

Salvation for all people

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[0 : 00] Are you a good listener? Is there a difference between hear and listen? How do you feel when someone says to you, I hear you, compared to I'm listening?

What fallacy would I be committing if I say I'm hearing you? Maybe you can share your thoughts on our live chat if you are watching right now on your device or on the computer.

We have been studying the book of Acts over the last 12 weeks, almost as long as our current lockdown.

Seeing God working through Paul to bring the gospel from Jerusalem to the end of the world was challenging and encouraging at the same time.

Even in the toughest of situations, nothing stops God from advancing the good news of Jesus' resurrection to bring salvation to all people.

[1 : 03] Today, we have reached Rome, which also concludes our study of the book of Acts. Luke tells us that Paul made the following conclusion in chapter 28, verse 28 to 30, to a big group of people that have come to his place to meet with him.

Therefore, I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen. For two whole years, Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcome all who came to see him.

God's salvation has been sent to those who will listen. And today, I hope to be your hearing test to get you ready for God's salvation.

For God's salvation is for all people. And from our passage today, we can see God's salvation in the following three ways. Against all hope, unusual kindness, and welcome all.

Chapter 27 of Acts gives us a vivid picture of the difficulties Paul and his companions and Jews before they arrived in Rome.

[2 : 26] As I read through it, I cannot but feel like it's talking about our current situation with the COVID pandemic. the danger and uncertainty, the constant great difficulties of hoping to move forward and being driven along against our own will.

But one thing very different is in verse 9 to 11. Much had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now, it was after the Day of Atonement.

So Paul warned them, man, I can see that our forage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo and to our own life also.

But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and the owners of the ship. Paul warned them about the danger ahead.

But instead of listening to him, they followed their advice that was more soothing to their ears, more inclined to what they want to do to get to Rome quickly.

[3 : 43] Before the second half of 2019, we had no warning of what is going about to hit the world. But they were warned and had a chance to avoid the storm and the shipwreck.

However, instead of listening to Paul's warning against setting sail, the pilots and owners' advice were followed because they thought they could accomplish their purpose.

We can't blame the people for not following Paul's advice for they did not know who Paul belonged to and who he was serving.

And after all, Paul was only a prisoner and a preacher. What would he know about sailing? The decision not to listen to Paul has put everyone in danger, including Paul himself.

And they took a violent battering for many days and trying to save their life and their self even through falling overboard their livelihood.

[4 : 54] And in verse 20, we are told that when neither sun nor stars appear for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

The we here refer to everyone on the ship, including Paul and the narrator Luke. And Luke did not hold back in the following verse from letting us know who Paul really is.

Then he also would say, I told you so. And he too need to be encouraged. Verse 23, it says, Last night, an angel of God, of the God whom I belong and whom I serve, stood beside me and said, Do not be afraid, Paul.

You must stand trial before Caesar and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you. They did not listen to Paul, for they do not know who Paul belonged to and served.

Paul belongs to and served the living God of the universe, creator of everything in this world. God's angel told Paul that God has graciously given him the lives of all who sail with him and not to be afraid.

[6 : 25] That's why Paul urged the people on the ship to keep up their courage in verse 22 and 25. To keep up your courage can also be translated to cheer up.

Paul urges them to cheer up in the middle of a raging storm where they have not seen the sun or any stars for many days. The only source and guide for them to get home.

Paul was able to cheer up and take courage in the middle of a raging storm based on the promise that God had graciously given him the lives of all who sail with him and his faith in God that it will happen just as God told him.

Paul's message is one of hope amid despair and we'll be learning more about this over our next series. he challenges everyone on the ship including himself to trust God based on the assertion that God is as good as his word.

Like what Isaiah said in chapter 55 verse 10 to 11. the word that goes out from God's mouth will not return to God empty but will accomplish what God desires and achieve the purpose for which he sends it.

[8 : 03] God is determined to save and has sent out salvation to all people. So Paul encouraged everyone on the ship to trust in his God for deliverance.

