

# Unstoppable (Acts 28)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] of Acts chapter 28. And I'll be reading from NIV, so Christopher will put it on the screen if you don't have your phones, or maybe not, but follow along in your own Bibles. Let's go. Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. So this is after the shipwreck. The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. Paul gathered a pile of brushwood, and as he put it on the fire, a viper driven out by the heat fastened itself on his hand. When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, this man must be a murderer, for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live. But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead. But after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery.

Paul went in to see him, and after prayer, placed his hand on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. They honoured us in many ways, and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

After three months, we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods, Castor and Pollux. We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rigin. The next day, the south wind came up, and on the following day, we reached Piteoli. There we found out some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them, and so we came to Rome. The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they travelled as far as the Forum of Pius and the three taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people, Paul thanked God and was encouraged.

When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself with a soldier to guide him. Three days later, he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them, My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They exclaimed to me, they examined me, and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charges or any charge against my own people. For this reason, I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain. They replied, We have not received any letter from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against the sick. They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the law of Moses, and from the prophets. He tried to persuade them about Jesus. Some were convinced by what he was said, but others would not believe. They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made his final statement. The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet, Go to this people and say,

You will be ever hearing, but never understanding. You will be ever seeing, but never perceiving. For this people's hearts has become calloused. They hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn, and I would heal them. 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 welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God, and taught about Lord Jesus Christ, with all boldness and without hindrance. Pastor William.

[ 4 : 44 ] Thank you, Fran. Thank you, Isaac and team. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you, everyone.

Peace, peace, peace, English is to walk through the Bible. We don't skip the hard bits, and we don't skip the long bits sometimes. We do summarize it, but we want to let God's Word set the agenda for us, because we want to hear God speak to us today, and so would you pray with me? Let's listen and hear God speak to us from this passage.

Father, be with us now. Open our eyes to see wondrous things from your Word. Your word is like honey dripping with nutrients and sweetness.

Help us even in this passage, in this narrative, to see the sweetness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Give us attention now. Help us if we're feeling weary after a long day.

Help us if we don't fully understand what's going on. Give us an understanding and insight that comes only through your Spirit. Father, we pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

[ 6 : 19 ] So I'm sorry if it feels like you've just entered the last two minutes of, you know, like a movie at the theater, because that's kind of what it feels like. But we have been journeying through this book, and wasn't last week's chapter a bit of a thrill, right?

Who would have expected that we would be on a boat with Paul, going through bad weather? Remember in the midst of that storm and the shipwreck, what was the main point?

The main point is this. God's word and his promises to Paul was what kind of anchored him, right? Everyone else around him was going crazy, right? Panicking. He was the one in control of his emotions, ready to help, ready to serve, ready to be the preacher that God called him to be.

And we learned last week that sometimes God, he will lead us into the storm. But remember, he will also lead us through the storm as well, right?

His grace will lead us safely home. And so I wonder, even in the past week, what's it been like for you? Have you listened to the voice of God, whether your week's been calm, whether it's been stormy?

[ 7 : 26 ] Are you right now trusting and obeying Jesus, our captain who's sailed into the storms of sin and death in our place? Are you willing to follow him, even if the way ahead seems like you're about to crash into rocks?

Now, for our final sermon in this series, Fran read that chapter really well, I just want to highlight three things that we see in this passage. I think in Acts 28, as we kind of round up the story, we see three things.

We see a preacher who's unhindered, a church that's unashamed, and finally, a message that's unstoppable. I get this because you'll notice in some of your Bibles, actually, there's three different sections, right?

So in Acts 28, Paul seems to speak before three groups of people, right? There's one group, which is the natives of the island of Malta. He's there bringing the mercy of Christ through his healing ministry.

There's this long section where he's talking with the Jews in Rome about the gospel. And then, mixed in all that, he's free to talk with brothers and sisters, with anyone who would come, free to share with them about God's kingdom, the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 8 : 43 ] So kind of three sections to the talk today. And so let's think first about the preacher who's unhindered. And if you think about Paul's ministry in this last chapter, I think that's the word we want to think about, right?

