

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 04 June 2023
Services: *Across the Diocese*
Series: Saved by grace (Acts 10-28)
Passage: Acts 18
Title: Proving from the Scriptures that Jesus is Messiah
Outline:

1. Start with the Jews
2. Go to the Gentiles
3. People hear and believe
4. Paul is assured; AND
5. Opposition halted by Roman authorities

- Two weeks ago, I started with two questions.
- Are you **convinced** that salvation **IS** entirely by God's grace?
- And second, do you have **CONFIDENCE** in the gospel of grace in today's world... that when it *is shared* here and now – in central and western NSW – it is still **effective**... and **WILL draw** people to **God**??//
- we can sometimes lose heart about **both** these points – can't we?
- Many people in our church simply don't **get** that we are saved by grace.
- They work **tirelessly** for the church in the hope that in the **end** they'll have **done enough** to get in to **heaven**.
- They seem to have **no comprehension** of the **significance** of **Jesus' death** on the **cross** and are more concerned with **buildings** and **fundraising** and **history** and comparing themselves to **others**, than they are about **sharing** the news of **Jesus**. //
- And to my **second** question – about losing confidence in the **power** of the gospel to impact and change lives today?
- Recently two people become Christians during church services at **Holy Trinity Orange**... praise **God**...!
- But when was the last time you saw that or heard of that happening in **your church**?
- You might have faithfully **laboured** away for the last couple of decades... you've tried different stuff... but seen **little** for your **labours**... and you just quietly wonder whether it is **worth it** – does the **gospel** still **work**?? //
- This series from Acts 10-28 is called 'saved by grace' as I've wanted you to see in this wonderful book of Acts, that **GRACE** is the **only** way people are saved... the only way people come into right relationship with God...
-and I've wanted you to see that the **proclamation** of the **good news** of **Jesus** – that he was the **Messiah** and he was **raised** from the **dead** – **consistently results** in more people being added to the **church**. //
- We'll see this again today...
- Now, we see here in the book of Acts, that the Apostle Paul has a **strategy** which he keeps to where ever he goes... and here in chapter **18** in **Corinth** and in then again in next week's chapter – chapter **19** - in **Ephesus** – we see the same pattern... and I think it can give us great encouragement.
- Here's the pattern we see:

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5. **Opposition is halted by Roman authorities**

- First

1. START WITH THE JEWS

- The chapter starts with the words.... *After this* – which means after Paul’s presentation in the Areopagus... remember? Some **sneered** at the mere **mention** of the word ‘**resurrection**’, but others wanted to hear Paul **again** on the **subject**.
- And the **great news** at the end of ch 17?? **Some of the people believed!!**
- But *after this* – here in Ch 18 – *Paul left Athens and went to Corinth*.
- Paul did some **tentmaking** because he met tentmakers Aquila and Priscilla who had to leave Rome on the orders of Claudius (the 4th Roman emperor from 41-54AD...) and then Paul starts with the Jews in the synagogue – as he had done in Thessalonica (see the start of Acts 17)...
- ... have a look with me at v4 – *Every Sabbath he reasoned in the **synagogue**, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks...*
- Persuade them of **what??** v5 – testifying that **Jesus** was the **Messiah**...
- The message was **consistent** in the **preaching** reported in the Acts of the Apostles... from **Peter** to **Paul** – when speaking to **Jews**... **Jesus** is the one promised **long ago!** – the one you’ve been **waiting** for! – the one **anointed** of **God!**...
- He’s the **man!** He’s the **one!** ///
- You **killed** him. /
- God **raised** him /
- Yet in **him**, you can find **forgiveness.** //
- **Great news....! Life giving....! Thrilling news!! //**
- **EXCEPT** if you don’t like it! //
- **Except** if you have a **closed mind** to anything other than what you’ve always believed!
- And **that** is why we read in v5 – that people **opposed** Paul and became **abusive**.
- Now let me share with you that wherever I’ve gone in ministry – whether the two parishes – Roseville and Noosa I’ve had the privilege of serving – or here in this role as bishop of the Diocese... people **IN THE CHURCH** – have responded to the good news with **joy** and **thanksgiving**.
- In Noosa, there were people asking – why hasn’t any one told them this **before**... or explained the **Bible** or the Gospel in such **clear terms**...
- And as people **understood** the message, so did they **embrace** it with all the more **enthusiasm**... and the over time, we saw lives which were obviously being transformed and beginning to show the fruit of the Spirit.
- **Hard** people become **soft**
- **Judgemental** people became **gracious**

