



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 86 “Convictions that Produce Fruit”
By Pastor Jody May 07/07/2024

Acts 28:1-16 ESV

Paul on Malta

28 After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. ²The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. ³When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. ⁴When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.” ⁵He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. ⁶They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

⁷Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. ⁸It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. ⁹And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. ¹⁰They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed.

Paul Arrives at Rome

¹¹After 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. ¹²Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. ¹³And 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. ¹⁴There we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him.

[READ THE TEXT]



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**Pastor – “People of God, this is the Word of God.”
People – “Thanks be to God.”**

[PRAY]

[INTRO. & BACKGROUND]

Well, we are almost at our destination with Paul. He’s come so far as we catch up with him now on the beach in Malta, he’s just over 600 miles from Rome, and will have to go through Sicily to get there, but it’s not just about getting to Rome, that wasn’t the issue, it was who he would encounter when he gets to Rome. Paul’s political captivity has granted him an audience with Caesar. It has been his desire for years now to get to this point, and he’s so close that I can imagine it is hard to think about anything else.

We know from history that Paul didn’t convert Nero, but it was the audience that brought awareness of the force of Christianity to the known world. It got under Nero’s skin to the point he blamed all his troubles on Christians and started a mass persecution of them between 64-65 AD. But it was also during this time Paul was able to





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influence many leaders from Nero’s home both Jew and Gentile alike. No doubt these people went on to help lead in the transformation of the Roman Empire to become the Christian leader of the known world. This of course we all have seen was Jesus’ original plan from [Acts 23:11](#).

Up to this point over the last several weeks as we prepared for Paul’s voyage, we first learned about how to share the Gospel, and how to **include your personal testimony** as seen with Paul’s defense with Agrippa, [Acts 26](#). Then last week in [Acts 27](#) as a byproduct of one’s faith we saw how Paul was a **natural leader** and on a fatal trip ended up saving 276 people on a doomed ship. To sum it up we have seen consecutively over 3 weeks a man that is living out his **spiritual convictions**, it has led him to this point of destiny on the beach at Malta. What we are looking at today in Malta then is the byproduct of the ministry of a man, that has **lived by his convictions**, that has **produced Godly leadership**, and now we can see how this type of person is treated both by God and man. If you will, this is a story of what it looks like to **reap the fruit of living out one’s theological convictions**.

The point I hope we all can capture this morning is that living out of one’s convictions will put us all in the middle of God’s will, declaring the Gospel to those around us.

[ILLUSTRATION]

Two weeks ago, our student population for example, lived out of their Christian convictions just like Paul did. We taught them how to share a testimony, we worked on some basic tent making/constructions skills, they practiced their leadership by standing up among us saying, “I’ll go, I believe God is sending me.” And it placed them on a foreign mission field in West Virginia. They too had a tumultuous voyage being stranded for a day on the island of Subway. While there they practiced living out their convictions and were rewarded the hospitality of the natives and were even able to help minister to them while there. That then propelled them on to their final destination, where they were held as a friendly prisoner in the local high school. They were set to task at hard labor and shared the gospel with any of those that came, and all were filled with awe and wonder at the presence of Christ while on that trip.



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The point to all of this family, is summed up in our main point this morning.

MP:

Living out Christian Convictions automatically puts you on mission producing fruit for the Lord.

I real briefly want to lay out three things that happen when we live out our convictions, and then I am going to turn this over to Pastor Bill so you can get a real time report on what actually transpired on the student’s odyssey.

1. Practicing your Christian Convictions delivers on Hospitality.

You know I just need to point out if you go looking for true hospitality you will rarely find it in our world. The closest you might come to it outside the church, and by that I mean the true church, is the **Chick-fil-a** down the street. That though is a reflection of the Christian Convictions of its’ owners, that you treat people as you wished to be treated.

Luke 6:30-31 ESV

³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

But it is also curious to note that when you operate out of kindness, compassion, and a general care for others as Paul did for these men, that many times those same traits are displayed towards you. It is as if the **Providence of God** is working to show His people that to live on mission, is to understand that you will always be provided for when you are about sharing the Gospel by word and deed ([Luke 10:1-23](#)). Paul has lived out his convictions in the Word of God that they would be delivered, he lived out his convictions that he would help these people and treat them as he desired to be treated and now God is providing for this water-logged party through the people of Malta.



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² The **native** people showed us **unusual kindness**, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold.

The native people of Malta, simply means they were not Greek educated, they spoke their own island dialect, they were simple people, fishermen, small time traders, herders, farmers, salt of the earth people. They weren't important enough to be noticed by the rest of the world and yet they knew what these poor people needed, a fire to keep warm, a big enough fire to fight back rain/cold and to drive the doom away of what just happened.

