

PAUL'S MINISTRY AND MESSAGE

INTRODUCTION

1. Going through the Book of Acts to get more acquainted with Paul as a person, his approaches to evangelism and leadership, his relationships with fellow disciples and his example and teaching about prayer is a rich experience.
2. Since we do not have a separate study of Acts in our basic curriculum, our study of Paul gives us much more insight to Acts than we gained in the New Testament Survey course.
3. And, following this assignment through Paul's letters gives us an amazing amount of material to explore, just from the biblical record alone.

New Testament Chronology

1. Luke 3:1-2 Luke writes his account within actual Roman history (names Tiberius).

Julius Caesar	46-44 BC
Augustus Caesar	27 BC – AD 14
Tiberius Caesar	AD 14- 37
Gaius (Caligula)	37 – 41
Claudius Cesar	41 – 54
Nero	54 – 68
Galba Cesar	68-69, etc.
2. Luke as historian: Luke – Acts is NT history
 - Luke and Acts (plus Hebrews) contain some of the most cultured Greek writing in the New Testament
 - Luke used several sources: Semitic sources; Septuagint, aka LXX; Luke's own recollections (may have had a diary); other written sources (e.g. Decree of the Jerusalem Council).
 - Luke wrote purposeful, accurate accounts for Theophilus. He was personally involved (note the "we" passages in Acts).
 - There is a wealth of data in his writings (over 90 facts). Moreover, there is amazing accuracy in his writings.
 - Places – cities, regions, islands
 - Figures – emperors and other officials
 - Titles – procurators, consuls, praetors, politarchs, etc.
 - Conclusion: Luke was historian par excellence
3. Dating the Life of Paul
 - He has no biography, nor autobiography. He has left us with no memoirs.
 - Most helpful passages about Paul's personal life: Gal 1:13-2:10 (where he says he visited Jerusalem as a Christian, then visited again); Acts 9ff, esp ch.13-28
 - Paul's Jerusalem visits (two versions)

4. Establishing Chronology: Studies in Chronology allow us to align biblical events with non-biblical data, especially those which are distinctly from non-Christian sources
 - Paul's appeared before Gallio while he was in Corinth on his second missionary journey (AD 51 – 52)
 - Luke says Paul was in Corinth 18 months
 - Claudius released an edict (Ac 18:2) in AD 49
 - Josephus writes about severe famine (AD 45 or 46)
 - Festus was governor of Judea AD 59

5. Basic Chronological Framework

Conversion	34-35 or earlier
Ministry in Damascus	35-37
First MJ	46-48 (approx)
Second MJ	49-52
Third MJ	53-57
1st Imprisonment	57-59
Voyage to Rome	59-60
Roman Imprisonment	60-62
Ministry in the East	62-64
Death under Nero	64-65

6. Conclusions

- Christianity is a historical religion and the historical books of the Bible represent the highest level of research and reliability
- We can harmonize biblical data with those from pagan sources in order to establish a working chronology of biblical events
- God brilliantly and powerfully works in history toward the unfolding of his great plans

The Ministry of Paul: Key Lessons from Acts 8-28

What Did You Learn About Paul As a Person?

1. **Acts 8:1-3**

- He was extremely zealous for what he believed – an extremist without question.
- It makes you think about the end of Romans 7.
- It also makes you think about whether he had been married and what might have happened in his family to set him on edge. (He definitely knew a lot about the husband/wife relationship.)
- See Acts 26:10 where it is said that he cast his “vote” against Christians (which may or may not mean that he was a voting member of the Sanhedrin).

2. **Acts 9:1-2**

- Just more of the same – an extremist who would go to any lengths to carry out his hatred.
- One wonders how he was financed.