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- People began to understand that their good **works** would *never* lead to a place in **eternity**...
- And they wanted **others** to hear the good news **too!** ///
- But it is **ALSO** true... that some in the **church** in **Noosa**... and some in our churches **here**....
- ...**oppose** the **message!**
- They don't want me to point out what an **astonishing gift** Jesus is...!
- They don't **want** to hear about **forgiveness**... for they don't think they have any **need** for it...!
- They don't want to hear about **salvation** being by **grace**... because they're content **working** their way to **heaven** under the impression they're doing **enough!**
- And the result of course is **disastrous**... **rude** people stay **rude**, **grumpy** people stay **grumpy**... **judgemental** people stay **judgemental**.... **NO transformation** of the heart takes place... and they remain **focused on** or some cases **fixated on fundraising** and **money** and **buildings**...!
- The analogy is not quite the same... but as Paul wanted to go to the **Jews** first with the good news of **Jesus**... so I want to go to those in the **church first**... because so many are **weighed down** with a **load** of **guilt** and **expectations**... and **they** need – **we** need – to hear the **wonderful, glorious, liberating** news of the **Lord Jesus**. //
- So – after these people became **abusive**, Paul shook out his clothes in **protest**... and said – and we're surprised at the **strength** of his feeling **aren't we**....? V6 – *Your **blood** be on your **own heads!** I am **innocent** of it. From now on I will go to the **Gentiles**.* //
- We're seeing **grief there**... **grief** that these people had **closed** their hearts to the message of **life**... and therefore would face **death**... But Paul figures he had done his **job**... he had shared **Jesus** so they have **life** – they've **rejected** it – so their **blood** is on their own **heads!** //
- So now – he will....

2. GO TO THE GENTILES

- I love that he goes right next **door** to the **synagogue** – v7 – to the home of **Titius Justus**...
- Imagine in your town... the minister turns up – or the bishop – and people **oppose** the message... so the minister rents the **community** hall right next **door**....!
- That would be **disturbing**, wouldn't it?
- Just like the story of John **Wesley** – an Anglican clergy person in the 18th century who faced opposition and hostility from parishioners – was barred from preaching in church **buildings** – but **undeterred**, took to preaching in **open fields** and **outdoor spaces**, attracting **large crowds**... reaching people he may have **never** reached **otherwise!** //
- So Paul preaches in the house right next door, and....

3. PEOPLE HEAR AND BELIEVE

- V8 - *Crispus the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord*
- The synagogue leader believes!! That must have **really** annoyed those who had risen in **opposition** to **Paul!**
- And then we read *and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptised...*
- **Glorious news**...! I watched with tears the testimony of a doctor up at St Bart's Toowoomba last

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Sunday – who had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer... I'd guess he's only around 40 years old – with a young family... His wife called the minister at St Bart's – Adam Lowe – who started sharing the news of Jesus with him.... And he shared now that because he knows where he stands with God through Jesus – he's not afraid to **die**... and that **God's plans** are **perfect**...

- And then Trividi – that was his name – was **baptised**.
- That's what happens when we share **Jesus** for **life**.
- People who are **dying** find **life**... and are **baptised**...! //
- Now in the face of **opposition** from his own **people** – Paul was a **Pharisee** you're recall – God **moves** to **assure** Paul to not be afraid... to keep on speaking...

