

Unstoppable Gospel

Acts 28:23 – 31

I. Intro

- A. Return to book of Acts; last week talked about the focus direction of the church – not to be up, down, in, but the direction focus of the church is to be looking out – and moving out
- B. Church purpose to continue the work of Christ on earth
- C. Today, realize that regardless of what the church, God's people do, the Gospel will prevail – unstoppable, no matter what the world, prince of this world, does to try and stop it
- D. **READ Matthew 16:14 – 18:** Jesus poses question to disciples, who do people say that Jesus is
- E. Many people today have differing opinions of who Jesus is – even in the church; some say good man, prophet, myth – didn't really exist, some even say He was God's Son without even understanding what that truly means
- F. Background of passage: Paul under house arrest, for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ; in Rome, called together a meeting of Jewish leaders because of false accusations made against him by Jews who turned him over to the Romans; **READ v. 20;** these Jewish leaders claim ignorance – (like Sergeant Schultz in Hogan's Heroes, know nothing, hear nothing, see nothing)
- G. **READ Acts 28:23 - 31**

II. The Gospel Shared

- A. Book of Acts summed up
 - i. The Savior went up
 - ii. The Spirit came down
 - iii. The church went out
 - iv. The lost brought in
- B. That is the advancement, spreading of the Gospel in a nutshell
- C. Acts 1:8 (NIV) – significance at beginning of Acts
 - ⁸ 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."
- D. Paul calls this meeting of religious leaders – thinking he will try to appeal and plead his innocence of the charges and insist on his release
 - i. **Question:** What does Paul do? Doesn't plead his case or try to prove his innocence, but he (v. 23) ... *explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus ... using the Law and writings of OT prophets; Paul preaches the Gospel*

E. Paul backs up his conviction in Romans 1:14-16 (NIV)

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 at Rome.

¹⁶ I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

F. 3 key words from Romans 1:14 – 16: *obligated, eager, and not ashamed*

- i. **** ON SCREEN ** 1** – All believers are obligated to share the Gospel (Great Commission, Acts 1:8, John 20:21); commanded to all throughout scripture regardless of any circumstance or situation we find ourselves in; whether at work, at school, on the street, in our neighborhood, in our home (Paul under house arrest for doing this very thing, but that didn't stop him, didn't stop the sharing of the Gospel)
- ii. **** ON SCREEN ** 2** – All believers should be eager to share the Gospel; all at some point had privilege of someone sharing with us; any of us could have easily been born into a different situation where the message of the Gospel wasn't so readily available, or accessible, to us; why would we not have an eagerness, be “sitting on ready” to share that Good News that we've so mercifully, graciously received ourselves (seems pretty selfish otherwise)
- iii. **** ON SCREEN ** 3** – All believers should never ever be ashamed of sharing the Gospel

G. **Question:** Is the true church of Christ dying out today? Yes

H. **Question:** Will it ever completely die? No – Jesus said even ... *the gates of hell will not prevail against it*

I. **Question:** What's the answer for any church to be able to survive? By going out and sharing the Gospel; by being a body of God's people who deeply feel that obligation to share, who have sincere eagerness to share because of their burden for those who are lost and dying in sin, and who are not the least bit ashamed to share

III. The Gospel Truths

A. **** ON SCREEN ** 1** - The Gospel is mankind's only hope

- i. Some will hear and respond, some will not, but we are to still share it with the world – our *Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the end of the earth*
- ii. **Question:** Can a small church in a small town in Georgia be part of sharing the Gospel to the end of the earth? Yes; first, realize the number of young people who have passed through this church who are now in ministry, sharing the Gospel in other parts of this state and nation

- iii. Offerings for state missions, Annie Armstrong – home missions, Lottie Moon – foreign missions
 - iv. Kentucky mission trip – feeding homeless (Lord’s Cafe)
 - v. Pandu Maddala in India, training Christian Pastors in India, distributing God’s Word to those converted from Islam to Christianity – need Bibles; crusade last year – 9,000 salvations; crusade next year – DBA request for \$1,000 from church
 - vi. Note from Pandu in DBA Newsletter: *Thank you for your continued prayers for Victory Baptist Assoc. short term training program and this month (August) I and all of our fifty students planted 26 new churches where there is no church here in India. All of our four Gospel outreach teams met 6,742 people with Gospel ... and 2,000 people came to Christ.*
 - vii. Jesus said, *You will be my witnesses*; book of Acts which depicts that beginning of early church began with sharing the Gospel and ends with sharing the Gospel
 - a) All the hardships, persecution in between didn’t stop message of Jesus Christ from spreading all over the world; even into Rome the world dominating power of the time
- B. **** ON SCREEN ** 2 - The Gospel cannot be stopped**
- i. Peter, Paul, Silas, others imprisoned; bound up in chains, tortured in an attempt to get them to stop sharing the Gospel – even if those attempts had been successful, the sharing, spread of the Gospel itself could not and still cannot be stopped
 - ii. Acts 8:1 (NIV)

¹ And Saul was there, giving approval to his (Stephen's) death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles **were scattered** throughout Judea and Samaria. (Yes, all scattered because of persecution taking place, but also intentional work of God in order that the Gospel would spread *throughout Judea and Samaria* and even further
 - iii. Acts 11:19 (NIV)

¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as **Phoenicia (Mediterranean coastline), Cyprus (little commercial island west of Greece)** and **Antioch (in Syria)**, telling the message (the Gospel) only to Jews.
 - iv. At times the gospel spread without opposition; been many times there have been threats to silence it (still see this today even in our own country)
 - v. Just this week on Tuesday, Oct. 23rd: *Attorneys at the American Humanist Association (AHA) and the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), led by AHA Senior Counsel Monica Miller, filed a brief in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. Today’s*

filing opposes the City of Pensacola's request that the full Eleventh Circuit rehear the case and overturn an earlier three-judge panel's ruling that the massive Christian cross in Bayview Park is unconstitutional.

vi. At times the gospel has been distorted and completely twisted by false ministers and teachers who have gained access into the church and empowered by Satan

vii. At times it's been added to and subtracted from, but never has, or will, the Gospel message cease to go forth; told this from OT to NT

viii. Isaiah 40:8 (NIV)

⁸ "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."

C. **** ON SCREEN ** 3** – The Gospel is the only way for salvation

i. Repeat Romans 1:16 (NIV)

¹⁶ I am not ashamed of the gospel, because **it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes**: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

ii. The early NT disciples and apostles believed this with all their hearts; the Gospel and spreading it was their # 1 passion; they shared it with urgency

iii. We must not only believe this, but we must also act in sharing it with same urgency

D. The Gospel is the only hope for mankind, that the Gospel cannot be stopped, only the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God to save those who are lost in darkness and sin

IV. Close

A. **Illustration:** Walt Disney was a dreamer. His crowning vision was EPCOT; Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow. He envisioned the perfect city of 20,000 using all of the most modern advances technology. One problem, Walt Disney died before his dream was ever realized. His dream was so big and complex and outside the box that no one else in the Disney company ever caught the dream and had no idea what to do after Walt was gone. What Walt Disney intended as a living breathing perfect city turned out only to be an entertainment center. Disney's world would only become a place to visit.

B. Jesus left a blueprint for His church to be a living breathing expanding organism that would permeate and transform the whole world.

C. The problem is, that as time has gone on, many churches have lost the vision of the Lord's magnificent plan. Rather than a community of loving, passionate followers of Christ dedicated to demonstrating the power of the Christ-transformed life in a dark world, they've begun to do what they knew best – build buildings and run organizations and develop entertainment centers that would hopefully draw the crowds but miss

sharing the Good News, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.