



Acts 28:11-22

DESIRES CAN BE REALIZED IN UNPREDICTABLE WAYS

Supportive fellowship is a blessing (28:11-15)

¹¹ After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria, with the twin gods as a figurehead. ¹² Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. ¹³ And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium. And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. ¹⁴ There we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. ¹⁵ And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

- ▶ Favorable southern winds blew in late winter, enabling them to leave Malta and head to Sicily and the port city of Syracuse
 - ▶ Luke takes note that the carving of the twin gods, Castor and Pollux, was the figurehead of the ship
 - ▶ The world is full of false gods, and this ship now carries gospel messengers that bring light to the darkness

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- ▶ Fellow Christians opened their homes to them in Puteoli, and the Roman centurion allowed them to go
 - ▶ Again we see the benefit of God granting them favor with those in positions of authority
 - ▶ Additionally, God stirs the care and concern of fellow Christians to offer fellowship and encouragement for these gospel messengers
 - ▶ Fellowship is something the Holy Spirit empowered in the life of the church from the beginning
 - ▶ Acts 2:42
 - ▶ Fellowship is believers interacting about how redemption and the authority of Jesus Christ in all of life are being understood, applied, and shared
- ▶ Sanctification and ministry are challenging and can be draining
- ▶ Paul and his associates regularly face oppressive and difficult circumstances
- ▶ The believers from the church in Puteoli went out of their way to show support and concern
- ▶ If the Apostle Paul, Luke, and Aristarchus need encouragement and edification, we need it too
- ▶ We need to make the most of opportunities to encourage and edify
 - ▶ Romans 14:19
 - ▶ 1 Thessalonians 5:11

A chained witness with an unchained gospel (28:16)

¹⁶ And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him.

- ▶ Imagine being chained to the Apostle Paul
- ▶ Likely there was little or no complaining
- ▶ Communications of the authority of Jesus Christ and the need for gospel grace were common
- ▶ Three years prior Paul shared his desire for fellowship and encouragement with the church in Rome
 - ▶ Romans 1:9-15
 - ▶ Romans 15:22-32
- ▶ The soldiers chained to Paul during his time in Rome did not keep their interactions with Paul under wraps
 - ▶ Philippians 1:12-14

A chained witness with an unchained gospel (28:16)

- ▶ God provided support for Paul in his imprisonment as he wrote to minister to people and churches
- ▶ Gospel-focused men came to his side to assist as encouragers, advisors, and messengers
 - ▶ Colossians 4:10-18
 - ▶ Philemon 23-25
- ▶ Supporting Paul and churches while he was in captivity was not a piece of cake
- ▶ The demands revealed to true state of the heart of Demas
 - ▶ 2 Timothy 4:9-10

Challenging circumstances shouldn't blind us to gospel opportunities (28:17-22)

¹⁷ After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. ¹⁸ When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. ¹⁹ But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my nation. ²⁰ For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain."

- ▶ Paul has been through many ordeals
- ▶ But Paul does not become self-centered and discouraged
 - ▶ False charges compelled his appeal to Caesar
 - ▶ Paul loves his people and his nation and wants what is best for them
 - ▶ Paul wants to share with them, the hope of Israel, who is Jesus Christ
- ▶ His commitment to sharing the life, death, resurrection, and ascended authority of Jesus is the reason he appealed to Caesar and is under house arrest
 - ▶ The Lord told Paul he was to testify in Rome
 - ▶ Appealing to Caesar enabled this to happen
 - ▶ The Lord is faithful, and He inspires Paul to be faithful

Challenging circumstances shouldn't blind us to gospel opportunities (28:17-22)

²¹ And they said to him, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. ²² But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

- ▶ The Jewish leaders in the city of Rome have not heard anything about Paul
- ▶ They agree to meet with Paul to hear his account of how Jesus Christ is the hope of Israel and the nations of the world
- ▶ It is possible that personal afflictions will give us opportunities to share our gospel hope with others

The background features a faint, artistic illustration of several hands reaching out or clasped together in a supportive gesture. A solid red rectangle is positioned in the upper right corner. A dark teal banner with a wavy bottom edge spans the top of the slide.

Questions to Consider

- ▶ Are you prayerfully open to the needs of fellowship and encouragement around you?
- ▶ Are you prayerfully open to receiving fellowship and encouragement?
- ▶ If people were chained to you for a couple of years, what would they see and hear?
- ▶ What have the pressures and afflictions in life revealed about your heart?
- ▶ How can your eyes be more aware of gospel opportunities that result from affliction?



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