

HELP ONE ANOTHER

WEEKLY THEME:

PAUL MINISTERS IN MALTA

BASED ON:

Acts 28:1–10

KEEP IN MIND:

Acts 28:8

FROM YOUR BIBLE:

The Scripture text is in the student lesson under “Learning From God.”

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON

During this lesson, Juniors will describe how Paul helped people on the island of Malta, appreciate the ways others minister to them, and learn how to minister to those in need.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

1. Suggested Materials—Bibles, student magazines, pens or pencils, and paper.

2. Lesson Background—For background information, read Acts 28:1–10. Be sure to read the student lesson. Also see Bible Study Guide 12 in the white pages of this book, as well as in the UMI Annual Commentary, *Precepts for Living*®.

Today’s lesson continues the story of Paul’s journey to Rome after he was shipwrecked and had to swim for shore. Paul and the other passengers reached the island of Malta, and as God promised, everyone on the ship made it to shore alive. While it was common for islanders to overtake foreigners and plunder their ships, Paul was surprised by the hospitality and kindness the islanders extended. It was the beginning of a friendship that allowed Paul to serve and minister to the people of Malta, praying and healing the sick. While this text does not specifically mention converts, given the gratitude and care the islanders exhibited upon Paul’s departure, it is obvious that Paul’s ministry had great impact. He planted a seed that God would continue to nurture long after Paul was gone.

OPEN THE LESSON

Get Started Activity

Review last week’s “Doing My Part” activity. Then instruct Juniors to think back over their

week. Who did they help in some way? Who helped them? How do they think God feels when we help one another? Take the time to define the word “minister,” as used as a verb in this lesson.

What’s It All About?

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Student Story: Help One Another

There was no use being upset. Rules were rules, as Jordan had learned both at home and in his Bible class. No homework meant no recess. Jordan explained that he really had done his homework, but he had picked up his brother’s folder by accident.

“I believe you, Jordan,” his teacher, Ms. Lewis, said. “But it wouldn’t be fair to the others if I excused you.”

Jordan understood, but he was extremely embarrassed because he was running for class president. What kind of president sat in detention? Jordan slumped in his chair before opening a book. He hadn’t even noticed that another student, David, was still in the room until he heard David talking with Ms. Lewis at her desk.

“I’m sorry I can’t help you today, David. I have to get these reports to the principal by this afternoon. Do what you can, and we’ll work together tomorrow.”

Jordan watched David return to his seat, looking discouraged. He knew David was struggling with math. Before Jordan knew it, he heard himself saying, “Would you like me to help him, Ms. Lewis?”

How would you describe Jordan’s character? How open would you be to helping if you were in a

similar situation? Do you think Jordan created an opportunity to share his faith? Explain.

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Learning From God

Teaching time about 10–15 minutes

Allow volunteers to read the passage. Then discuss what a sight Paul and the others must have been to the natives of Malta as they reached shore, exhausted, waterlogged, and probably barely alive, and what a sight the fire must have been for Paul and his fellow travelers. Such was the beginning of friendships that would be tentative at first, but would end with well-wishes and gifts as Paul left the island. And this was all because of Paul's faithfulness to share God's love, serve, pray, and heal.

Have volunteers work alone or in pairs to answer the questions in the student magazine for this section and to then discuss the various responses.

What I Have Learned

Teaching time about 5–8 minutes

Juniors will pretend they are writing an action play. Have them write action scenes from this story in the order in which they happened.

Specific scenes may vary. Example Answers:

Scene 1: Paul and his companions pull themselves onto shore, wet, cold, and tired.

Scene 2: They meet islanders who are very, very kind and build a fire for them.

Scene 3: Paul helps to build the fire, and a snake attaches on to his hand. The islanders are afraid and think Paul must be a murderer.

Scene 4: Paul shakes off the snake and does not die; they think he must be a god.

Scene 5: Paul is invited to Plubius's house. He is treated with kindness for three days.

Scene 6: Paul prays for Plubius's father and lays hands on him, and he becomes well.

Scene 7: Others on the island come to see Paul and they are healed as well.