3. See the ***Parallel Chronology of Paul's Conversion*** based on Acts 9, 22, 26.

4. **Acts 9:20-22**
 - He was decisive in his conversion and in his mission – no hesitation at all.
 - He stirred up persecution constantly – which likely says that he was just as extreme for Christianity as he had been against.
5. **Acts 9:31**
 - Interestingly, after Paul stirred up things in Jerusalem and then left, the church had a time of peace.
 - The question this could raise is whether Paul's approach needed some refinement at this early stage or not. (The other apostles were no slouches at causing persecution themselves, as seen in the early chapters of Acts.)
6. **Acts 11:25-26**
 - Paul had made a very positive impression on Barnabas, and under his tutelage, perhaps learned how to be more encouraging.
 - Nothing is mentioned about persecution in Antioch at any time, which may be due to two things: the place regarding its Jewish constituency and Paul's growth in knowing how to handle himself.
7. **Acts 11:27-30**
 - Whether helping the poor was a natural inclination of Paul, we don't know, but it became a part of his spiritual character.
 - See Galatians 2:10 and Acts 20:35.
 - How long did they stay in Jerusalem delivering the money? See Acts 12:25 on that one, which indicates it may have been after the death of Herod.
8. **Acts 13:1**
 - Paul was a prophet and a teacher.
 - He said twice that he had been appointed as a teacher (1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11).
 - Any of the other roles besides prophet in which revelation was involved, it must of necessity meant that those roles included having the gift of prophecy.
9. **Acts 13:4-13**
 - On the first Missionary Journey, it started out with Barnabas as the leader of their expedition, but shifted to Paul.
 - Perhaps the shift came from Paul's personality being such that he was much less a conflict avoider than Barnabas (shown by his confrontation of Elymas, the attendant of Sergius Paulus, whom they were teaching).
10. **Acts 15:1-4**
 - The amazing thing here is that he could still share the good news in the midst of a potentially movement dividing issue.
 - This means that he was a man of great faith in God's working out his will, and this shows up time and time again.
11. **Acts 16:6-10**
 - Paul handled setbacks in his plan with great faith in God's plan.
 - Again, his decisiveness as a leader came out in the quick reaction to the vision – also a faith response.
12. **Acts 16:16-34**
 - Paul's faith never burned brighter than in this account – rather amazing response to the terrible beating and imprisonment.
 - His example no doubt influenced Silas, and also all those fellow-prisoners.

13. Acts 18:1-3

- Like all Jewish young men, Paul was taught a trade growing up – tent making in his case.
- The word for “tent making” refers to working in leather, or at least includes that. (Tents often had leather components.)

14. Acts 18:9-11

- In spite of his success, Paul went through periods of doubt and fear.
- For more on this point, see 1 Corinthians 2:1-3; 2 Corinthians 1:8-11; and 12:7-10

15. Acts 19:23-31

- Paul’s courage was never more apparent than in this situation.
- I have seen this theater, and it held thousands of people – quite a mob scene, no doubt.

16. Acts 20:19 – Paul was a humble man, shown by his willingness to shed tears in front of others.

17. Acts 20:33-35

- Paul was not a materialist man in any sense.
- His concern for the poor continues to shine through (really believing Christ’s teaching in Matthew 25:31-46)

18. Acts 23:1-5

- Paul had lived in close accord with his conscience.
- This must mean that becoming a Christian gave him some deeper insights into what was making him feel the inner conflict described in Romans 7:14-25.
- He also had a quick temper when stuck on the mouth!
- However, he had enough self-control to cool down quickly and humble out.

19. Acts 27

- Paul was obviously a man with much influence authority, due to his “God-confident” character and personality.
- He was not hesitant, even as a prisoner, to give his advice to the centurion, pilot and owner of the ship (verses 9-11).
- His boldness in verses 21-26 to tell everyone else on the ship what to do, based on a vision from God that he had received.
- The centurion and soldiers followed his advice in verses 30-32 regarding the life boats.
- By the time they reached the point described in verses 33-38, Paul was clearly in charge of the whole ship and its occupants. Amazing!

20. Acts 28:1-10

- Paul was the kind of man who pitched in and did whatever he could do to serve (and ended up being a part of a snake bite miracle).
- As on the ship, he was a standout kind of guy who ended up with quite a reputation, some of which related to his miracle working ability and some of which related to his character.

21. Acts 28:11-16 – Paul’s relationship even with authorities allowed him to have an amazing amount of freedoms in spite of being a prisoner.

What Did You Learn About Paul And The Mission Of Evangelism -- Publicly and Privately?

1. Acts 13:13-52

- As a trained Rabbi, Paul had the opportunity to start his teaching in the synagogues.

