

Uprooted - Week 6
October 27 & 30, 2011
Acts 28:11-31

Intro:

- One of my favorite stories from this series was Tim's dad and he replanting that tree that had fallen in the storm!
- Over the last several weeks and really throughout this year, you've heard of how Saul became Paul and all the things he would endure for the sake of the Kingdom of God
- Struck blind, rejected, beaten, imprisoned, stoned...just last week he was facing starvation, a storm that would break apart their ship, a prisoner, then ship wrecked, stranded...snake-bitten. Living for God in the Kingdom is easy right?

Acts 9:15-16, "But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake."

Acts 28:11-31

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

- Paul is a prisoner...he is heading to Rome to stand before Caesar and be tried!
- We get so bent out of shape when we come in contact with Pagan ideas, false religions...Paul boards this ship...along with the many others who just witnessed the one true God who would keep them safe.
- How exciting...to get back on a ship!
- He boards this ship without creating a stir about it...because those false, twin gods, are nothing to Paul. They have no power to keep anyone safe. It's not the type of ship you sail on, but the God you believe in with your heart. Its the faith that you have.
- As Paul is traveling through Rome on the Appian Way...brothers and sisters in Christ, christians begin to greet him!
- The Gospel has reached Rome....his letter to the Romans was written and sent a few years before Paul's arrival and now they've come to greet him!

- Paul is encouraged by this...he's not alone...the power of the Gospel that he was not ashamed of had been influencing hearts...they were truly brothers and sisters in how they greeted each other.
- You have to remember, this is an Italian reception and greeting...the warmth and care and joy was off the charts!
- I went to an Italian place here in town a few years ago that was owned by someone at church at the time...I walk into the place and he says, "Oh, Pastor Keith...you have to try this...and this...and this...."
- I thought I would get a corner booth that day...
- What kind of greetings do we give to others?

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."

- Paul has his own place, but is still a prisoner, still is chained to a guard at all times.
- He does what he has always done, he reaches out to the Jews.
- He explains to them the reason he is there, not to accuse them of anything to share with them... "the hope of Israel" - Jesus
- His mind was not on himself at this point, but continually sharing the good news
- "They consistently remind one another that God's Kingdom is not about their own comfort or preference, but all about Jesus."

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."

- They've heard nothing about Paul
- They do however want to hear about this "movement" or "sect"
- What they have heard is all bad news...they've only listen to those who have denounced it, who stand opposed to Christ. They have only listened to those who disagree and have spoken against Jesus, the enemies of the Gospel.
- They will walk into this meeting with Paul with presumptions and opinions even before Paul shares with them. Some of them have made up their mind simply by listening to one side.
- It is no different in this room today. Some of you have listened to the world, the culture and have already made up your mind about who Jesus is and who he isn't.
- Many of you have loved ones who follow Christ, who would be called "friends of Jesus" and even though you come to church with them...you have already accepted the worlds ideas about who Jesus is...rather than listening to the hearts of those who love Jesus and see the truth about who He is in their lives.

- Paul says the “hope of Israel” - Jesus is the hope of Israel AND the hope for all people, every nation, every race and gender...He is the hope.

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.

- Imagine this scene, Paul, still in chains, with people all around.

- Paul is an EXPERT in the Scriptures...at this point the OT! In the Law and in the Prophets!

- Morning to evening.

- Our attention spans are so weak...but hey, we have smart phones!

- I would have loved to hear what Paul said, I’m sure some of it was similar to the speeches he has used elsewhere in scripture...but I would trade all my books and my seminary diploma to have sat with Paul that day!

- Here’s Jesus...who he is, what he has done for you and I, He is the Son of God. He is the Savior. He has redeemed us! Rescued us! Given us the Holy Spirit! There are no more sacrifices required...He has atoned for our sin once and for all! And for those of you who would put your faith in him, you will also be saved!

24) Some were persuaded by the things he said, but others did not believe.

- And that’s the way it goes...every time the gospel is presented.

- Those who walked away disbelieving would not turn perhaps from their preconceived notions of who Jesus is, or perhaps they would not turn from their traditions.

- Some were persuaded...don’t know if they accepted Christ...have to be careful making that assumption.

- I’m sure that some of you are persuaded...but you are holding back...you have one foot in but haven’t really placed your trust and life in the hands of Christ.

- What’s keeping you? Tradition? The World? Stubbornness? Pride? Shame?

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.”

- This is a rebuke
- Paul was drawing a line in the sand and saying...Really? After all you have heard? The scriptures, the OT, the Law, the Prophets...it all brings to light who Jesus really is....what Jesus has accomplished for all of us!
- The line is still there!
- Jesus is still our hope...for the Jews and for the rest of the nations!

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.

- Paul waits for his trial for two years
- He welcomed all who visited him...sharing Christ
- Nothing could stop him from sharing the Kingdom of God and about Jesus Christ
- Paul writes Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians and Philemon during this time.
- Early Christian documents tell us that Paul was released from prison for a few years, wrote more letters, but was imprisoned again and eventually martyred for his faith in Christ.

- Blinded, rejected, beaten, imprisoned, chained, tortured, whipped, abused, dragged, screamed at, accused, stoned, shipwrecked...nothing could uproot Paul and keep him from living his life for the Kingdom of God.

- What would your life look like?

- fired, laid off, broke or broken, divorced, sick, hurt, depressed...you and I face hardship. You feel like the entire world is against you at times...by the way if you are a Christ follower, I got news for you...the world is against you!

How can we keep from remaining uprooted?

How do we live our lives for the Kingdom of God?

1) Embrace that hardship as a chance to grow!

James 1:2-4

2) Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3) For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4) So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

- I've talked to so many people who have lost their jobs or battled cancer who have taken on those challenges and have experience faith in God greater than ever before!
- Don't waste the crisis in your life, use it as a chance to grow in your faith!
 - Journal
 - Write down passages of scripture / prayers

- invest in the lives of others

Acts 9:15-16, ***“But the Lord said, “Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name’s sake.”***

- Gulp!

2) Living for the Kingdom of God means influencing those around you!

- Your faith in Christ should not be secret!
- Living for the Kingdom means listening to our King!
- Our kids and youth are inviting their friends to experience Christ and the church in droves!!
- This church is not your opportunity to get away from the people you work with, live beside are related to...Jesus is sending you to share him with others! It should be a goal of yours every week to bring someone new to church! To have a conversation with someone about your faith in Christ!
- Paul says, come to my house! The door is always open!
- Radical series coming up!
- We need to raise the temperature of evangelism in this church.

3) Stop making excuses!

Acts 28:30-31, ***“For the next two years, Paul lived in Rome at his own expense. He welcomed all who visited him, boldly proclaiming the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. And no one tried to stop him.”***

- I can always think of 5 excuses not do something
 - I’m tired
 - I’m scared
 - I deserve a break
 - It won’t work
 - It’s not my job
 - ???????
- There’s a reason you have that job. There’s a reason your kid goes to that school. There’s a reason your son or daughter is on that team. There’s a reason you are going through this crisis. Those aren’t excuses...they are opportunities to live for the King!
- Tim’s Dad and the Tree - will you simply lay down and wither or will you allow God to replant you and flourish, bear fruit and live life for the King?