He is not blocked in any way. Think about it. Verse 1, he is firstly, we see how he's not blocked, he's not unhindered by the idolatry that he comes across on this island.

Verse 1 seems like a special kind of welcome, right? It's like a very hospitable people here in this island. They eventually find out this is an island called Malta.

Turns out when they crashed their boat and had to come onto the shore, they landed in paradise, it seems, right? People who are hospitable saying, welcome, we're going to help you out.

This is God's, of course, incredible provision. It's his provision, right? Their boat could have gone anywhere and it crashes onto this very island. But then we are introduced to a bit of a snake bite incident.

[ 9 : 49 ] Now, it might seem shocking to us at first. We hear this story and we think, how do we process this? The key thing, I think, is to observe the reactions of the local people, okay?

They know the situation the best. And so what do they do? When Paul gets the bite, what happens? Verse 4, right? They say to each other, this man must be a murderer. He escaped from the sea, but justice has not allowed him to live.

But then when Paul doesn't swell up and keel over and die like they would expect, suddenly their view of him completely changes. It's like it's a 180 turn. Verse 6, it says, they changed their minds and they said, he was a god.

What's going on here? Some of you, when you read the story, you might think, wow, that's fascinating. I want to know how to handle snakes and not get stung.

Or maybe you're thinking, well, he does a lot of healing ministry. I'm keen to know more about this. I don't deny that God can do miraculous things. He does every day.

[ 10 : 55 ] And when you hear the reports of brothers and sisters all around the world, we don't want to put God in a box. But I think here we are less like Paul and more meant to reflect on the Malteser's reactions.

Okay? One moment was saying justice. Justice killed him. The other moment we're saying, he's a god. Can you see?

We may be full of eagerness to do good as people, but we can be quick to judge. We can be quick to idolize others. And through it all, you know, why are they so scared about a snake?

I think death is something that we think about a lot. All right? And we fear sometimes as well. Does that sound familiar? I think we're meant to relate to the Maltese here rather than the Apostle Paul.

But, you know, taking a step back, Paul is actually unhindered. He shows that despite being a total foreigner to these people, right, he's not scared.

[ 11 : 57 ] He goes in. He's happy to collect firewood. He's happy to just live among them and serve them, whatever their needs were. And I find it interesting that actually by the end of their time on this island adventure, it actually never says that Paul preaches the gospel.

Right? So we don't even know what seeds were sown, right, as they hung out with the Maltese. Right? The Maltese send them off really nicely three nights later on a boat. Seems like they had a good time together.

But we do know this. You know, God's word, God's people always have an impact. Sometimes we can't see it on the day. And we know that even the idolatry of the Maltese, right, worshipping justice, suddenly worshipping Paul, suddenly not sure, that did not hinder, it didn't hinder Paul from doing what God had called him to do.

So you see, firstly, Paul is someone who is unhindered, even by idolatry. What else is he unhindered by? Well, further on, we see that he's unhindered by opposition.

Look, whether Paul did preach the gospel in Malta, one thing we do see is that he explicitly preaches about Jesus Christ, right? We see this in verse 16 onwards. By now he's in Rome.

[ 13 : 14 ] He's under house arrest. He's awaiting his trial before the emperor. You've got to picture this. Paul is actually in his 60s now, okay? He's in his 60s.

He's chained to a Roman soldier 24-7, right? If he had to use a bathroom, this guy had to come with him. He's unable to visit the synagogues and marketplaces himself. So you think someone like that, all right, surely your time's up.

Surely there's nothing you can do now. Surely that's a barrier to you being useful. But no. Three days after arriving, verse 17, he just invites the Roman Jewish leaders to come in here from his house.

He's not going to let a Roman guy next to him stop him from preaching the gospel. And thankfully, these particular Jews, right, from Rome, they don't seem to have heard about all the, you know, the other Jewish leaders and how fiercely opposed to Paul they were back in Jerusalem.

Right? Seems like all that's kind of filtered through to Rome so far are secondhand reports. And so they seem to be willing to listen. And so Paul says, verse 17, I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers.

[ 14 : 21 ] And actually, as you hear him talk, I wonder if you notice there's no hint of being upset at the Jewish people. He's not bitter or angry at them.