- His message to Jews was fulfillment of Messianic prophecies by Jesus.
 - From early in his ministry, his focus on the Gentiles was obvious (and amazing, given his intense Jewish background).
2. **Acts 14:15-17**
 - Paul’s message to Gentiles was similar to the one in Acts 17 when in Athens.
 - In both messages, he shows God as the Creator and sustainer of life (thus, a good God, as compared to the “gods” in their systems).
 3. **Acts 16:13-15**
 - When there was no synagogue, Paul used his knowledge of how the Jewish system worked to find Jews – in this case, women.
 - Paul, like Jesus, was comfortable and effective with women (not a male chauvinist, as is claimed by those who don’t like what he said about women’s submission in marriage).
 4. **Acts 16:16-34**
 - Paul was anxious to seize any opportunity to share the gospel, and was not focused on himself in spite of what he had just been through.
 - He definitely had urgency for the salvation of others, and had the ability to pass it on to those whom he taught.
 - Baptism was a part of the plan, given the circumstances in this account (the time and the risk on the jailor’s part in taking them out of jail).
 5. **Acts 17:16-17**
 - Paul was greatly distressed by false religious views – he truly believed that people were lost without a true faith in Christ.
 - In spite of the circumstances prior to coming to Athens, and in spite of being lonesome without his friends, he preached to the Jews and to the Gentiles – day by day.
 6. **Acts 17:18-32**
 - Paul was not intimidated by the leading philosophers of his age in a city famous for its philosophers.
 - As in Acts 14, he began with preaching about God as a Creator and Sustainer of life.
 - However, he ended up condemning their idolatry and preached about the Judgment Day.
 7. **Acts 18:4-8**
 - Paul was obviously effective in all aspects of evangelism, with both Jews and Greeks.
 - He was not intimidated by anyone, reached out to many men and women in high places, and converted a number of them (mentioned also in the end of Acts 17).
 8. **Acts 18:18** – Paul clearly took “becoming all things to all men” very seriously. (More to come on that point in Acts 21.)
 9. **Acts 19:1-7**
 - Paul was not at all hesitant to confront variations in doctrine that might even be called “Christian doctrine.”
 - He was certainly willing to re-baptize those whose baptism did not match up with the baptism of the New Covenant.
 - Although their first baptism was different than many denominational baptisms today, the fact that Paul wouldn’t accept variations should provide a lesson for us as well.
 10. **Acts 19:8-10**
 - Paul understood the need to train others, not only by walking with them but also by giving them training in a classroom setting.

- Interestingly, our former leader dismissed this approach repeatedly, claiming it was not the way Jesus did it.
- However, Jesus not only did the on-the-job type training, he taught lots of Bible, whereas we have tended to only train in the areas of what might be called “practical ministry.” (Both approaches are needed!)

11. **Acts 19:21**

- Paul had mission plans to keep reaching new areas with the gospel.
- See especially Romans 15:17-25 on his mission goals.

12. **Acts 20:24** – Paul’s mission was more important to him than his own life.

13. **Acts 21:37-22:23**

- Paul was determined to preach the Word “in season and out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2), in situations that most disciples would back away from.
- Paul had both wisdom in how he laid the foundation for his speech, and storytelling ability in keeping their attention.

14. **Acts 28:17-31**

- Ever the courageous and convicted preacher, he entered Rome challenging the Jews, even though some of them believed.
- In spite of being chained, he never stopped preaching to anyone who would listen – and many did.
- It was in this setting that he wrote his four “Prison Epistles.”

<p>What Did You Learn About Paul and His Views and Practices of Leadership?</p>

1. By the time we get through Acts 14, we see many things about Paul’s leadership style.

- First, he was capable of being led and following advice.
 - ◊ In Antioch and Jerusalem following conversion, he listened to the ones who thought he should leave town.
 - ◊ He was comfortable being under the leadership of Barnabas and evolved naturally into the leadership role with him.
- Second, he was very comfortable having a team of leaders around him – he was decidedly not a one man show.
- Third, he was a very decisive leader and had almost no traces of conflict avoidance or people pleasing.
- Fourth, he could work with all types of disciples with differences in race and personality.
- Fifth, he was not just focused on conversion – he took seriously both parts of the Great Commission.
- **Acts 15:1-4** – Again we see Paul’s willingness to engage in strong disagreement when the message of the gospel was at stake, and also the spiritual well being of those whom he had converted and taught.

2. **Acts 15:12**

- Barnabas is mentioned ahead of Paul, which likely means that Barnabas had more to say in this setting than Paul did, or at least was perceived as still being the overall leader by those at the Jerusalem Conference. (See also verse 25 and how the letter was introduced, but then in verse 35 when back in Antioch, Paul was back in the more dominant role.)
- Either way, Paul was able to be in a more submissive role whenever that was needed.

3. **Acts 16:1-3**

- Paul well understood the need to keep recruiting new, young leaders.

