

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Calvert, Damien (Cindy Newsome's son-in-law), Mr. Dowling, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mr. Hickox's father and grandfather, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Ms. Sowder, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Paul's Imprisonment at Rome

By Derek Long

The book of Acts concludes with Paul in prison at Rome (Acts 28:16-31). Acts 28:16 tells us, "Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him" (NKJV). Acts 28:30 records how, "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house" (NKJV). Paul was apparently under something like a house arrest. His movements would be limited. He was allowed to receive visitors though. Paul's imprisonment at Rome may provide us some great lessons for how to handle situations when our movements and interactions are somewhat more limited than at other periods of our lives.

Paul took the initiative to talk with others about the gospel. Acts 28:17 says, "And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together" (NKJV). Paul did not just sit around and wait for someone to contact him. He was seeking to make contacts with others he felt might be interested in the gospel. Do we continue to take the initiative to find people to speak to about the gospel even if our movements are somewhat limited at times?

Paul realized he could communicate the gospel to individuals without being there in person. Paul's imprisonment at Rome is a time he used wisely by writing many letters to

churches and even an individual. The books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon all appear to be written during Paul's time as a prisoner at Rome (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Philippians 1:7, 13-14; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 10, 23). Paul used his time wisely in service to God. When we find ourselves somewhat confined, do we use our time wisely and in a manner which serves the Lord (Ephesians 5:16)? Paul would later write to Timothy, "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained" (2 Timothy 2:8-9, NKJV). Paul demonstrates by his own example how being imprisoned did not stop the spread of the gospel.

Paul's imprisonment at Rome gave him unique opportunities (Philippians 1:12-13). The book of Philemon shows us how Paul was able to be successful at converting Onesimus while in prison (Philemon 10). If Paul had not been in prison, he may not have encountered Onesimus and have the opportunity to teach him the gospel (Philemon 15-16). Do we ever stop in the midst of a trying situation to think I may be around people now I otherwise would have little to no contact with? Paul's imprisonment put him in contact with the palace guard and he taught them the gospel!

Paul's imprisonment at Rome encouraged other Christians to be bold in their presentation of the gospel (Philippians 1:12-18). If we continue to do the right thing in trying circumstances, it can serve as an encouragement to others to continue doing the right thing as well. If others see us taking advantage of opportunities we have to teach the gospel, they may have more opportunities than us and start taking advantage of those

opportunities. If others see us not giving up with things are challenging, it may help them to not give up when they face challenges of their own eventually.

Paul's imprisonment in Rome as recorded in Acts 28 does not seem to be the final chapter in Paul's life. Acts 28:30 tells us he stays in his own rented house for two years. The various details about his trips recorded in 1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy seem to indicate he was released and continued serving God for a period of time. 2 Timothy finds him again in prison facing what appears to be approaching death (2 Timothy 4:6-8). When we are facing a challenging time, it is true we may never see it change. However, like Paul, we might go on to have opportunities to once again resume a more normal course of life and continue to have more opportunities to serve the Lord.

Let's be determined to keep on serving God no matter what our outward circumstances are just like Paul continues serving the Lord while a prisoner in Rome.