit to empower you. If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God’s family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to do the work of the Church to cause its continual growth. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!

If you are reading this on the Internet why don’t you pray asking Jesus Christ to be your Lord and savior, then write us at pastordatiri@mttraveler.org? If you are a child of God and this message has blessed or helped to you, please write and tell us also.

Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama
Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Evangelist R. D. Jacobs

THE BOOK OF ACTS: THE WORK AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH
February 9, 2014 57. Paul Preaches at Rome under Guard Acts 28:17-31

The 59th and concluding sermon in the Series “THE BOOK OF ACTS: THE WORK AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH” deals with Paul preaching at Rome under guard. Our Study of the book of Acts has dealt with many individuals including Peter, James and the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul was a missionary, theologian, and writer to the early church including 13 epistles - 1/4 of the New Testament. He also is the most important interpreter of the teaching of Christ, His Life, Death and Resurrection.

In the concluding part of Acts 28, Paul has arrived in Rome and is dwelling by himself with a guard waiting to stand trial before Caesar. In retrospect, Paul’s life up to this point has been anything but easy. Rather it has been full of problems. Since his conversion, missionary trips, and arrest Paul’s life has been full of problems. As the Rev Dr. B.C. Datiri has been quoted as saying, “Life is problem solving”. And, it is the Christians that have the mindset of “God use my life to minister to others” that find Joy and Peace in life despite the problems in their lives. These are ones who lives are a testimony to Christ and who are becoming like Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost. The Apostle Paul used his life as a ministering opportunity and to testify of Christ in the midst of his problems!

As Paul is now in Rome and is permitted to remain by himself with a soldier guarding him, he calls together the Jewish leaders there to tell them why he was arrested. (Acts 28:16-23) Paul tells them that he is arrested because of his belief in Jesus the Christ. Paul’s belief in Christ was beyond the basic belief in Judaism that many practiced. It was beyond this belief based heavily in the Law of Moses with its customs, rules, and rituals. Paul believed and taught about a Relationship with God and not an outward show of religion trying to reach God. On this day the Jews came in large numbers to the place where Paul was and from morning to evening he expounded/expained, testified, preached/tried to convince them about Jesus from their Books of the Law of Moses and the Prophets (the Old Testament).

The Bible says that some believed but that others would not believe and that they made the choice to reject Jesus but the Work of the Church is share the Gospel in the Power of the Holy Spirit. And, to leave the results up to God as he will build his Church with such as should be saved. (Acts 28:24) Paul would quote to them Isaiah 6:9, 10 because of their blunt rejection of Jesus Christ and how the gospel would be extended to the Gentiles also. (Acts 28:25-28) The book of Acts concludes with Paul boldly and without hindrance preaching about the Kingdom of God and teaching about Jesus, welcoming whoever would come to him. (Acts 28:30-31) The book concludes with a man that at one time passionately sought to destroy the Church now being tasked to be apart of the Work of building it back up! God used a Gospel that would be rejected by some to allow Paul to stand before Kings, Rulers and many other to preach the Good news! The Good News/Gospel is that through faith in Jesus there is forgiveness of sins. Only confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus was the Son of God, that he Died, was buried, and was Resurrected from the dead you will be saved from eternal separation from God! This is the salvation in Christ that Paul dedicated his life to preaching!

Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama
Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Rev. B. C. Datiri, Pastor

THE BOOK OF ROMANS: PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

February 16, 2014

1. Paul's Longing to Visit Rome

Romans 1:1-17

Practical Christianity is the act of practicing or applying into your daily living the truth God has taught you thereby building character that reflects Jesus Christ in your daily walk in this pilgrim's journey that every believer is engaged. Practical Christianity aids your mind to become dynamic and open to receiving the truth of God which transforms you through the renewal of your mind. This also prevents you from having a mindset that conforms to the worldly standards. Christians cannot therefore afford to have a closed mind or a mindset that limits the mind and make them to remain static. The Christians life is dynamic such that it transform one from glory to glory as the unchanging word or truth of God causes you to change your ways continuously as you become more and more obedient to it and mature in the things of God. Practical Christianity involves fervor and not fear; faith and not foolishness; and favor and not favoritism. Practical Christianity is all about building relationships and not religion. Practical Christianity is ultimately about building character that reflects Christ in you and not necessarily building a reputation for yourself.

