



# CHRISTIAN CRUSADERS

7401 UNIVERSITY AVE., CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50613  
(319) 277-0924

[INFO@CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG](mailto:INFO@CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG)  
[WWW.CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG](http://WWW.CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG)

## The Glory of the Church, Part 2

### Acts 28:23-31

When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:

"Go to this people, and say, 'You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.' For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'

Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen." He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

### Matthew 10:16-22

"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

---

We've been studying how this church began when Jesus instituted it, and we've been looking at how the church started in Jerusalem. I have a map that we could put on the screen here. It started way down in the southeast corner of the Mediterranean, there in Jerusalem.

Jesus, after he was crucified and then resurrected, told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem until this Spirit, the Holy Spirit, came upon him with power. And then they would be his witnesses in Jerusalem, there first in Judea and Samaria, and then to the rest of the known world through the great Roman Empire.

We've seen the Apostle Paul's journey three different times, up through Turkey and Greece and coming back to Jerusalem. Last week we looked at the fact that he was in Jerusalem. They turned against him there, and they had some trials against him, and the Jewish leaders were persecuting him.

So eventually, in Caesarea, he appealed to Caesar. And near the end of Acts, now we see his journey over to Rome, because they spent a lot of money to send Paul to Caesar for his appeal, as he was promoting the way and speaking about Jesus.

We see Jesus' words come true. I want to read the gospel text again. Many of you who have walked with us through Acts know that all of this happened. Jesus said to them, "I am sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves."

I don't know why there's such hostility to the gift of Jesus in the world, but if the truth disrupts people's lives enough, they lash out.

And we saw that as the truth of the resurrection was promoted in the early church, the wolves came out. So Jesus said, be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Live above reproach. Be savvy. Be smart. Call on the Lord for wisdom.

"Beware of men," Jesus said, "for they will deliver you over to the courts." How many times has Paul been dragged before the courts? How many times has Paul been flogged? "They will flog you in their synagogues."

At times they beat him and left him for dead. "You will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and before the Gentiles."

Last week we looked at how Paul was dragged before Governor Felix and then Governor Festus, and then King Agrippa, and now he's on his way to appeal to the great Caesar. All because he lifted up Jesus.

"When they deliver you over," Jesus said to them before all of this happened, they weren't to worry about what they were going to say, because the Holy Spirit would quicken them and power them. The Spirit of the Most High God would give them utterance and what to say as they stood before the great kings and leaders of the past.

And then Jesus said, it's going to divide families. It's going to cause murders. All this is going to happen. And people are going to hate you if you name the name of Jesus.

And it still happens in our world today, friends. It still happens. But Jesus said, if you endure to the end, you will be saved.

When they do persecute you, if you can, just brush the dust off your feet and move on to the next. Look for receptive hearts and pray for those that are hardened.

So Paul is on this journey, and he's found his way to Rome, and we're looking at the very last passage in Luke's recording of Acts.

And in this last passage, he went first to the synagogue, as he always did, because the Scripture says, God comes to his people first, the Jewish people first. And that's why Paul almost always went to the Jewish people in the city when he went into a city first.

And he asked to have a meeting with them because he couldn't actually go to the synagogue in Rome, because he was under house arrest, and he was living in a home that he had rented himself. And so he invited them to come to him.

And when the day they had appointed to go to him came, many more people than Paul thought came to him. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying — listen to this — to the kingdom of God, the church, the building of God's family for eternity, and trying to convince them about Jesus from their own history, the Law of Moses and the prophets, which point always to Jesus as the suffering servant to come, the one by whose stripes we would be healed.

He testified to them from their own history about the revelation of Jesus. And as is always the case, some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved.

It was more diplomatic to argue publicly back then over spiritual things. Much of the community revolved around such things, and so they started to argue publicly about whether what Paul was saying was true or not. It's all based on the resurrection, whether that really happened or not.

After disagreeing among themselves, then they departed from Paul's residence there, after he made this one statement. This is the very end of Acts.

“The Holy Spirit was right in past history,” Paul said to them, “saying to your fathers through Isaiah and the prophets, go to this people. Go to him and say, you will indeed hear, but never understand. You will indeed see, but never perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull.”

Rome was rich. The synagogues were organized. They all had money, and the prosperity that they were living in, the order that they were living under, had got them spiritually dull. Their hearts had grown dull. With their ears they can barely hear. With their eyes they have closed, lest they should see. And if they would open their eyes, the prophet said, God would heal them.

