



### **August - September 2023 | Trinity Church Golden Grove**

Acts 18-28 is the encouragement that in the hardest of times and in the trickiest of locations, God will work through his people because nothing can prevail against the gospel of Jesus. God encourages and equips us for his task of planting churches, giving a faithful testimony, making sure that our ministry is word and relational based, and putting us in all the places and situation in life according to his will.

In Acts 18, we see how the gospel makes inroads to Europe and the city of Corinth, noting that God sustains his people and church plants. Acts 20 is the reminder of what inputs God gives to strengthen his church - it's all about the word and relationships. The final 3 talks are long narratives, all looking at how to be faithful in ministry, giving a testimony and even how weather events and snakes can't stop the progress of the gospel. The final sentences of Acts are the rock solid reminder that through many trials and challenges, the gospel will continue to make progress.

I'm praying that in our time in Acts, each of us would be encouraged in our own convictions of the gospel of Jesus, see the fruit of salvation in our church family and be encouraged with the inputs God gives us as we too, do what we can to take the good news of Jesus to those we know and love.

*Luke Dahlenburg*

## SERIES OUTLINE

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#	Date	Talk Title	Passage
1	27-Aug	Planting a Church	Acts 18:1-18
2	3-Sept - Fathers Day	Strengthening a Church	Acts 20:17-38
3	10-Sep	What Does Faithful Ministry Look Like?	Acts 21-23
4	17-Sep	What Does a Faithful Testimony Look Like?	Acts 24-26
5	24-Sep	The Gospel Is Unstoppable	Acts 27-28

## TRINITY KIDS

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"The mission of the risen King Jesus cannot be stopped."

## TALK OVERVIEWS

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### Talk #1 - Planting a Church, Acts 18:1-22

The gospel now comes to some of Europe's biggest cities at a time when they are filled with trade, prosperity, evil and philosophy? Can belief in Jesus crack this egg, be believed as rational and true and actually change lives? Isn't the gospel a message punching above it's weight?

When we left Acts a while go, in Acts 17, we saw how the gospel can holds it's own against philosophy and other belief systems and the winsome words we can use. Paul's arrival in Corinth shows us what it's like to plant a church in a environment filled with behaviour that is about as far from God's intent for humans as possible.

But, God has people known to him, all over the city. Churches are like lights, cities on hills, showing the joy of Jesus, even in much persecution.

We also see how God works, 18:8 and sustains his people. What keeps us going on mission? Not being alone - supportive friends in 18:1-4, Silas and Timothy arrive, 18:5, and a promise from God himself, 18:9-10. In all things the gospel prevails. Plus, church planting is never straight forward!

### Talk #2 - Strengthening a Church, Acts 20:17-38

This is the only speech in Acts given to an exclusively Christian audience.

Paul has spent a year and half in Corinth (last week) before 2 more years in Ephesus where he now says these things as he heads off towards Jerusalem.

To strengthen the church, Paul reminds them of what ministry looks like so they can keep it on long after he is gone. It's all about the word and care of God's people, teaching what is helpful and the kingdom of God. A church is strengthened though the inputs God gives and recognising that leaders speared God's people, bough with his blood. Many of us will never be such a shepherd in the church, but, these verses ask us two things: what is our motives, character and

lifestyle like - all Christians are word based. And two, are we promoting ministries and lifestyles in the church to this end, or asking and expecting the church to focus on what is unhelpful?

### **Talk #3 - What Does Faithful Ministry Look Like? Acts 21-23**

Paul's ministry now changes direction and he no longer plants any more churches. He now travels Jerusalem (Acts 21:11-14), convinced that it will be a dangerous time for him. God is not always as interested in our comfort as we are, and while Paul's friends tried to stop him, God's agenda was far more important to Paul. Perhaps Christians today are too concerned with a good life and have little capacity to understand that trials come with the kingdom? When we make a decision for the gospel or step out in faith - work, career, family, house, caring for parents - as God's vision shapes us, do we ridicule those believers and say it's not safe or wise? Perhaps God is more interested in loosening our grip on this life than we care to admit? After all, God will direct his people and his mission in his way, sustaining them along the way - which is what we see once Paul arrives in Jerusalem. Conflict abounds, but, God delivers Paul 4x times. The encouragement is that faithful ministry isn't the absence of conflict or challenges or unexpected events. It's trusting our faithful God, in all places, as we seek to proclaim his gospel. God will carefully look after his church and his people.