Scene 8: When it's time for Paul to leave, the islanders give him gifts for the journey.

Juniorway® Bible Activities

For additional material, see the activity for this lesson in the *JBA® (Juniorway® Bible Activities)* book.

Keep In Mind

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

Recite the verse several times. Then dramatize the scene with hand signs as Juniors continue repeating the verse.

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Choosing What's Best

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Juniors are instructed to write a thank you note to someone who has helped or ministered to them lately. If not too personal, allow volunteers to read their letters.

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Doing My Part

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

Juniors are challenged to look for opportunities to help others they interact with this week. Pray that God will help them in their efforts.

NOTES

[illegible]

Paul Ministers in Malta

Bible Background • ACTS 28:1–10

Printed Text • ACTS 28:1–10 | Devotional Reading • EZEKIEL 34:11–16

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: KNOW how Paul helped people on the island of Malta; APPRECIATE the ways others minister to us; and MINISTER to those in need.

In Focus

Brenda knew she was driving too fast for the poor road conditions, but she just wanted to get home after a long day. She hit a particularly rough patch and suddenly, Brenda's car spun out of control on the slick highway. She nearly missed careening into a ditch before her car skidded to a halt. Thankfully, she was not hurt, but the car would not start. She used her cell phone to call for help, but was still waiting. Then, 10 minutes later a dark car pulled up and a man jumped out, offering his help. She was afraid to talk with him until he showed her his badge: He was an undercover detective on his way home from work. Sighing with relief, Brenda allowed him to check out the car. Although he couldn't help, he stayed with her until her emergency roadside assistance service arrived.

We sometimes forgo help from others who do not look like us or because of the situation in which we find ourselves. Helping one another becomes easier as we realize God will often send unlikely strangers to help us in our times of need. Paul was such a helper to the sick islanders.

Keep in Mind

“And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.”
(Acts 28:8, KJV)

Focal Verses

KJV Acts 28:1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but

after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

The People, Places, and Times

Barbarous people. The people of Malta were not barbarians as they are defined today. Rather, in biblical times, Greeks used the term for anyone who didn't speak Greek and was seen as an uncultured individual.

Malta. Also called Melita, it was an island located near both Sicily (60 miles away) and Syracuse (90 miles) and was in a strategic location for trade. It is clear that the island had an established government system and that its chief, Publius, was wealthy. He was able to lodge the 276 ship passengers at his estate (Acts 28:7).

Background

After surviving a brutal northeast storm, Paul and the other passengers either swam to the island of Malta or floated there on boards or pieces of the destroyed ship (Acts

27:44). The inhabitants warmly welcomed the strangers out of the rain and cold. Rather than resting with the others, Paul gathered firewood. As he did, a snake rose from the fire and bit him. When the islanders witnessed the biting, they believed it was divine payback for some perceived crime and waited for Paul to die. Paul, however, simply shook the snake off. The fact that he was not harmed changed the islanders' opinion: They now thought he was a god.

At-A-Glance

1. Receiving Help from Strangers (Acts 28:1–2)
2. Divine Protection (vv. 3–6)
3. Ministering to Others (vv. 7–10)

In Depth

1. Receiving Help from Strangers (Acts 28:1–2)

While it is true that it is “more blessed to give than to receive” (from Acts 20:35, KJV), it is equally true that believers must learn to receive help during difficult situations. Family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors are among those who assist in time of need. And as Paul discovered on the island of Malta, strangers also may provide timely assistance.

Paul and the other passengers found this to be true as they landed on Malta, wet from the sea during winter. They had no clothing to change into, no firewood or matches by which to warm themselves, and no food to eat. The islanders, quickly assessing the situation, came to their aid. They built a fire, offering exactly what the stranded strangers needed most. They later provided lodging and months later gave the ship’s passengers needed resources to continue to Rome.

During stormy seasons of life, we learn there is no such thing as a “small blessing.” Anything and everything that helps make a difficult situation easier to bear is big to the recipient. The residents of Malta built a fire. The ship’s passengers were wise enough not to devalue the islanders’ help or to reject it because of the givers’ nationality. God recruits believers and nonbelievers to help Christians in distress. Learning to receive help from nonbelievers is especially difficult for some Christians.