- Evidently he was someone whose leadership style was very compelling, for Timothy was willing to allow himself to be circumcised. (See Genesis 34 where the men of Shechem were still in pain three days after circumcision and couldn't fight back!)
4. **Acts 16:16-28** – The fact that the prisoners were still in the open door jail seems to imply that they were “led” by Paul not to flee.
 5. **Acts 16:35-40**
 - Paul appealed to his citizenship in a very bold way, but only to help protect the new church (not to get personal vindication).
 - From a study of the “we” sections, it seems clear that Paul left Luke here as the evangelist, knowing the challenges in such a “non-Jewish” place, which means that he left the best available for the job.
 6. **Acts 19:8-10** – See comments under “Paul and his Evangelism.” He was a trainer in and out of the classroom.
 7. **Acts 20:1-2** – He had learned some good lessons from the “Son of Encouragement” about encouraging the disciples.
 8. **Acts 20:7** – He was a preacher, and like most of us, spoke a bit long on occasion. (But please make it only on special occasions, like this time with Paul!)
 9. **Acts 20:17-38**
 - Paul not only raised up elders, he highly valued them, as shown by who he called to the meeting.
 - He taught publicly and from house to house (understanding how discipleship must work).
 10. **Acts 21:17-33**
 - Paul, in his willingness to submit to other leaders, became all things to all men to a point that it nearly led to his death.
 - The “Jewishness” of what he did can only be explained by the fact that God allowed a transitional period in Jews practicing aspects of Judaism on two conditions: don't bind any of it on the Gentiles; and, don't bind it as necessary to salvation.
 - See Hebrews 8:13 for a reference to that transitional period.
 11. **Acts 22:24-30** – Paul knew when to appeal to his citizenship, not for personal gain, but for the purpose of being able to keep going with his mission.
 12. **Acts 23:6-11**
 - Paul had a lot of savvy about the crowd he was addressing, and knew their theology well enough to turn them against one another.
 - The lesson for us is that we have to understand the theology of the people we are trying to evangelize.
 13. **Acts 24:10-26:29**
 - Paul was well-versed on many matters, including politics and government, and he used this knowledge to relate effectively to public officials.
 - At the same time, he used any opportunity with anyone, including high ranking officials, to preach about the basics of salvation in Christ and the Judgment Day.
 - When he wrote in Romans 1:16 that he was “not ashamed of the gospel,” he was not exaggerating, for he never was in any circumstance.
 14. **Acts 27:9-43**
 - Paul's advice was not always taken, but he was never reluctant to give it – to anyone.
 - However, by the time of the shipwreck, everyone on the ship was listening to Paul and following his advice.

- Being outspoken in circumstances outside the spiritual realm is a part of being the light and salt of the world.

What Did You Learn About Paul and His Relationships With Other Disciples?

1. Acts 15:36-41

- Paul was very close to Barnabas, but wouldn't compromise on this point about Mark.
- Thus, not only was he not a conflict avoider or people pleaser, he was not at all sentimental.
- One could wonder if Paul were too unyielding in this case, but the good thing is that it was not permanent relationship damage, as may be seen in Galatians 2:13 in the case of Barnabas and in 2 Timothy 4:11 in the case of Mark.
- Also, as Paul went on the Second Missionary Journey with Silas, he kept reading the Jerusalem Conference letter, which mentioned Barnabas and Paul as dear friends of those who wrote the letter (Acts 16:4).

2. Acts 16:35-40 – In spite of what they had just been through, Paul wanted to help the new disciples be settled out and ready to remain strong spiritually.

3. Acts 20:36-38 – Paul obviously built really close relationships with other leaders – personal friendships not just working relationships.

4. Acts 21:7-15

- Paul was a relationship builder with a number of different types of people.
- Having a relationship with Philip was no small matter, for Philip was a close associate with Stephen, who Paul helped to kill.

What Did You Learn About Paul and His Views and Practices of Prayer?

1. Acts 14:23

- The appointment of elders was accompanied by prayer and fasting in this passage.
- Other passages that connect prayer and fasting are: Luke 2:37; 5:33; and Acts 13:3.
- Thus, only Luke mentions this connection, although other writers mention fasting as well as prayer.
- Note the very interesting connection between Acts 13, verses 2 and 3.

2. Acts 16:25

- Incredibly, after being falsely charged, beaten severely and put not only in prison, but in stocks, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God.
- The other prisoners were listening – not that they had much choice, for it was a small jail.
- The fact that the prisoners didn't flee when the jail doors sprung upon when the earthquake must have had something to do with the influence and actions of Paul and Silas (as in "Don't move!").