While the four Gospels present the words and work of Jesus Christ, the Founder of Christianity, the Book of Romans explores the significance of His death and the application of Christ's doctrine and example. Paul uses the question and answer format to record the most systematic presentation of Christian doctrine in the Bible. The Book of Romans is therefore more than a book of theology; it is a book of practical exhortation for Christian living. Paul wants us to understand from the Book of Romans that the good news of Jesus Christ for believer is more than facts to be believed: it is also a life to be lived – a life of righteousness and dynamic transformation in building relationships that befits the person “justified freely by the Grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”. We now begin this practical Christianity by focusing on Paul's longing to visit the Church he had developed Christian relationships with.

Thus our text for today reads, “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— 2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. 5 Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. 6 And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. 7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. 9 God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you 10 in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you. 11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— 12 that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. 13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. 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” (Romans 1:1-17).

Mt Traveler members, as we conclude this sermon on today please allow me to summarize it as follows. Practical Christianity involves:

- **Building relationships rather than religion:** Being born again or accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and savior; and becoming part of the household of God as a believer.
- **Fervor and not fear** as the Holy Spirit who resides in the believer empower him to make determined commitment to be transformed and rejecting conforming to the things of the world because of fear.
- **Faith and not foolishness:** Faith helps build your commitment to God; thereby trusting Him and obeying Him. Fear makes you rationalize to figure everything from the human view point.
- **Favor and favoritism:** Favor is the grace and mercy from God and man; favoritism is play partiality and games to have your own way according to the desires of the flesh.
- **Ultimately building Character not reputation:** Character is who you are; reputation is what people or who you want people to think you. Christian character reflects Christ in you – the hope of glory!
- This is what Practical Christianity is all about. And let the church say, “Amen!”

To become part of the household of God as a believer, and be saved, have peace and happiness; and do the work of the church to cause healthy church growth, you must first know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and savior and then allow the Holy Spirit to empower you. If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God’s family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to do the work of the Church to cause its continual growth. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!

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Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama
Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Evangelist R. D. Jacobs

THE BOOK OF ROMANS: PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

February 23, 2013 2. God’s wrath against sinful humanity Romans 1:18-32

Christians are saved from the power of sin to live a life of obedience in God’s purpose for their lives, in complete submission, reflecting the character of Christ. This is the essence of Practical Christianity, a daily life of practicing the Character of Christ by the Transformation of the Holy

Ghost. Christians must be transformed from the results and effects of sin. One Old Testament definition of the word sin is *Chata* which means to “miss the mark” and illustrates a person shooting a bow & arrow and missing the target. Sin is a violation of the Righteous nature of God and as a Righteous and Holy God He sets forth a criterion of Righteousness like His own for Christians. The Lord God is Righteous, Holy, Pure, and Undefined from the guilty stain of sin. However, Sin makes causes one to become defiled, unholy, no longer pure, unrighteous and filthy.

Paul begins this Epistle to the Romans by stating that we have been called out/called unto Jesus and saved through the power of the Gospel of God - the Good news of Jesus’ birth, death, and resurrection. Paul then moves into what we are called out from and saved from-unrighteousness and the effects of sin. For Paul says, that the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith but the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness. Paul begins in verses 18-32 to reveal some of the effects of sin that can be seen in humanity. First dealing with how mankind has suppressed the Truth of God by their wickedness of denying that He is and by glorifying the creation more than the Creator. Paul continues with how their shameful lusts burned within them to cause them to pursue sexual impurity by the giving of their selves man to man and woman to woman.

Paul then describes the state of sinful humanity. Humanity has become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. Humanity has been filled with envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful. They invent ways of doing evil, they disobey parents, and they are senseless, faithless, heartless and ruthless. Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of these who practice them. Because of sin, the state of mankind is in enmity with God and will receive His wrath and judgment. But, there is salvation to those that would believe in the power of God through the Gospel of Christ! One must only confess their sins, repent, and believe in Jesus Christ as risen Lord and Savior to be saved from the effects of Satan Sin and Death.