He demonstrated his trust in God by preparing food for all the people on board. 276 people were there. He took some bread gave friends to God in front of them and passed it on to them.

Paul inspired everyone on board to act decisively and courageously for the benefit of all people. He stopped any group from taking action to seek the safety of their own while abandoning others.

Verse 36 tells us that they all become cheerful and eat some food themselves. This action shows now they listen to Paul and begin to believe too in the promise of God's word.

Here in this chapter we see a picture of human being in a desperate situation in need of God's help and also shows the importance of believing God's word and rely on his power for deliverance.

[9 : 33] It also demonstrates the believer's opportunity in such a situation to draw attention to God's character and encourage others to turn to him for mercy.

If you are not yet trusted in God I'm glad that you are still watching right now. Have you considered your life situation? Why not turn towards God for mercy and ask him to save you?

Sometimes we have to be at a deep end to realize God's merciful hand merciful helping hand was always there.

Against all hope we can trust in God for salvation because he is as good as his word. God's word never returns empty and his salvation is also shown in unusual kindness.

kindness. The idea of kindness is very prominent in these two final chapters of Acts. And the primary form of expressing kindness in these two chapters was hospitality.

[10 : 48] We have the centurion showing kindness to Paul allowing Luke and Astakus to accompany him. and after they land at Sidon he allowed him to go to his friends to provide for his needs.

And later in the chapter ordering Ephraim from the ship to swim to the shore to protect and spare Paul's life. And while they were on the island of Mota in chapter 28 the islanders showed them unusual kindness.

They built a fire and welcomed them all because it was raining and cold. And the chief official of the island welcomed them to his home and showed them generous hospitality for three days.

And when they reached Petone in first fall they found some brothers and sisters who invite them to spend a week with them.

They were treated with unusual kindness and hospitality and brothers and sisters traveled 50 to 70 kilometers to see them. In verse 15 and 16 it said at the sight of these people Paul thanked God

and was encouraged.

[12:09] When we get to Rome Paul was allowed to live by himself with the soldier to guide him. In the original language Luke called the islanders barbarian and considered their action unusual and out of its expectation.

From a Greek Roman perspective since Greek was not their first language they were considered uncultured even though Malta had been a Roman island since 218 years before Christ.

I believe Luke expected to be treated with hostility instead they showed them unusual kindness with hospitality.

When someone treats a stranger with kindness it's considered unusual and if someone treats their enemy with kindness it's inconceivably strange but it's not without example.

the islanders seem to believe in many gods for they refer to a goddess justice when a snake fastened himself on Paul's hand.

[13:28] They also seem to believe our action influenced God. Treat other people with kindness and you'll get good fortune and if you're unkind or cruel you'll get punishment.

In verse 4 of chapter 28 when the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand they say to each other this man must be a murderer for though he escaped from the sea the godless justice has not allowed him to leave.

they were waiting for something unusual to happen to Paul after he shook off the snake into the fire maybe he would suddenly drop dead and die but nothing happened to him and they changed their mind about him.

I don't know about you but this is how I sometimes think about how to hold my life too. I think I can earn God's favor by what I do and worry that I have done something wrong to upset God when life is not as smooth as I intended but instead of being hostile towards us God has treated us with hospitality and unusual kindness he is not out to get us instead as Psalm 103 says Psalm 103 verse 8 the Lord is compassionate and gracious slow to anger abundant in love he will not always accuse nor will he harbor his anger forever he will not he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities

Paul sent a letter to the believers in Rome a few years before his survival and he explained further what God has done for us and how God has treated us and most importantly how we should relate to God one of the key points is in Romans chapter 5 verse 6 to 8 God God God God died for the ungodly very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person but for a good person someone might possibly dare to die but God demonstrated his own love for us in this while we were still sinners Christ died for us God made this world and everything in it including all human but we demand our independence instead of honoring God and knowing him for who he is we imagine we can influence or even control the divine being and live an ungodly life that suits our likeness we live life for ourselves instead of God instead of living cheerfully under God's care we live fearfully under strife but God treat us with unusual kindness and hospitality he gave Christ his one and only son to die to reconcile us to him and while we were God's enemy we were reconciled to him through the death of his son and having been reconciled we will be saved through his resurrection to resurrect the life