It is not always how much we give or even what we give but that we are willing to be used by God to aid someone in distress. Our availability goes a long way in showing recipients God’s providence and care. Using the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), Jesus taught that a neighbor is anyone in need of help, and the “good” neighbor is the person who provides help in the time of trouble. The parable teaches that we should be grateful givers and receivers.

As others rush to assist you, joyfully receive their gifts of time, talent, or treasure. If you struggle with asking or receiving help from others, ask God to make you a gracious recipient.

2. Divine Protection (vv. 3–6)

Soon after surviving the tumultuous storm at sea, Paul found himself shipwrecked on an island. Rather than sit back and allow the islanders to serve him, Paul also got involved in collecting firewood for the needed fire. As he began serving others, a viper came out of the fire and bit him. The islanders took this as a sign that Paul was a murderer who was about to reap a requisite punishment. What was Paul’s response? He shook off the snake and continued his activities without any ill effects. That one action, more than any words, served to remove any doubt from the islanders’ minds that Paul was a criminal.

The fact that he was able to shake off the snake is reminiscent of Jesus’ teaching after His resurrection. Jesus appeared to the 11 original disciples and gave them what is commonly called the “Great Commission.” During His discourse, He discussed the signs that would follow believers. Among these, He said, “[T]hey will pick up snakes with their hands; and ... they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well” (from Mark 16:18, NIV). Paul exhibited both of these miraculous signs while on Malta. He did not do so to benefit himself but to help others. The people recognized something different about Paul because of these signs, which was evidence of his faith in Christ.

3. Ministering to Others (vv. 7–10)

Paul was able to minister to others in spite of finding himself in a trying predicament. Rather than fall prey to depression and selfishness because of his circumstances, Paul continued to use his gifts and talents in executing the ministry God had given him, with signs

following. When it became known that the chief's father was sick, Paul did what he knew to do. He laid hands on the man and healed him. That ability to rise above the circumstances and continue to flow in God's anointing was critical to the islanders' perception that there was something extraordinary about Paul. His example teaches that we, too, can rise above our situations to help others in need. Further, it proves that in spite of any difficulties we encounter, God's gifts and callings can still work through us if we allow them to.

Search the Scriptures

1. Why did the islanders believe Paul was a murderer (Acts 28:3–6)?
2. What critical help did Paul provide to Publius's father and others (vv. 8–9)?

Discuss the Meaning

News reports are filled with stories about the dangers of helping or receiving help from strangers. What strategies have you discovered to overcome fear of danger while helping others?

Liberating Lesson

Distrust between races makes it hard for some people to receive help from people who aren't "their kind." How can God's love help believers break down barriers to communication and care for others?

Application for Activation

Paul did not allow his life storm to stop him from ministering to others. Is there an area of ministry or outreach that you have given up because of pressures from a difficult situation? If so, prayerfully ask God to help you resume using your gift to help others. Then, make an appointment with the appropriate ministry leaders to see what steps you must take to resume service.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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Say It Correctly

Melita. muh-**LEE**-tuh.
Publius. **POOB**-lee-uhs.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

The Failure to Minister
(Ezekiel 34:1–6)

TUESDAY

God's Ministry to the Flock
(Ezekiel 34:11–16)

WEDNESDAY

God's Judgment of the Privileged
(Ezekiel 34:17–22)

THURSDAY

Extend Hospitality to Strangers
(Romans 12:9–13)

FRIDAY

Ready for Every Good Work
(2 Timothy 2:20–26)

SATURDAY

Do Good to All
(1 Thessalonians 5:12–22)

SUNDAY

Ministering to the Sick
(Acts 28:1–10)

Notes

GIVE ME FIVE MINUTES

WEEKLY THEME:

PAUL EVANGELIZES IN ROME

BASED ON:

Acts 28:23–31

KEEP IN MIND:

Acts 28:28

FROM YOUR BIBLE:

The Scripture text is in the student lesson under “Learning From God.”