In fact, verse 19, you know, he says, I don't have any charge to bring against my own people. How can Paul be so gracious? I think we see the answer in verse 20.

You see, when you live with hope, it can carry you through ups and downs.

And what better hope than the hope of Israel, than the hope of what God's people were longing for, a coming king, a Messiah, a promised one, one whom God would raise the dead to life with.

We just said it in our Bible verse, right? It's the same hope that he declared before even King Agrippa before. And this hope in Christ seems to make him unhindered by whatever opposition.

[ 15 : 26 ] He could have just said, oh, there's local Jews in town. I'm going to stay away from them. But he didn't. He actually sought them out. He wants to share the gospel. He's not carried through by wishful thinking or by any thoughts of willpower.

It's his hope, the hope of Israel, his confidence in the confident Christ, right, that carries him through. And I think in the same way, we want to learn from this.

We want to learn from this. No opposition is going to hinder the gospel, right? And so let's proclaim it. The more you and I dwell on the glorious truth that Jesus is the hope of Israel, that he is alive, he's in charge, the more we will naturally speak of his saving power freely without hindrance.

And that's what we see Paul do, right? Here is a preacher. He's unhindered by idolatry. He's unhindered by opposition. And later on, as he expounds, we're going to see he's actually unhindered by even their unbelief, the unbelief of the Jews.

So what happens here? Paul, he keeps going. He preaches. He expounds to them, right? It's a very technical word. It's saying that he explains carefully from the writings of Moses, from the writings of the prophets.

[ 16 : 45 ] These are books that the Jewish people knew very well. That Jesus is the Christ. That Jesus fulfills the Lord. That he is the promised Messiah. He's the one they've been looking for.

You know, you wait all Christmas, right, to open that gift, right? This is the gift that God's people have been longing for. And whenever there's a Jewish audience, big or small, this is what Paul does all the time, doesn't he?

He always says, look at the scriptures you know. All right? Look at the hope you already have. He did this in Corinth and Ephesus and Thessalonica. Now here in Rome, he's doing the same thing.

But then we also should expect by now a similar reaction, right? Just like before, we see a mixed response. Have a look at verse 24.

Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. And they began to disagree among themselves. Does this unbelief hinder Paul's message?

[ 17 : 50 ] No, it doesn't. The point that Luke is trying to make here is that, look, if some of the Jews reject the gospel, at the end of the day, he warns them, if you pass up this opportunity, then I'm going to go and take this same message to the Gentiles instead, to those who aren't Jewish, to people like us.

And when Paul quotes from the Bible, he quotes Isaiah 6, 9 to 10, he's quoting this to the Roman Jews as they're sitting there in his living room. You notice the words that are scattered through this prophecy, okay?

There's a repetition. It's all about hearing and seeing, right? I wonder if you can hear it for yourself. You will indeed hear, but never understand. You will indeed see, but never perceive. But then another word is also repeated.

It's heart. For these people's heart has grown dull, right? Lest they understand with their heart, in turn, and I would heal them. Why the focus on senses?

We can serenade the ear when we do church. We can dazzle the eyes, right, with all kinds of things. But ultimately, whether someone follows Jesus, whether someone accepts or rejects God's message, is a heart issue.

[ 19 : 07 ] It comes down to whether God has opened their heart. Don't be hindered by unbelief. It's not your fault. It's not your presentation. It's not your polish.

It's not how beautiful you made your invitation look for a Christmas gathering. God knows every heart that would soften, every heart that will harden against Jesus.

And he's in control. He will bring about his purposes. We're called to just keep being faithful, aren't we? God will provide the right outcome. And if you're here and you're not yet a Christian, our biggest problem, you need to know this, is a heart problem.

Not a seeing problem. Not a hearing problem. It's a heart problem. It's our willful rejection in our hearts of the God who created us. And it can only be solved by a change of heart.

By running away from what's captured our hearts, whatever idols we have. And resting in the one who should win our hearts, Jesus Christ. Who died on a cross for sinners.

[ 20 : 15 ] Only he can rescue you. Only he can transform your heart. Despite idolatry and opposition and unbelief, this is the message that Paul is giving and wants to give to people.

