

TABLE TALK

FAMILY DISCUSSION GUIDE for December 4 – December 10, 2022

“ACTS IN 30” Chapter 28 (FINAL): *To “The Ends of the Earth” Forever*

CHAPTER OVERVIEW: In the final chapter of Luke’s Book of Acts, Paul demonstrates witnessing “*to the ends of the Earth*” (Acts 1:8). First, he ministers to the **pagans** - the indigenous people of the island of Malta - where they had been shipwrecked. God uses Paul to heal the island chiefs’ father and many others (Acts 28:8-9). Then, after arriving in Rome, he ministers to the **Christians** who came to visit him from all over this region (v. 15). Finally, Paul ministers to **Jews** (vs. 23). Paul ends up spending his final years on earth in Rome, ministering to people, sharing the Gospel and writing his two “Pastoral Letters” (Titus and I and II Timothy) before reportedly being martyred in Rome by Emperor Nero in 66 AD. Luke ends the Book of Acts abruptly, which some believe was intentional. Perhaps it was meant to imply that the message of Acts is still be “written” and demonstrated in the lives of every believer yesterday, today and forever.

DAY 1 Paul Ministers to the Pagans of Malta

READ: Acts 28:1-10

REFLECT: After washing ashore on Malta, Paul and the survivors were treated with great hospitality by the unbelieving locals (v. 2). Paul is bitten by a poisonous snake, yet he does not die, so the locals think he is a god (v. 6). God uses Paul to heal the island chiefs’ father and many others (Acts 28:8-9). The locals eventually shower Paul, Luke and the crew with many gifts before they sail to Rome (v. 10).

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: The people of Malta worshipped many gods. How did God let them know that He was the one true God (vs. 8-9)?

Application Question: Are you ever been around people who have no concept of God or Jesus? If so, how can you minister to them?

DAY 2 Paul Finally Arrives in Rome

READ: Acts 28:11-22

REFLECT: The prophecy Jesus told Paul in Acts 23:11 is finally realized. Paul arrives in Rome and is greeted by many believers. Some speculate these believers visited Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost who were saved and baptized (Acts 2) and then returned to Rome.

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: Review Acts 2. Why were so many people from all over the world in Jerusalem at that time? What was the impact?

Application Question: When Paul met with other believers, Luke says, “*he thanked God and took courage*” (vs. 15b). How does it feel when you connect with other believers that you haven’t seen in a while? How do you encourage one another?

DAY 3 Paul Shares the Gospel to the Jews in Rome First

READ: Acts 28:23-31

REFLECT: Shortly after arriving in Rome, Paul reaches out to the Jewish leaders and invites them to come to his home and many of them do (v. 23). Paul always believed that the Gospel must be pronounced to “the Jews first” and then the Gentiles. As is the case throughout Acts, some Jews believed Paul’s message (v. 24) but unfortunately many Jews did not (v. 25). Paul ministers in Rome for years (v. 30).

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: Paul quotes Isaiah 6:9-10. How did Jesus use this same passage in Matthew 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10?

Application Question: How does it feel when a close friend or family member refuses to believe in Jesus? What can you learn from Paul’s reaction here in these final passages from the Book of Acts about how to respond when people reject Jesus?

DAY 4 Living Out “Acts 29” Today!

READ: Acts 1:8

REFLECT: Rome was approximately 1,500 miles away from Jerusalem which would have probably felt like, “*the ends of the earth*” to the early church believers. Jesus used that metaphor of the “ends of the earth” to signal that all past, present and future believers that this message of the Gospel – that Jesus is the Messiah and Savior of the world - will go on forever. How are you a witness of that today?

JOURNAL or DISCUSS:

Context Question: Acts 1:8 is the defining verse that serves also as an outline the entire Book of Acts. From Jerusalem (Acts 1-Acts 7), to Judea and Samaria, (Acts 8-Acts 12), and then to the ends of the earth (Acts 13-28). How did the Holy Spirit demonstrate power in the lives of the believers in those 4 geographic locations?

Application Question: Try to imagine Acts 1:8 in terms of “relational” geography in your life today. Being a witness for Jesus with those closest to you could be considered your “Jerusalem”, while “Judea” and “Samaria” could represent those you see less often. To the “ends of the earth” could be people you haven’t even met yet. How can you ask the Holy Spirit to give you the power and authority like He did in the Book of Acts to equip you to live out “Acts 29” today?