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON

During this lesson, Juniors will summarize the points of Paul’s Gospel message, be confident in their ability to use Scripture to bring others to knowledge of Christ, and identify ways they can tell resistant listeners about Christ.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

1. Suggested Materials—Bibles, student magazines, pens or pencils.

2. Lesson Background—For background information, read Acts 28:16–31. Be sure to read the student lesson. Also see Bible Study Guide 13 in the white pages of this book, as well as in the UMI Annual Commentary, *Precepts for Living*®.

One reason people give for not sharing the Gospel is that many are reluctant to hear it. While that may be true, it should not stop believers from being bold witnesses for Christ. Believers should tell others about Jesus every chance they get. When they encounter reluctant listeners, they can recite Scripture. God’s Word is powerful.

In this lesson, Paul serves as an example of a bold witness. In spite of being jailed and having to face the rejection of many listeners, Paul proclaimed Christ from morning to night. Encourage Juniors to spread the Good News with the same boldness.

OPEN THE LESSON

Get Started Activity

Review last week’s “Doing My Part” activity. Then, discuss why some people may not want to hear about Jesus. How should Juniors try to persuade them otherwise?

What’s It All About?

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Student Story: Give Me Five Minutes

Delia was sitting on her porch with some friends. They were discussing the events that had happened at their school.

“I still can’t believe it,” one of the friends said.

“Me either,” another added. “On the news this morning, they said those four kids are still in the hospital. I’m praying for them.”

“I’m telling you,” Delia said, “we have to pray to God all the time for our schools, our community, each other, our...”

Before she could finish, one of the boys on the porch stood to leave. “I don’t want to hear that God stuff; it doesn’t help.”

Delia stopped him. “Give me just five minutes to try to change your mind.”

How do you think the story will turn out? Do you think Delia’s friend will be more open to hearing about Jesus after talking to Delia? What should you do when you try to share the Gospel with someone reluctant to hear it? Can you use Scripture to help you? Why or why not?

PRESENT THE SCRIPTURES

Learning From God

Teaching time about 10–15 minutes

After reading the passage, have volunteers summarize what happened in their own words. Then encourage Juniors to be bold witnesses for Christ. Allow them to work in pairs to role-play being bold witnesses for Christ.

What I Have Learned

Teaching time about 5–8 minutes

Juniors will complete a word search.

Answers:

I	V	G	C	Z	L	Z	J	L	A	X	H	B	E	S
U	E	R	O	O	J	M	I	S	V	O	O	V	A	B
R	E	Y	N	D	U	S	C	E	U	L	E	L	D	O
K	M	C	J	M	T	F	F	T	D	N	V	W	Q	R
H	N	G	N	E	Q	K	M	N	I	A	F	G	I	P
H	E	D	N	E	Y	F	E	N	T	K	R	U	V	P
J	S	A	N	V	D	S	G	I	M	P	E	D	M	S
M	I	K	R	A	S	I	O	O	R	E	E	W	D	Q
O	I	D	L	T	T	N	F	O	U	U	D	T	E	G
N	E	D	X	M	B	S	C	N	P	K	O	O	X	Z
W	K	D	C	H	I	L	R	F	O	R	M	G	L	Z
P	A	U	L	I	A	V	H	E	F	C	P	H	I	T
D	K	B	M	I	L	M	E	Q	D	R	W	Z	Q	R
X	B	Y	M	H	U	K	B	Z	Y	N	K	Z	S	L
K	Z	W	S	L	I	T	V	E	K	B	U	L	Y	H

BOLDNESS
CONFIDENCE
EVENING
FREEDOM
GOD
HEART

LISTEN
PAUL
PROCLAIM
SALVATION
UNDERSTAND

Juniorway® Bible Activities

For additional material, see the activity for this lesson in the *JBA® (Juniorway® Bible Activities)* book.

Keep In Mind

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

Repeat the Scripture aloud several times. Then have individual volunteers recite the verse. If you can arrange it with another teacher, have the Juniors go and boldly recite the verse to another class. Remind them that they can use Scripture to bring others to knowledge of Christ.