3. Acts 21:5

- As Paul left the city of Tyre after a 7 day visit, all of disciples there, including their families, accompanied Paul to the Seashore and they prayed on their knees together.
- A part of the prayer concern was that the Holy Spirit revealed to the people that something bad was going to happen to Paul in Jerusalem.
- Whatever else may be said, the quality of Paul's relationships with fellow disciples was obvious.

4. Acts 22:17

- Paul was giving his account of conversion for the first time to the crowds in Jerusalem during the midst of a mob uproar.
- As he was telling about praying in the temple during his first return to Jerusalem after conversion, he mentioned that he fell into a trance and was warned by Jesus in a vision to leave the city.
- His next statement was about Jesus telling him that he was to be sent far away to the Gentiles, at which time the mob erupted, due to their extreme prejudice.

5. Acts 26:29

- Here Paul is in Caesarea defending himself before Roman officials, Festus and King Agrippa.
- Festus didn't understand anything about what Paul was saying, but Agrippa understood Jewish customs and controversies.
- Festus thought Paul's great learning had driven him mad, and Agrippa was taken aback that Paul was calling him to faith – at which time he said, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"
- Paul then replied, "Short time or long--I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."
- Paul's boldness in preaching the gospel and pleading with people to respond is most convicting!

6. Acts 28:8

- Shipwrecked on the island of Malta, Paul prayed, laid hands on Publius' father and healed him.
- Thus, prayer and the laying on of hands were the steps to much miraculous healing.

Ancient Letter-Writing

How did the ancients write letters?

Papyrus and Writing

Letter-writing was part of culture of the Greco-Roman world. Letters were written on papyrus.

- Papyrus sheet: 9.5" x 11.5", could accommodate 150-250 words
- Cicero (orator) and Seneca (philosopher) – letters averaged around 200 words
- Archeology has unearthed many ancient letters, giving us insight into ancient letter writing.

Sample Letter from 150 BC

Format of Paul's Letters (Greco-Roman)

- Greeting – sender and recipient; good wishes
- Main body – variable length
- Farewell – sometimes with other wishes
- Signature (optional)

Length of Paul's Letters

- Average length – 1,300 words
- Philemon: 335 Grk words
- Romans: 7,114 Grk words

Insights into Paul's Letters

1. A New Form?

- Epistles are several times longer than the average letter of ancient times.
- We could say that Paul invented a new literary form, the epistle.

2. Communal Nature

- Aside from the theological character of the letters, observe the communal nature of their address.
- Paul's letters exhibit what could be called "group mentality."

3. Scribal skills

- Paul often employed a skilled scribe called an *amanuensis*.
- His letters explicitly mention secretaries six times (Rom 16:22; 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17; Phlm 19).
- Paul writes the final greeting with his own hand (1 Cor 16:21, Gal 6:11, Col 4:18, 2 Thess 3:17)

4. Hassles and Costs

- There was no postal system in the Roman Empire.
- You would have to either 1) bring the letter yourself, 2) ask around until you find someone going to or passing through the intended destination, 3) pay a reliable courier.
- Before writing a letter, one would have to seriously consider various costs.

Order of Paul's Letters: Depends on length; Longest to shortest –those written to churches, then to individuals

Reflection

- How can you be more like Paul in the ways you **encourage** the fellowship?
- How can you be more like Paul in your **concern** for brothers and sisters?
- How can you employ elements of local **culture** (or your own context) to advance God's kingdom?

The Ministry of Paul: Key Lessons from Paul's Epistles

What Did You Learn About Paul As a Person?

