

# FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS

## A LOOK AT THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

### Acts 28: 11 – 31

#### “The End of the Beginning”

Paul finally reaches Rome, at the end of his long voyage there, as a prisoner. This final section can be described as: THE END OF THE BEGINNING. It ends abruptly. We are told Paul proclaimed the message freely for two years and no one tried to stop him. The question is: what happened after the two years? Why doesn't Luke finish the story? We must remember that Acts is not the story of St. Paul. Luke's purpose was to relate the story of the expansion of the gospel. Paul's arrival in Rome and the declaration that he was able to preach freely was a good place for Luke's account to end.

Acts begins with Jesus command, 'you shall be my witnesses'. It concludes with that witness continuing, as Paul shares the gospel from his sheltered accommodation in Rome. The gospel has now reached the centre of the Empire. Symbolically, it has reached 'the ends of the earth'.

So what can we learn from these final verses of Acts?

First, we are reminded once again of God's gracious provision for His children. As Paul arrived in Rome it was a fulfilment of God's promise. God did what He said He would do. Throughout the book we have been reminded that the road of discipleship is often difficult, but God is always faithful. He gives us strength and courage for the trials of life. Our task is to hold on to the One who is faithful and true.

Second, we see the importance of sharing our faith with others. Everywhere James, Peter, John, Philip, Stephen and Paul went, they proclaimed the good news of forgiveness and new life in Christ. Their message was consistent, humble, Christ-centred, and Biblical. The book of Acts is a record of the church doing what Christ told them to do: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel."

Third, we are reminded that the work of sharing the gospel continues. Acts doesn't come to a neat conclusion, with all safely accomplished. Our lives are but the latest chapter, as we continue the work of sharing the gospel.

Our job is to minister to each other, to honour God, to grow in grace and truth, and to proclaim the message of salvation to all who will listen. As we do that, the church will change. That's nothing to be afraid of. The church has always changed, and will continue to do so as it adapts to meet the needs of a new generation. The important point is that the message of salvation remains the same.

The book of Acts reminds us of our calling. We are called to follow Him fully and to proclaim Him boldly. We are to trust Him in the circumstances of our lives and follow wherever He leads, even if the way seems dark. Along the way, we are to share the message of hope with all who will listen.

To conclude, let's remind ourselves that the message of salvation is for each one of us. If we will trust Him, He will heal the wounds of the past and give us strength for the hard times.