EXPLORE THE MEANING

Choosing What's Best

Teaching time about 4–8 minutes

Juniors are instructed to summarize the main

points of Paul's message. Have volunteers read their summaries aloud.

NEXT STEPS FOR APPLICATION

Doing My Part

Teaching time about 2–3 minutes

Juniors are challenged to create a script they can use when trying to witness to reluctant listeners. Suggest they use whatever they did during the earlier role-play. End class with prayer.

NOTES

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Paul Evangelizes in Rome

Bible Background • ACTS 28:16–31

Printed Text • ACTS 28:23–31 | Devotional Reading • DEUTERONOMY 4:32–40

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: SUMMARIZE the points of Paul’s Gospel message; BE CONFIDENT in our ability to use Scripture to bring others to knowledge of Christ; and IDENTIFY ways we can tell resistant listeners about Christ.

In Focus

During the past year, Monique started recognizing that her grandma Jean was becoming more and more forgetful. Jean started to forget where she placed items in the house. She would start teaching and get so confused the students could not understand what she was saying. She would get in her car to run an errand, but not remember where she was going. She also frequently put food on the stove and forgot about it. The house almost caught fire numerous times.

At Monique’s urging, Jean went to the doctor, who examined her and ran some tests. A few weeks later, the results of the tests came back. Jean was in the early stages of dementia. He told her the condition would progressively get worse over time. Jean felt devastated by the news. How long could she continue teaching? She had served as the church’s Sunday School Superintendent for more than 25 years. She was a faithful and committed worker. She wondered whether to stop now or wait until things got worse.

Sometimes challenging circumstances can make it difficult to carry out our commitments. At such times, we may need to persevere in faith in spite of the difficulties we experience. In today’s lesson, Paul is imprisoned but keeps his commitment to share the Gospel, which leads to souls coming to Christ.

Keep in Mind

“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation
of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.”
(Acts 28:28, KJV)

Focal Verses

KJV Acts 28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes

have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

The People, Places, and Times

Rome. Rome was the capital city of the Roman Empire. Its population exceeded one million people. The city was wealthy, literate, and artistic. The Romans worshiped many pagan gods and even some of the emperors.

Jews who had come to believe apparently started the Roman church during Pentecost (Acts 2:41–47). They spread the Gospel on their return to Rome and the church grew. While in Corinth, Paul wrote a letter to the Romans to encourage the believers. After taking money to Jerusalem for the poor Christians there, he desired to visit the Roman believers on his way to Spain (Romans 15:23–28), but his visit did not happen as he had planned. Years later, Paul was taken to Rome as a prisoner.

Background

Finally, after a 2,000-mile journey that started in Caesarea, Paul arrived in Rome.

He was permitted to live in his own quarters under house arrest or with a light chain. This fairly good treatment resulted from a favorable report from a Roman official, Porcius Festus, and the goodwill of the centurion (Acts 24:23). This proves God can grant us favor even with our enemies.

Paul called together Rome's Jewish leaders. The Jews were back; the decree of Claudius expelling them from the city had expired (18:2). Paul addressed the leaders as "my brothers" to acknowledge the common Jewish blood he shared with them (from 28:17, NIV). Paul wanted the leaders to feel connected to him. In doing so, they may have enough compassion toward him to try to understand the ordeal that created his unjust imprisonment. He explained to them that he was bound because of the hope of Israel, which is the Messiah. He grabbed their attention because they wanted to know more about Jesus. There was a great dispute about

Jesus' claim to be the Messiah. They agreed to listen to Paul's presentation of the Gospel.

The Jewish leaders' agreement to hear the Gospel was in fulfillment of Paul's calling to share the Good News with the world, starting in Jerusalem (9:13, 28). God planned that through the seed of Abraham, He would send the Messiah into the world. Now that the Messiah had arrived in the person of Jesus Christ, the entire world needed to know about Him. That is why Paul traveled on missionary journeys during his lifetime. He wanted everyone to have the opportunity to receive Jesus Christ. In spite of the way he arrived in Rome, Paul knew God had a purpose for his imprisonment. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28, KJV). Therefore, what was intended for evil, God worked it into good in Paul's life and ministry.