[17:07] Luke wrote the book wrote the gospel and acts to demonstrate how God fulfilled his word through Jesus and the Holy Spirit in bringing salvation to all people to the end of the world and God welcomed all people to his salvation plan all different backgrounds all different upbringings and all different stages of life in these two chapters of last two chapters of Acts we see the culmination of that fulfillment we have Paul saved from a religious cellist to be a faithful follower of Christ we got Luke the doctor acting as a narrator as Tacos a Macedonian from Thessalonica the Roman the Anturian with all the soldiers sailors and prisoners all together 276 people from the ship saved from the raging sea and saved the rich land

Paul reached many places along the coast of the province of Asia God's mercy reached the island of Malta where many islanders were cured of their deceits and finally to Rome and surrounding Rome believers were coming from areas as far as 50 to 70 kilometers away and in chapter 28 verse 17 to 23 many Jews have the kingdom of God explained to them and allowed to be persuaded about Jesus in verse 24 it says some were convinced by what he said but others would not believe but Paul did not stop there he said in verse 28 to 31 therefore I want you to know that God's salvation have been sent to the Gentiles and they will listen for two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rental house and welcomed all who come to see him he proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance the salvation of God

has been sent out to all people and they will listen and all are welcomed we have seen the salvation went to all people and those that believe are all welcomed but I found a statement in between that people will listen very challenging will they listen in today's world maybe the new immigrant whose English is their second language will they will be more accepting to our help and the social activities we offer for them to find friends but not Uncle George or Aunt May who is well-to-do and busy pursuing their career you might say if you think people will listen you should try my friends they went to a private school and doing great in uni and they already have life figured out they wouldn't care less about believing in God they care more about who they can impress or go out with let me encourage you to do what

Leland and Christian do during this lockdown we have been saying our praise and pray upon in our community group and Leland and Christian have been sharing with us how they have together with another brother persevered during the lockdown to regularly meet up with other friends from uni to answer their questions about Christianity and introduce them to God over Zoom in a season where most of us are Zoomed out they persevere to listening and encouraging their friends to turn to God and to the one that can save them you might say you might say if you think people will listen you should meet my very opinionated brother or neighbor who think they have the solution to save the world or also my environmentalist and feminist friends if you think all these people will not listen are you a good listener yourself how well are you listening to the reason they become who they are today are you ready when you are presented with an opportunity to proclaim the kingdom of God if we believe our family and relatives are the most challenging group to persuade about Jesus and the kingdom of God our boss and colleagues will be a cold second because we spend most of our daily life with them and they know the perfect need my wife Vivian managed a small law firm and the other day her boss told her one of their kind sister has suddenly fallen ill and they have to prepare documents for their client to take care of her sister her boss commented that life is fragile and full of uncertainty and as she listened she replied that is why we need to know

Jesus God's salvation has been sent out to all people and they will listen so keep up your courage brothers and sisters have faith in God that it will happen just as God told us let nothing hinder you and keep proclaiming the kingdom of God and teach others about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness if you are not yet a believer and have stayed watching until now I'm confident that you have a very healthy hearing and are ready for God's salvation keep joining us online and come to see us in a few weeks when we can gather in person or give us your details by clicking the connect with us link or write your comment in our live check to let us know how we can welcome you into the embrace of

God's family as St. Paul we exist to treasure Jesus together for God's glory and the joy of all people we seek to unite our diversity in the good news of Jesus Christ and joyfully become like him together unlike the word here which is stative and without action listening treasuring seeking ongoing action that can take place in the past in the present and in the future let's join with Christians through the ages to take courage to proclaim the good news of God as we saw in the book of Acts against all hope we can have hope of salvation because God's unusual kindness to all people and God welcome all to his gospel family come and join us in sending salvation to all people