You see no matter where we go it seems the further, we can get away from cultural mandates of who should be accepted and who should not; whether to judge a person by their skin color, views on sexual persuasion, environmental friendliness, or political persuasion, people still know how to treat one another. Isn't it funny the closer you get to the **politically correct big cities** the more hostility we have between people? **Those that would call themselves educated.** But when you escape those confines people, even unsaved people, can reflect the image of God and show kindness to others. God will always provide for His people when they are living out their convictions and influencing this world. And it is the gift that just keeps on giving.

⁷ Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, **who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days.**

¹⁰ They also **honored us greatly**, and when we were about to sail, they **put on board whatever we needed.**

¹³ 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.

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

When we choose to live out our convictions, we share the Gospel when we can, giving our testimony in it, we lead the best we can for the benefits of



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others, God provides for His people because we are doing what we were called to do, actively reflecting the goodness of God to a lost world.

Let me challenge you today not only to practice hospitality to others, but don't wait for it to be done to you first, seek out those you could share some warmth with. Go risk some time and effort and go on your own mission and test this hypothesis and see if God doesn't supply for you your needs along the way. Living out your convictions I believe you will find hospitable gifts to help you produce the fruit of evangelism.

2. Practicing Your Christian Convictions delivers on Opportunities.

I have known Christian people who have claimed that they have a hard time finding people to talk to about Christ with. That's really hard to believe because in our culture if you are doing it right, balancing both Grace and Truth, a Christian should never not have an opportunity to minister to the lost. I think what they mean is that the normal way they engage in the world is to never look at their daily interactions as God ordained meetings whereby, they are to represent Christ building bridges for future Gospel talks. That's all really you and I are doing every day, we should be living constantly looking for the way to build a connection between a lost person and an opportunity for them to be enlightened on who God is, whether they accept Him or not, that is up to the HS.

³When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. ⁴When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.” ⁵He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. ⁶They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

Well, here we have Paul and like any leader worth his salt, he's not sitting on his tush letting other people do work for him, he's out there looking for firewood. All he's doing at this point is just living out his convictions of loving



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Wk. 86 “Convictions that Produce Fruit”
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others as he would want to be loved, to care for others first as Jesus did for His disciples, before He would rest. Well wouldn't you know it, what some would look at as bad luck God uses for the advantage of the people of Malta. A venomous snake latches onto Paul's hand, and Paul just shakes it off and keeps going.

Just a couple of things before we keep going here. Sometimes life is like that, you got other plans, you have a destination to get to, you may even have a ministry opportunity you are supposed to be at, but **something happens along the way that makes you stop**, and you have to deal with it. Second thing I want you to notice, as an example for people not totally brainwashed by culture that these people have a sense of right and wrong and justice.

So, what we are seeing here is that Paul, living out his Christian convictions on faithful Christian leadership, is given an obstacle, but the obstacle to these people represents a divine judgment. I have always found that Christians when given the hard things in life to deal with will usually have opportunities to portray Christ to others. How people deal with trauma, sickness, disasters, and even death, how we deal with that is a major evangelism tool to show people in whom do we put our trust.

Well, Paul is rewarded with health, no sign of sickness at all, so to these people that automatically opens up a possibility that this man might have a divine appointment to be on that island. With that in mind look at the next part of the story.

⁸It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. ⁹And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured.

Paul and all his 276 friends are being taken care of by Publius, basically the governor/mayor of this island, and he has a father that is sick. In Malta there is a disease from a bacterium that is carried in the goats, and some people on that island are still affected by it by consumption of goat milk. One of the conditions is that the fever and dysentery can disappear for a few months



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Wk. 86 “Convictions that Produce Fruit”
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only to come back again months later. A miserable state of affairs. Well, for this man God allows his discomfort to build a bridge between Himself and what must have been a theological awakening on that island. Paul and Luke, a doctor, go on and heal those who were sick opening up doors for evangelism. No doubt their sense of Divine came alight and now instead of them saving some poor shipwreck fools, they were being saved, a people that were not thought much of on the mainland.

Practicing our convictions of love and leadership family gives us all the opportunities to finally have that discussion we want to have with people about Christ. Participating in CAYA and going to WV and Ecuador we may or may not encounter a HS reaping of souls there but when people hear about what our little church is doing God can, and I believe will, send people to us that need our help and want to hear about this Jesus that means so much to us.

Living out your Christian Convictions will always provide you opportunities to influence the lost, don't be worried about seeing the fruit right away, some sow and some reap ([John 4:36-38](#)) but the reward is the same, God is glorified and He is pleased with your work.