At-A-Glance

1. Paul Shares the Gospel with the Jews (Acts 28:23–25a)
2. The Jews Turn Away (vv. 25b–27)
3. Paul Preaches to the Gentiles (vv. 28–31)

In Depth

1. Paul Shares the Gospel with the Jews (Acts 28:23–25a)

On the agreed-upon day, the Jewish leaders came back to the place where Paul resided with an even larger group than expected. Paul testified and taught them about the kingdom of God all day into the evening. He tried to persuade them that Jesus was the Messiah prophesied about in the Old Testament (Acts 28:23). Romans, written some years earlier,

reveals Paul's ongoing dialogue with the Jews in Rome.

Some of the Jews were persuaded while others were not. Everyone has to make a choice to either accept or reject the Gospel. The most important fact is that we share the Gospel with people no matter the circumstances in which we find ourselves. God was faithful in preserving Paul's life so he could share the Gospel in Rome. He was imprisoned but did not complain. He used the opportunity to keep his commitment to spreading the Word.

2. The Jews Turn Away (vv. 25b–27)

Verses 26 and 27 are quoted from Isaiah 6:9, 10. They are also quoted by Jesus in Matthew 13:14, 15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; and John 12:40. We can picture in these verses people covering their eyes and ears so they can't perceive or hear because they are so adamantly against the message and will do what they think will stop the message from getting through. It was predicted that the majority of the Jews would not accept their Messiah, but they are also responsible because they are refusing to look and listen. But don't forget the significant number of Jews who believe, including Paul and the apostles.

3. Paul Preaches to the Gentiles (vv. 28–31)

Because the Jews rejected the message of salvation, Paul turned his attention to the Gentiles. He knew the Gentiles would listen, so he spent two years teaching, preaching, counseling, and receiving visitors (Luke, Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphroditus, and Mark) while confined. During his imprisonment, Paul wrote many of his epistles: Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians. Paul did not let his imprisonment hinder him from proclaiming the Gospel. He did not worry about the outcome of his upcoming trial. Instead, he committed his life into the hands of God.

For Paul, “To live is Christ, and to die is gain” (from Philippians 1:21). His faithfulness was rewarded through souls coming to Christ.

Search the Scriptures

1. How did Paul preach the Gospel to the Jews (Acts 28:23)?
2. What prophet foretold the Jews not listening to God’s message (v. 25)?
3. How did Paul spend his time while in prison (vv. 30–31)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. How was God’s favor shown toward Paul in Rome?
2. How did Paul keep his commitment to God while imprisoned?
3. How was his faithfulness rewarded?

Liberating Lesson

Commitment to ministry is sometimes hard. We have so many distractions and hindrances that can cause us to lapse in our responsibilities. Jesus also had a lot of adversity to deal with as He walked the Earth. However, He never allowed anything or anyone to stop Him from reaching the place He was destined to go, the Cross. If Jesus can remain faithful in spite of all He had to endure, surely we can, too. We must not allow family drama, workplace stress, or personal issues to hinder us from keeping our commitment to minister to others. The world may not understand how we can remain faithful, but we know God can and will sustain us.

Application for Activation

This week, pray God will give you the strength to keep your commitments. Always remember, God is present and in control over your circumstances. Testify to others of the faithfulness of God and how He helped you keep your commitments.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

Sources:

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Say It Correctly

Esaias. eh-sah-EE-as.
Expounded. ik-SPOUND-ed.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Will They Listen to Me?
(Exodus 6:6–13)

TUESDAY

I Told You So!
(Deuteronomy 1:41–45)

WEDNESDAY

Charged to Teach
(Deuteronomy 4:5–14)

THURSDAY

The Voice of Discipline
(Deuteronomy 4:32–40)

FRIDAY

The Word Is Very Near
(Deuteronomy 30:6–14)

SATURDAY

We Would Like to Hear
(Acts 28:16–22)

SUNDAY

Teaching Boldly and without Hindrance
(Acts 28:23–31)

Notes