### **Talk #4 - What Does a Faithful Testimony Look Like? Acts 24-26**

These chapters are filled with long speeches as we find Paul defending himself before governors. It is an example of what the testimony of a Christian looks like. Paul is more interested in using the platform to talk about the resurrection of Jesus than his release. And, he's more interested in being clear about why he's in this tricky place rather than seeking to defend himself. These are a challenging few chapters because it begs the questions - do we testify about Jesus, or, are we more concerned about our comfort and reputation? In the situations we are in, God is not just with us, but there is an imperative to be missional too.

### **Talk #5 - The Gospel Is Unstoppable, Acts 27-28**

The final two chapters of Acts show us that not even natural disasters can hinder the gospel (Any more than people can) and that while there are seasons of challenges and trials, God also gives seasons of calm and growth. Paul's words in Acts 27:25, "I believe in God," is how we can navigate trials. Just as God's purpose will prevail, so too, those who trust Jesus are able to have steady, persistence courage in their life. The reminder here is that the gospel is unstoppable - how does that shape our life, decisions and speaking?

# COMMUNITY GROUPS

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Our Community Groups will look at the bible passage the week before it is preached. Use the following method as you read and talk about the passage. David Cook has prepared some excellent questions to ask each passage as well which you'll find below.

## Introduction

Share how God's word has impacted you over the last week and then read Sunday's up-coming passage together.

## Ask the following questions of the text

Begin by working out a structure and a big idea as a group and then ask:

1. What stands out for you from this passage?
2. What is difficult to understand from this passage?
3. How does this passage point forward to Jesus?
4. How might this passage shape how you live as a follower of Jesus in the coming week?

## Talk #1

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1. What special promise of God encouraged Paul?
2. How is Paul sustained in ministry?
3. How is each hindrance to the gospel and rejection of it opening up new opportunities for ministry?
4. How does this encourage us as we face opposition to the gospel?

## Talk #2

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1. Paul details his ministry at Ephesus. What does he emphasise and what does he not mention? (20:17-27)
2. Since these men are shepherds of God's people, what must they do first and foremost? What must they recognise (20:28)? What must they be wary of (20:29-31)?

3. Why does Paul mention his tears in verses 19 and 31 and why does Luke mention their tears in verse 20:37?
4. What can you learn from these verses about the method and content of Christian ministry, and the character of the Christian minister?

## Talk #3

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1. Natasha Moore from [publicchristianity.org](http://publicchristianity.org) encourages us to see those around us as thirsty, not threats when think about different beliefs and those who aren't for Christianity. What do you think of this statement and how might it change how you respond to someone?
2. How does Paul's understanding of the God and the gospel shape his response to the up-coming trials?
3. When Paul gets to Jerusalem, what does he say as he reports back all that

God has done? How do they respond?  
What does this mean for our ministry today?

4. How do you see Paul's Agabus's warning playing out in Jerusalem? What does this tell you about God's sovereignty and human decision making?
5. Read though Paul's defences - what does he emphasize and note what he doesn't say. Think again of the thirsty and threat comment from question 1 and consider how Paul models it here.
3. Why are we told the number of people on board in 27:37?
4. What was the thinking behind the remarks of the Maltese in 28:4-6? Why do you think healings have suddenly reoccur when Paul arrives in Malta?
5. In what ways can you be encouraged by his experience?

#### **Talk #4**

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1. How does Paul defend himself and what does he believe to be the real issue? (24:10-21)
2. How would you describe Paul's manner? The content of his defence? His purpose (26:1-29)?
3. Why do you think the king terminated proceedings at this point (26:30)?
4. What motivated Paul here? How does 2 Corinthians 5:11, 14, 15 help us understand him?
5. What do you learn here about God's ways of answering prayer? In what ways are you surprised by the way God is bringing Paul to Rome?

#### **Talk #5**

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1. Why do you think Luke gives such prominence to the weather conditions here (27:4, 7-9, 13-15, 20, 27)?
2. Why do you think Paul was disregarded in 27:10-12 and then listened to in 27:30-32?