1. **Romans 1:1** – As a leader, he saw himself first as a servant of Jesus, and his apostleship was just an extension of that role. (He was always hesitant to see authority as a part of his being appointed an apostle.)
2. **Romans 9:1-4**
 - Paul was capable of having unceasing pain in one sense, and being to “rejoice always” in another.
 - His willingness to be lost if his people could be saved is a high water mark of love, with which I cannot personally identify.
3. **1 Corinthians 2:1-5**
 - Paul was in a weak and fearful condition at some point while in Corinth, perhaps pointing back to the Acts 18 time when God appeared in a vision to encourage him.
 - It could indicate that his solo experiences in Athens took an emotional toll on him.
 - However, whether he felt weak or strong, he always gave the glory to God. In whatever ways pride may have been a challenge to him, we rarely get a glimpse of it at all.
4. **1 Corinthians 7**
 - What Paul says about marriage here makes you think that he may well have been married at one time.
 - Paul was very bold about claiming apostolic authority and inspiration (verse 12 – compare to verse 11).
5. **1 Corinthians 15:9-10** – Paul viewed his apostleship in light of his persecution, but used that view as motivation – always giving God the glory for whatever he accomplished.
6. **2 Corinthians 1:8-11**
 - Paul was very vulnerable about his own suffering, saying that it had reached the point of despairing of life.
 - He also defended his previous travel plans, even though they didn’t work out, and defended his own integrity.
 - Verses 23-24 say that one of the reasons he had not come sooner is that he in essence wanted to give them more time to work things out in their lives before he came (wanting to “spare” them).
7. **2 Corinthians 2:1-4** – Paul continues what he started in the end of the previous chapter, stating his love for them as being the reason he did not want to make another painful visit.
8. **2 Corinthians 6:3-13**
 - Paul commended his ministry once again by describing his sufferings for the gospel, a common theme in 2 Corinthians.
 - He opened his hearts wide to the Corinthians through his vulnerability in expressing his love for them, and he calls on them to do the same toward him.
9. **2 Corinthians 7:2-9**
 - Paul continues his appeal for them to open their hearts to him.
 - He describes his suffering again, and shares how difficult it was to write his previous challenges to them.
10. **2 Corinthians 11-12**
 - These two chapters appeared to be Paul’s most difficult write, for he didn’t like having to defend himself for fear that it would come across as boasting. No one likes to argue their own case in situations like this one.
 - He continued to pour out his heart about how they were making him feel and how having to defend himself to his own spiritual children made him feel.

- We do learn that he had seen and heard things in the realm reserved for eternity, although we don't get any details. (Some think this took place when he was stoned in Lystra – Acts 14, but others question the chronology.)
- 11. Galatians 6:11**
 - Paul calls attention to the fact that he wrote this letter in his own hand (rather than using a scribe – an amanuensis).
 - The letters were large, leading to speculation about what his “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12) was.
 - 12. Ephesians 1:15-19** – One of many encouraging passages about Paul praying for the disciples, and he usually mentions some specifics for which he was praying.
 - 13. Ephesians 6:10-20** – In describing how to be victorious in the spiritual battle, Paul mentions prayer repeatedly. If anyone believed in prayer, Paul did.
 - 14. Philippians 3:4-6** – Paul's deep Jewish heritage and training are outlined here, although he doesn't mention that he had been trained by the most respected Rabbi of the day, Gamaliel.
 - 15. Philippians 3:7-15**
 - Paul's spiritual priorities are shown as clearly here as in any other place in his writings.
 - His patience with less mature disciples is shown in verse 15, for in spite of his amazing level of personal righteousness he was not tempted with self righteousness.
 - 16. Philippians 4:10-19**
 - In thanking the Philippian church for sending financial support, we learn something of Paul's financial status generally.
 - He had been in need and he had also had plenty, and he had *learned* to be content with a little or a lot (the term “learned” is likely very significant).
 - Verse 19 demonstrates a principle made very clear in 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, namely that giving financially results in receiving spiritual blessings in return.
 - 17. Colossians 1:24-26**
 - Paul's view of suffering is amazing, often connecting with rejoicing about it.
 - This view was based in the fact that it was productive suffering, done for God's glory and done to bless God's people.
 - Ultimately, Paul's desire was to not only preach the gospel to all lost people, but to see every disciple mature in Christ.
 - 18. 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6** – Paul defends his ministry, and in doing so shares his persecution and his motives as an apostle.
 - 19. 1 Timothy 1:12-16**
 - The fact that Paul had been such a violent persecutor of the church was never far from his mind and heart.
 - He used that fact to magnify God's grace and to motivate himself to serve tirelessly.
 - This motivation was not a guilt-based one, for that doesn't square with all that he wrote about grace and faith, but it was a definite motivation – grounded in appreciation for how much mercy he had received.
 - 20. 2 Timothy 1:15-18** – The fact that some had deserted Paul (and he named names!) made him even more appreciative of Onesiphorus, who stood by him in both Ephesus and in Rome. (Enemies make friends shine even brighter.)
 - 21. 2 Timothy 4:6-22** – Paul's closeout of his last letter yields many insights into him as a person and as a leader of God's people.