And then Paul said this to them. The Jewish people in Rome who were gathered, let it be known to you that this salvation of God, it's been presented to you by God's grace and his kindness, but now it's going to the Gentiles.

And then he just gives this dig. He says, “They will listen.” Ever hearing but never believing. It's so sad. They missed, many of them, the salvation of God, the hope of eternity.

And then Acts ends this way. Paul lived there two whole years at his own expense, and he welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

And Paul would die there. He would be brought before Caesar's court twice.

What I want to do in the close of this series is I want to offer you some of Paul's last words that he penned for us. It is thought to be Paul's last writing, and he wrote his last writing from Rome, there under house arrest, awaiting trial, or during his trial with Caesar the second time.

And he took the time to pen a few words to young Timothy, who he met in Lystra on his second missionary journey, who knew the truth and lived the truth. And Paul was sort of shepherding and discipling young Timothy to be able to hand the baton off to him.

And here you see the heart of Paul, an older man, 60-plus years old. He's awaiting his death in Rome.

He knows it. And he says these things. You just feel his humanity and his heart.

In his final writing, Paul, he says, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. Wasn't even his choice. The living Christ struck him down on the road to Damascus. An apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus to Timothy.

Listen to this: my dear son. My dear son. Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He encourages him. He says, you, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things you have heard from me, the things you've heard me say in the presence of witnesses, entrust to other reliable men — multiply it — who will also be qualified to teach others.

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier for Jesus Christ. Endure it.

Flee the evil desires of youth, he said to young Timothy. Pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with others who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Be careful who you hang with. They'll have an effect on you. Choose people who are pursuing the godly life to hang out with. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

The Lord's servant must not quarrel, but must be able to teach.

Mark this, he said to Timothy. Paul's ending, writing for us: there will be terrible times to come.

People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not

lovers of good, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God — having a form of godliness but denying its power.

Pray for such people. But stay away from them.

He said near the end, Paul told Timothy, every opportunity you have, share about Jesus, discharge the other duties of your life, and make Jesus your life in sharing him.

And then Paul said this: I am being poured out like a drink offering. His life poured out. The time has come for my departure.

I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me — think of Paul, beat and abused, whipped, left for dead, sitting in prison near the end — and all he can see now is, in store for me is the crown of life, which Jesus, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, not only to me, but to all who long for his appearing.

And then he says this to Timothy. Just listen to his heart: do your best to come to me quickly.

Demas, who was my friend, departed me. He loved the world. He deserted me. Only Luke is left with me.

When you come, if you can come before winter, bring my cloak. It's kind of cold here. Bring my cloak. I left it with Carpus at Troas. And bring my scrolls. I'd like to have the Scriptures near as I'm leaving this life. Especially my parchments, he says.

When I stood before Caesar the first time, he said, everyone deserted me, but God was there and gave me strength. So I hope God doesn't count that against them.

Remember, Timothy, the Lord will rescue you from every evil attack, and as he's done with me, he will bring me, like he will you, safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for recording this history for us about your Holy Spirit's work in the world. We thank you for loving us so much that you continue to call us to yourself.

We see in Paul's life your great patience, your great kindness, your great perseverance with humanity.

Father, in the midst of this spiritual battle that we're in, we need your help. The church in America needs your help. We ask that you would continue to strengthen your church and call your church out, the ecclesia, the called out ones, to live in the way the Scripture calls us to live — with all gentleness, kindness, to bear the truth, to bear witness to your Son, to correct, rebuke, instruct, and train in righteousness in all seasons.

Call forth your church in the midst of what's happening in our culture. We praise you today, Father, for your glorious church and the opportunity to be a part of it.

We thank you for this coming fall and the opportunity we have to continue to look into your Word and let you instruct us. I thank you as well for these families that are gathered here this morning, offering their children in service to you.

We pray that you would encourage and strengthen them. And Father, as we now close down our time together and we come before you in worship and song one more time, I pray that you would continue to impress on our hearts the importance of your Word, the importance of your calling on our lives, and you would continue to give us ears to hear what you're saying to us as your church in this era, and how you're calling us to live.

Strengthen us for these things, Father.

And Father, I want to pray, perhaps there's someone here today who hasn't opened their heart to the great gift of your Son, Jesus, in whom is the fullness of life. I pray that you minister to them, and your Holy Spirit would be drawing them to place their faith in the shed blood of Christ and his work on the cross on their behalf, so their sins could be forgiven, they could be adopted into your family, and they could join with us in this great Kingdom work here on the earth.

We thank you for these things, Father. Be pleased with our worship. Now we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.