3. Practicing Your Christian Convictions delivers on Destiny.

Family I have got to tell you this is one of the most freeing and enjoyable things that I love about the Gospel. If you live out your core Christian convictions, and then leading where you can, I can guarantee you this, **you will never miss your destiny**. You will never miss out on that thing that God has called you to do, you will never not know what it is to live a life that was centered within God's will. God will never let you miss your calling if you are doing what you are called to do, and that is reflect the image of Jesus in your life.

Paul Arrives at Rome

¹¹After 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. ¹²Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. ¹³And from there we made a circuit



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

Paul and the 276 crew stay on through winter, provided with all they need, and then rewarded by the Native people for their help with provisions. It also happened as we read that another Alexandrian ship was there, which just so happened would be going exactly where they wanted to go, and after over 3.5 months at sea they travel over 600 miles in 1 week and make it to Rome.

At no time during this trip did Luke record for us Paul’s worry over getting to Rome, or him trying to manipulate situations that would get him there sooner. Ever since arriving at Jerusalem 2.5 years earlier Paul has been riding the wave of God’s Providence to get him to Rome while all the while focusing and making sure he shared his story in the Gospel and leading when he can. By Paul focusing on his call to mirror the Son well, he was always in the center of what God wanted and arrived in Rome exactly as it was ordained exactly when God wanted him to be there.

Family today I know that for many of us sometimes we worry too much over thoughts like:

Did I live my life right, meaning was I rewarded with finding out my destiny. Did I do everything I was supposed to do, did I have the career I was supposed to have, marry the person I was supposed to marry, my answer to all of that family is an emphatic YES! Because this much I know, because we have a Sovereign God and those things you went through were to prepare you for your life to live out your faith in front of others no matter where you are at, **and that is your DESTINY!**

If we spend all our time pursuing worldly goals, desires, and treasure yes you can miss the peace knowing **if** you were doing the will of God. BUT if you pursue a life that reflects the Son, telling others how God saved you, leading others into trusting God when you can, then rest assured you will never miss



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Wk. 86 “Convictions that Produce Fruit”
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your destiny and you will even come to know the peace of living a life fulfilling the call of God in your life as well.

Practicing your Christian convictions will always deliver the Hospitality needed for your journey, the opportunities to serve God, and the destiny of what you are to be doing with your life. Because living out your convictions means God is Sovereignly reigning in your life no matter where you are, no matter what station at life you're in, and no matter how long your detours take. Family, live out your calling, **make much of Christ in you, lead when you can, and enjoy always being caught up in the work of our Lord!**

[PRAYER]

[CALL TO OBEY]

1 Samuel 15:22 says, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice..." – Family be obedient to the call to make much of Him in all you do, and discover the peace of Gospel living.

BILL will present the student Trip highlights:

[COMMUNION]

On the night that Jesus broke the bread by the symbol of distribution and eating, the disciples live out the conviction that Jesus was the perfect man, and when they saw Him, they saw the Father. They would become aware of their sin, the night they deserted Him, but they also became aware of His strength when Jesus still used them to accomplish His will. By eating the bread this morning remind yourself that Jesus lived His convictions perfectly so you could enjoy His presence when you attempt to live out your convictions for Him.

When they drank the wine, it was to show that sin had been forgiven, no more sacrifices required and a new covenant with God is established. When we live



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out our convictions now, we can be assured the Spirit of God is with us, making our lives an acceptable sacrifice for God.

Heads of Homes remind your families their sins are forgiven, their lives are pleasing to God, based on what He has accomplished.

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder – “Christians, what do you believe?”

Congregation - recites the LBCF Chapter 16 sections 1 and 2

1. Good Works Are Obedience to God's Word

2. The Results of Good Works, Which Are the Fruit of Faith

The only good works are works commanded by God in the Bible. They do not include works that are not commanded by the Bible, such as those done by humans out of blind zeal or with the appearance of good intentions.

1. Micah 6:8; Hebrews 13:21

2. Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13

These good works, which are done in obedience to God's commandments, are fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith. By them:

- believers express their thankfulness
- strengthen their assurance
- edify fellow believers
- profess the gospel
- answer people who are against the faith
- and glorify God

Believers are God's workmanship and created in Christ Jesus for good works. These good works bear fruit that lead to holiness, and the result of this is eternal life.

3. James 2:18, 22

4. Psalms 116:12-13



Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 86 “Convictions that Produce Fruit”
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5. 1 John 2:3, 5; 2 Peter 1:5-11
6. Matthew 5:16
7. 1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Peter 2:15; Philemon 1:11
8. Ephesians 2:10
9. Romans 6:22

[OFFERING+LAST SONG] –

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that is providentially providing all things for you so that you may live out your convictions, glorifying Him.

Go in the name of the Son, that perfectly demonstrated His convictions about God perfectly so we would never feel the sting of disappointing our Father, live guilt free for Jesus family!

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that makes all our work acceptable, that empowers others to see God through our lives, now go and share your story with others.