And he can do it unhindered. That's what we see. The second main thing I want to draw our attention to, we're seeing Paul as a very free and unhindered preacher.

The second thing I want us to observe is that there is a church here that's unashamed. I think the surprising thing when I read this was that there was already a church in Rome.

Wasn't Paul meant to take the gospel all the way to the ends of the earth? And wait, there's already people here that believe Jesus. Should I just go the other way and go home?

No, of course not. Because actually, his call is not just to share the gospel and then leave. His call is to be part of making disciples. And that includes encouraging the believers already there.

[ 21 : 15 ] And so that's exactly what happens, right? We see, right, earlier on, verses 11 to 16, this is how Paul finally gets to Rome. It turns out it's thanks to a ship that was sailing from Malta at the time.

It's a ship from Alexandria. We hear that. And it kind of seems to make a couple of pit stops. So as you remember last week, a lot of these big ships, they need to make stops along the way. They're dropping off food or drink or other things.

And then finally, they're put in at a place called Purioli. It's halfway up the western coast of Italy. It's still there today. And I love this interesting detail. Verse 11. This ship had the figurehead of the twin gods, Castor and Pollux.

And you think, why is that interesting, William? This is a reference to the two gods that people used to, you know, in those days, worship and pray to, to give them safe travels across the sea.

It's a bit of irony again. Luke is like saying, here's a ship. And they think it's these Greek gods or these Roman gods that carry them safely. But we know better. God is the one who carried them through.

[ 22 : 21 ] God is the one who brought Paul safely to the ends of the earth, to the eternal city. It is the one true God who is in charge. And once on shore, they continue the rest of the journey on foot.

Okay? They walk along the famous Appian Way. If you've ever traveled in Europe, you've probably actually seen it. And as they're journeying, you know, we just keep being reminded God's promises are being fulfilled.

Paul is safely delivered into the capital city. He is God's witness to the ends of the earth. It all happened just as predicted. And then Luke makes special mention, right?

Verse 14, there we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. On the face of it, you might read through this and just not think about it.

But I think this is actually pretty remarkable, right? It's one thing for us. Hands up if you've invited someone from church to your, you know, out for coffee or lunch recently or hang out. Yeah, yesterday, right, at Leonard's, someone said.

[ 23 : 25 ] Look, it's one thing for us to just hang out together and be hospitable to each other, right? To those that we love and care about, we've seen each other for ages. They've never met Paul. They're absolute strangers and they are hospitable to them.

They even say, come spend a week with us, okay? That's Christian love as unmatched, isn't it? And not only that, okay, Paul's not traveling by himself.

Who's he traveling with? A whole bunch of soldiers who aren't Christians. You know, Julius, that we heard from last week. They have to go with Paul anywhere he goes, right?

So this is not just standard, I'll just invite my friends. This is, whoa, that's a big crowd. Hey, come. Come hang out with us. That's pretty incredible.

But it's hard, isn't it? And yet I think it's far more enriching to welcome not just friends but strangers. Think about it. Our God is the most hospitable God there is.

[ 24 : 26 ] He is the one who calls people to himself. In Jesus Christ, he comes eating and drinking. You know, that's his way of working in this world. Our Lord is the ultimate host.

And so I think a natural way that we can respond as Christians is to be hosts like Jesus was to us. To be welcoming as Christ welcomed us.

So hospitality, how we treat others, how we share our lives with others is a crucial way of displaying the glory of God. And so I think this is where we see, this is a church, okay, that is unashamed.

That is unashamed. Willing to open up their homes even though it's messy. Willing to hang out with people even though you might not hang out with them normally if you could choose your friends. Imagine if you were at the airport, okay.

There's some kind of round ball game going on at the moment, okay, and everyone's watching. Imagine if New Zealand was playing in it and they won it and they were returning home.

[ 25 : 30 ] And we would all be really excited, right? And so maybe we'd get a crew, we'd go and wait at the airport at arrivals. We'd be like, yeah, when they come, I'm going to get the star player, I'm going to get the autograph, that sort of thing.