- He knew the end of life was just around the corner, yet was unafraid of it, due to his desire to depart and be with Christ (Philippians 1).
- He gave his last update on his co-workers activities, and further instructions for some of them.
- The fact that he asked for Mark to come and be with him says a lot about the ending of Acts 15 and how Paul did not let even a sharp disagreement destroy the relationship with Barnabas or Mark.
- Paul also named his opponents as a warning for Timothy (and others).
- He closes by mentioning the names of many people with whom he had close relationships.

What Did You Learn About Paul And The Mission Of Evangelism -- Publicly and Privately?

1. **Romans 1:9, 15** – Paul was about as *driven* as one could imagine to preach the gospel.
2. **Romans 10:1-3**
 - Paul loved the Jewish people, in spite of the persecutions they put him through.
 - His love for them did not in any way make him sentimental about their present sinfulness.
3. **Romans 15:17-29**
 - Paul had a great desire to plant churches, rather than just ministering to those already established.
 - He had very specific mission plans for church plantings.
 - Thus, Paul had very lofty personal goals of spirituality (Philippians 3) and very lofty goals for helping carry out the mission of evangelism.
4. **2 Corinthians 2:12-17**
 - Although Paul found an open door for the gospel, he missed Titus (one of his lonely times).
 - He defended himself in how he viewed and handled the Word of God.
5. **2 Corinthians 4**
 - One of the great chapters of the Bible, showing why Paul didn't lose heart in doing his ministry.
 - He talks here of how suffering plays a part in the preaching of the gospel.
 - Finally, he shares his secret of enduring suffering – namely, keeping his eyes on heaven.
 - The final verses set the stage for the early part of chapter 5 and our spiritual body when life in a physical body ends.
6. **Galatians 1:11-23**
 - Paul is defending his credentials essentially, but focused on the authenticity of his message.
 - At the foundation of his calling to preach was his certainty that he had been born for this role.
 - His life sequence immediately following conversion is given: Damascus, Arabia, Damascus, Jerusalem, Syria, and Cilicia.
 - Then Galatians 2:1 mentions a second visit to Jerusalem – for more information about the Jerusalem visits see article: "Chronology of Galatians 2 and the Book of Acts."
7. **Philippians 1:12-18**
 - Paul may have been in chains, but his preaching was not chained – the whole palace guard had to listen to it.
 - He was encouraged that others were emboldened by his example.
 - He was also amazingly accepting of the gospel message being spread by his enemies, showing his lack of ego problems in his leadership.
8. **Colossians 4:2-4** – Paul believed that the success of his mission depended upon the prayer support he received from other disciples, so he boldly asked for it.

What Did You Learn About Paul and His Views and Practices of Leadership?

1. In all of his letters, beginning with Romans, he had no hesitation in preaching strongly. As we saw in Acts, he was no people pleaser or conflict avoider.
2. **Romans 3:5-8** – Paul addresses his enemies directly, in terms of what they were claiming about his teaching.
3. **Romans 7:7-25**
 - Paul upheld the place of law, and never made excuses for his sin or the sins of anyone else.
 - We get some insight into Paul’s struggle in his inner man, whether it was in his pre-Christian state or as a Christian (although I vote for the former).
4. **Romans 15:30-32** – Paul very much believed in the power of prayer and the necessity of having others pray for you in your leadership role.
5. **Romans 16**
 - On a personal level, Paul had many close personal relationships with others, in and out of “the ministry.”
 - He is no doubt mentioning these relationships as a matter of building connections with others he had not yet met.
 - The close of the letter shows his continual focus on carrying out the Great Commission. To him, leadership was all about making both parts of the Great Commission come true.
6. **1 Corinthians 1:4-9**
 - Paul and his “love sandwich” gave us a great example of encouraging and commending where possible, before and after giving whatever admonishments and rebukes were needed.
 - If he could not commend them for personal things, he commended them as a group for what they were (or were designed to be) in Christ.
7. **1 Corinthians 1:10-17**
 - Paul’s ego was never an issue in his leadership – he neither sought nor would accept the adulation of men.
 - He was as disturbed by those who said that they were “of Paul” as by those who picked another “favorite.”
 - His focus was first and foremost always on the supremacy of Christ.
8. **1 Corinthians 3:1-17**
 - Another sterling example of giving God all the credit and taking none for self.
 - This was not false humility, because he honestly described himself as an “expert builder” (verse 10).
 - Verse 17 is an interesting one in context – showing that being worldly in our view of leaders and leadership can indeed endanger our souls.
9. **1 Corinthians 4**
 - Paul was not above using a bit of sarcasm and his own personal example to shame the disciples into looking soberly at themselves.
 - He also uttered some threats about having to use his authority.
 - In other places, he said similar things somewhat apologetically, but this time there was no softening of the blows in any way.
 - However, in verses 14-17, he called them his children and reminded them that he was their father through the gospel.