4. PAUL IS ASSURED

- Have a look with me from v9 - *One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. ¹⁰For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."*
- An astounding vision from "the Lord" – by which Luke, our writer – means 'the Lord **Jesus**'.
- The **two key features**... the exhortation to '**not be afraid**' and the promises '**I am with you**'.
-the **reminder** of these truths... was all Paul needed to carry out the **other** instruction of the vision – namely to '**keep on speaking**' and '**not be silent**'.
- He's promised he will be kept safe because the Lord says "*I have many people in this city*".... That is – **people**, no doubt, who have been **appointed** to **eternal life** – just as Luke has mentioned in Antioch back in chapter 13 v48 – that *all who were appointed for eternal life believed*...
- Now friends – I haven't had any dramatic **vision** like this... **encouraging** me to keep **going**...
- But I do **know this**...
- That '**do not be afraid**' is one of the most often occurring commands in the Scriptures... and the promise of Jesus at the end of Matthew's gospel of 'I am with you', is **still** ours to claim **today**!
- And we are assured from **Psalm 121** among other places, that the Lord who **made heaven and earth** is our **helper** and he is **protecting us** and watching **over us continuously**...
- And we **also** know that the Lord **has people** – that is; people **appointed** to **eternal life** – **EVERYWHERE** – they are just **waiting** for us to share the **good news** with **them**...
- So... we can confidently take the **contents** of this **vision**... and claim the **same** for **ourselves**.
- Brothers and sisters... **don't give up sharing Jesus for life**...
- Don't be **afraid** to do so
- Don't be **silent**!
- For the Lord is **with you**... by his **Spirit**... you cannot be ultimately **harm**ed... because the Lord **has** you... and he has **many people** out here in the **west**, whom he has **appointed** to **eternal life** waiting for us to **share Jesus** with **them**!
- Do you **believe that??** //
- Claim the **promise**... and **work out** how you might **do that**!
- James Daymond at our recent **conference** in **Dubbo**.... Gave some **very practical** tips in how we can

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share Jesus... even by saying **grace** when we have someone over, or making sure we have a day **off** each week – even on the **land...** or ensuring we have some **good reading material** on our **coffee table** when we have someone **over...** or inviting someone to **church...**

- Very **simple....** Do not be **afraid...** don't be **silent. Share Jesus for life... the Lord is with you!**
- And **finally** – and very **briefly...** as I bring this message to a close... I wanted to point out that we see in this chapter... that...

5. OPPOSITION IS HALTED BY ROMAN AUTHORITIES

- sure enough Paul **did** face **more opposition** from the **Jews...**
- He was brought to a place of **judgement...** (v12) but the Roman **proconsul** simply wasn't **interested in settling some religious dispute....** And he **drove** the **protesters off.**
- As I said a couple of weeks ago... we need to continually **defend** our **right to free speech** and **religious freedom** in this **country...** and pray similarly – that people will **defend our rights...** even if they do not hold the same views **themselves! //**
- Paul stayed even longer in **Corinth...** but then left for **Ephesus...** where he??? Yep, you **guessed** it... went to the **synagogue** and **reasoned** with the **Jews!!**
- We hear briefly of a man named Apollos who was helped to a greater understanding of Jesus... and then set about – v28 – **vigorously refuting his Jewish opponents – proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah!**
- ... the **very ministry** we see **Peter and Paul** undertaking right through this great **book. //**
- That's our message **now – today.**
- Jesus is the **Messiah....** The **Saviour**
- The one people are **looking for...** even if they don't know it!
- The one who will bring **peace and joy and contentment and life...**
- The one who will bring **hope and comfort and perspective on life...**
- The one people **need....**
- The one many **church** people need... if only they would **see** it... and **certainly** the one – that the many **lost and lonely and confused and hurting people** need in our **towns** and **villages....**
- So – please – **don't be afraid... keep on speaking... the Lord is with you... keep on SHARING JESUS FOR LIFE!**