And so you see them walk through arrivals, surrounded by support crew. Suddenly, you know, the striker that scored all the goals is coming through. Yes, yes. You're going to rush forward.

You're going to rush forward. And then you run past them and hug the security guard behind them. That would be unexpected, right? That's what the Christians do here with Paul, okay.

Here is a crew of rich, wealthy soldiers, powerful, okay, walking in like, you know, they're back in Rome, you know, they're back in home turf. And then right at the back of their little parade are the prisoners in chains, including Paul.

And the brothers and sisters, they are unashamed. They run to the back of the queue and they say, welcome. That is the kind of gospel hospitality, the kind of being unashamed of our brothers and sisters that God calls us to.

[ 26 : 40 ] How do we do with that? Could you say that we are a welcoming people to the least, to the ones at the back of the queue? We need to be.

Put yourself in Paul's shoes, right? He's human. He's been through beatings and imprisonment. He's been through a storm and shipwreck. He's been nonstop healing people in Malta for months.

And maybe right now he is exhausted. He needs brothers and sisters to encourage them. Could you be that person? For the one who struggles to walk through these doors?

The one who is shy? The one who isn't always in the popular crowd? Again, God's timing, this is a reminder.

All right. There is a church that's unashamed. How about us? How about us? How welcoming are we in comparison? Are there people who are part of God's family that you go out of your way to distance yourselves from?

[ 27 : 46 ] Whether in the media. Oh, no, we're not like those Christians. Surely not. All right. When a Christian makes the news and it's positive, we all love it, don't we? Yeah. Hey, I don't even know if he goes to church, but I like that person.

He says he's a Christian. Let's all say we like him. All right. But then when there's others who actually claim the name of Christ and are trying to live for him and they get shot down in public, what do we do?

What do we do? I'll give you one example. This happened in 2018, and I wonder if you heard this story. John Chow was a 26-year-old. He'd spent actually a decade preparing, trying to prepare his heart to reach an unreached people group for Jesus.

He was martyred. He was killed in a bow and arrow attack when he tried to reach them with the gospel. Look, it was no surprise that when this hit the news media, you know, people who weren't Christians, they kind of mocked him, scolded him.

You know, it was illegal. You shouldn't have gone there. But it was also surprising how many Christians spoke against John, a brother in Christ. Listen to Pam Allen.

[ 29 : 00 ] And she was part of the team that kind of helped him to go. Pam said it this way. I would say, for me, the only ongoing pain I have about John's mission and his death was actually how Christianity as a whole treated John so poorly after he was so willing to give his life for Jesus.

He was willing to give his life for a people group that he never actually got a chance to fully meet. I wish that Christendom would have been kinder to him. But what about closer to home, right?

I mean, we don't know John Chow. But God has blessed our church with a mix of different ethnicities, people groups, age groups, life stages.

How well do we embrace this? Well, if we're honest, are we ashamed of this? Are there regulars here? Members of our church even that you've still not spoken with once?

If there's someone among us who stands out, okay, or who sticks out, is our instinct to draw closer to them with encouragement? Or to take a step back and say, I don't know this guy.

[ 30 : 14 ] I wonder if PCBC spreading the gospel at the end of the year starts with us being a community unashamed of the gospel and unashamed of the brothers and sisters the Lord brings among our midst.

Maybe that will preach Christ quite boldly, don't you think? I thought about the preacher who's unhindered, a church that's unashamed.

Finally, the last two verses of Acts 28 leaves us with this picture of the message of the risen Christ that is unstoppable. When you get to the end of a book, I don't know what your reaction is.



You might have a sigh of relief if it's a boring book or an exciting one. You're like, I wish it could keep going. There's another chapter. Last sentences of novels I find are often quite fascinating. It kind of gives you a window into what the book was about.

See if you recognize this one. And they lived happily ever after. Every fairy tale ever, right? Or Disney movie. How about this one?

[ 31 : 19 ] The scar had not pained Harry for 19 years. All was well. Yeah? What a way to end seven books of a trilogy. Sorry if I spoiled it to you if you haven't read it.

Obviously, Harry survives. I won't tell you what the book is. You'll have to find out for yourself. Last line of the book, 1984, is, He loved big brother.

