

Devoted and Unshaken: The Book of Acts
“Unstoppable Gospel” (#32) Acts 28
Cornerstone Church of Poway
Pastor Ed Turley
November 30, 2025

Sermon Notes

Key Idea: The mission field isn't where you go next; it's where you are now.

The Unstoppable Gospel -

1. Keep Advancing the Gospel Wherever You Are Planted (vv. 1–10)

¹ Once we were safe on shore, we learned that we were on the island of Malta.

² The people of the island were very kind to us. It was cold and rainy, so they built a fire on the shore to welcome us. ³ As Paul gathered an armful of sticks and was laying them on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand. ⁴ The people of the island saw it hanging from his hand and said to each other, “A murderer, no doubt! Though he escaped the sea, justice will not permit him to live.” ⁵ But Paul shook off the snake into the fire and was unharmed. ⁶ The people waited for him to swell up or suddenly drop dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw that he wasn't harmed, they changed their minds and decided he was a god. ⁷ Near the shore where we landed was an estate belonging to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us and treated us kindly for three days. ⁸ As it happened, Publius's father was ill with fever and dysentery. Paul went in and prayed for him, and laying his hands on him, he healed him. ⁹ Then all the other sick people on the island came and were healed.

¹⁰ As a result we were showered with honors, and when the time came to sail, people supplied us with everything we would need for the trip. **Acts 28:1-10 (NLT2)**

And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. ¹³ For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. **Philippians 1:12-13 (NLT2)**

And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. **Pray** to the LORD for it, for its **welfare** will determine your welfare.” **Jeremiah 29:7 (NLT2)**

Notes: _____

2. Turns Obstacles into Opportunities for Impact (vv. 11–24)

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**. 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**.”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**.”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.²⁴ **Some were persuaded** by the things he said, but **others did not believe**. **Acts 28:11-24 (NLT2)**

Notes: _____

3. Finish Your Race with Faith and Focus (vv. 25–31)

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.” [Some translations add the Jews departed, greatly disagreeing with each other.]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. **Acts 28:25-31 (NLT2)**

I have fought the **good fight**, I have **finished the race**, and I have **remained faithful**.
2 Timothy 4:7 (NLT2)

Notes: _____

- What step will you take to live with unstoppable faith?

My Next Right Steps, I Will:

- ☐ Commit to keep advancing the gospel in your sphere of influence.
- ☐ Pray for someone who feels “shipwrecked” in their faith.
- ☐ Accept Jesus as my Savior and Lord.
- ☐ Be baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ.



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Talk It Over

Key Idea: The mission field isn't where you go next; it's where you are now.

Icebreaker – “When Plans Change”

Share a story of when your plans didn't go the way you expected — but something unexpectedly good came out of it. What did that experience teach you about God's timing or purpose?

Read Aloud: Acts 28:1-10

1. Keep Advancing the Gospel Wherever You Are Planted (vv. 1–10)

Paul lands on Malta after the shipwreck — cold, wet, tired — but immediately begins serving. He gathers wood, survives a snake bite, and heals the sick.

Discussion Questions:

Why do you think Paul kept serving even after everything he had endured?

How can we see our current “location” (workplace, home, school, etc.) as our Malta — a mission field?

What does it look like to live on mission even when life isn't ideal?

Takeaway: God often plants us in unexpected places so His gospel can grow in unexpected ways.

Read Aloud: Acts 28:11-24

2. Turn Obstacles into Opportunities for Impact (vv. 11–24)

Paul arrives in Rome — not as a free man, but as a prisoner. Yet even in chains, the gospel advances.

Discussion Questions:

How does Paul's example reshape the way we view hardship or limitation?

When has God used a difficult situation in your life to open a door for ministry or influence?

How can you encourage someone else who feels “stuck” in their circumstances to see it as an opportunity?

Takeaway: The gospel doesn’t stop because life gets hard — it shines brightest when we stay faithful.

Read Aloud: Acts 28:25-31

3. Finish Your Race with Faith and Focus (vv. 25–31)

Paul remains under house arrest, yet keeps teaching, mentoring, and writing. His chains never silenced his mission.

Discussion Questions:

What does it mean to “finish your race with faith and focus”?

How can we maintain boldness and endurance when we’re weary or discouraged?

What legacy of faith do you want to leave behind?

Takeaway: Finishing strong isn’t about comfort or success — it’s about remaining faithful to Christ’s calling to the very end.

How has the book of Acts inspired you personally to live with unstoppable faith?

What one step can you take this week to advance the gospel where you are planted?

Next Steps:

- Pray for boldness and endurance in your daily mission field.
- Write down one obstacle you face and ask God to turn it into an opportunity.
- Memorize Acts 28:31 — “He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance.”



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**Leaders
Guide**

Big Idea: You can chain the messenger, but you can't chain the message.

Purpose: Help your group celebrate the unstoppable power of the gospel and commit to carrying it forward with faith and focus.

Leader Prep:

- Revisit key themes from the series (Devoted & Unshaken): faith under fire, courage to testify, storm-tested faith, surviving the shipwreck.
- Reflect on how Acts ends without ending — because the mission continues through us.
- Pray that your group members will catch that same fire to keep advancing the gospel.

Session Flow (60–75 minutes):

Welcome & Icebreaker (10 min)

Use light storytelling to build connection.

Transition: “Just like our plans change, Paul's did too — but God still worked through every detour.”

Scripture Reading (5 min)

Read Acts 28:1–31 aloud or in sections.

Ask: “What word or phrase stood out to you as you listened to this passage?”

Discussion (40–45 min)

- Walk through the three main sections.

- Keep focus on application, not just information:
 - “What does this look like in your life?”
 - “How can you live this truth out this week?”

Encourage personal testimonies about how God has used hard seasons for growth or ministry.

Reflection (10 min)

Ask each person: What step will you take to live with unstoppable faith?

Prayer (5–10 min)

Pray for courage, endurance, and gospel impact.

Close by reading Acts 28:31 together in unison as a declaration of faith.

Leader Tips:

- Celebrate the journey: This is the final session in Acts — highlight how far your group has come.
- Encourage multiplication: Challenge them to carry what they’ve learned into future small groups or ministry opportunities.
- Model passion: Share personally how this series has impacted your faith.
- End with hope: Remind them that Acts is still being written — through every believer who lives on mission.

Leader Prayer Prompt:

“Lord, thank You that Your gospel is unstoppable.
Give us courage like Paul to keep advancing the message wherever You plant us.
When we face obstacles, remind us they’re opportunities in disguise.
Help us finish our race with faith, focus, and fire for Your mission.
May our lives declare that Your Word is never chained. Amen.”