Oh, man. That hits. That hits. Okay? Who's big brother? You'll have to find out by reading the book. How does Luke end the book of Acts, though? Have a read.

He says this. For two whole years, Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance, he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

I just read the NIV version, but actually, this is probably not the best translation, and I'll tell you why. In the original language, the last word is actually without hindrance.

[ 32 : 18 ] So, I think the King James ESV kind of captured that a little bit better. So, it's kind of like proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

All right? That's how the book of Acts ends. Without hindrance. Unstoppable. You see? I mean, if you were able to interview Luke, the author, in a Q&A; session, maybe you would ask him, Hey, Luke, why didn't you tell us more?

Right? How did the appeal to Caesar go? Right? We want to know. Does Paul live or die? Does he get to go to Spain, as he told the Romans later in a letter? What happens next?

You know? We need kind of like one of those, you know, sneak peeks at the end of every Marvel movie, right? Just to know what happens next. Give us more. Give us more. Look, I think the reason Luke leaves those things out is because the point of his book has already been fulfilled.

What was the goal of his writing the book of Acts? It was to show that the message of the risen Lord Jesus cannot be stopped. And he has proved this.

[ 33 : 29 ] The story up to this point has proved this. That is the main goal of the book of Acts. And we have seen the words of the risen Lord Jesus fulfilled. All right? Jesus said to the disciples in the book of Luke, repentant and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in Christ's name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

And that is exactly what we've seen. At the start of the book of Acts, you remember the memory verse we had. You'll receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

And that has happened. Exactly as God planned. The road map followed to the T, chapter by chapter. And so this last sentence is meant to thrill us, give us hope.

God fulfills what he promises. He's done it. Nothing stops the gospel going out. The risen Lord Jesus has launched his mission and the church has grown, hasn't it?

Right? From 120 people to thousands, not just Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, to the nations. And so, look, it's going to be hard.

[ 34 : 42 ] It's going to be tough. But if we are faithful at just proclaiming the same message, we too will see a message that is unstoppable, that keeps advancing, that keeps winning men and women to faith in Christ.

That's what we see throughout the history of the church. There's all kinds of opposition. But like a fire that cannot be contained, the gospel spreads from country to country to country.

Even to New Zealand through Uruatara, Samuel Marsden, missionaries like Henry Williams, gospel bringing the good news of Jesus to the shores of this nation 200 years ago.

And so we look back and we go, God, you have been faithful in the past. And so you will be in the years ahead. We know this. We can trust this. So I want you to be encouraged.

You may look around. You may look ahead and you may have questions. Will this church keep going in 50 years' time? I can't promise you anything.

[ 35 : 45 ] But I can promise you this. The message this church proclaims will keep going. The message of the risen Lord Jesus cannot be stopped. It will go out to the street you live on, to the schools and workplaces you belong to, to the families you're in.

The message of the risen Lord Jesus will move from, to the families you're in. The message of the risen Lord Jesus will move from Auckland to Korea, to North Africa, to countries we prayed for like Turkey, Hong Kong, China, to the ends of the earth.

It must happen. And so just as Luke leaves us hanging, maybe I want to just leave a few questions for us. Firstly, what have you learned personally from the book of Acts?

How will you be challenged by the fact that this message cannot be stopped? Will you take this message and have confidence to share it with those around you?

And how has the gospel advanced in your own life? Could you say that this message is unstoppable in your life? Or has there been a barrier or a block?

[ 36 : 56 ] What is it? Are you more passionate about Jesus these past few months? Is your motto in life to live as Christ and to die as gain? Or is it the other way around?

What's going on? And finally, how has the gospel advanced in our church in PCBC? Are we content, friends, for this church to be just a waiting room for heaven?

Or are we going to be as witnesses? Are we going to take up the task that God has given us? To make disciples of all nations, whatever the cost, with all boldness, without hindrance?

Let's pray. Lord, as we close the pages of this book, open in our hearts a desire to glorify you.

To make your name great. To share by word and deed the surpassing value of Jesus Christ. Help us, Lord.

[ 38 : 03 ] We need you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.