- ◇ Clearly, his main appeal to authority was to the authority of relational influence, not the authority of position.
 - ◇ The little letter to Philemon further illustrates this principle of appealing to relationship rather than position to enlist the obedience of Philemon to his request.
10. **1 Corinthians 5** – Paul was not only willing to exercise church discipline personally, he demanded it of the church.
 11. **1 Corinthians 8:13** – Paul was willing to sacrifice his personal rights if it would protect and benefit others.
 12. **1 Corinthians 9**
 - Paul gave the Corinthians an example from his own life to show the need to be willing to give up our “rights.”
 - Notably, he remained single and worked at tent making to be more fully engaged in the work and to avoid being a stumbling block to the disciples.
 - The final verse in chapter 9 shows his total commitment to practice what he preached no matter how much person discipline it took.
 13. **1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1**
 - This passage summarizes Paul’s example of giving up rights in order not to hurt the faith of others.
 - He is also setting the stage for 1 Corinthians 12-14 and their selfish view and use of spiritual gifts.
 14. **1 Corinthians 16**
 - Paul shared his plans with the disciples, both to inspire them and to garner prayer support.
 - He lifted up other leaders and praised them to the people, in order to help advance the cause through promoting and enabling them.
 15. **2 Corinthians 7:13-16** – In spite of the challenges given, Paul ends up the chapter finding ways to commend and encourage them.
 16. **2 Corinthians 8-9**
 - Paul found many ways to motivate people to give financially, but made clear that he was not commanding it.
 - Paul was quick to reason with people and motivate them by God’s grace, but slow to pull the “authority card.”
 - Identifying the different approaches he used in these two chapters would be a very worthwhile effort.
 17. **2 Corinthians 10**
 - Paul defends himself with those who owed him their very lives.
 - He does it by appealing to his own gentleness and by using some sarcasm, or at the least, some tongue-in-cheek reasoning.
 18. **2 Corinthians 13** – Paul closes out his warning, but it is obvious that the warning is given to avoid some real challenges when he is there in person (for their sake, not his).
 19. **Galatians 1:10** – He states in his own words that he was not a people pleaser.
 20. **Galatians 2**
 - Paul defends his apostleship here again, mainly by showing the stances he took with the other apostles.
 - He withstood Peter to his face for discriminating against Gentile Christians – amazingly.
 - This sequence of reasoning led him into the rest of Galatians, a book that some describe as “Romans argued.”

21. **Ephesians 3:1; 4:1** – Twice Paul describes himself as a prisoner of Christ for the sake of his mission to the Gentiles. Paul well understood the principle of Proverbs 27:2: “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.”
22. **1 Thessalonians 2:6-12**
- Paul was as gentle as a mother with the disciples and as strong as a father in his expectations for them.
 - He singles out his righteous example and hard work as providing good examples of his leadership.
23. **2 Timothy 1:1**
- When Paul calls himself an apostle, he often mentions (as he does here) that it is “by the will of God.”
 - He may have not only been trying to reassure the disciples that his calling was genuinely from God, he may have been reassuring himself.
24. **2 Timothy 3:10-12** – Paul used his own example of faithfulness in the face of persecution as encouragement to Timothy to do the same.

What Did You Learn About Paul and His Relationships With Other Disciples?

- Romans 1:8-10**
 - Paul was much like his mentor, Barnabas, for he always found ways to encourage the people.
 - His prayer list must have been quite long, for this is just one mention of many about the people he said he prayed for, often with a qualifier such as “constantly.”
- Romans 15:14** – Paul’s faith in people and his trust in their intentions and capabilities were impressive.
- Philippians 1:3-11**
 - Paul’s abundant prayer life is obvious again and most focused on others, not himself (convicting).
 - His relationship with this church is expressed in many terms: partnership; had them in his heart; share in God’s grace together; long for them with the affection of Christ; and desire for their spirituality and well-being.
- Philippians 2:19-30**
 - Paul was really bonded with his co-workers in genuine friendships, not just in being joined in the work together.
 - His special relationship with Timothy was obvious, but he also had great love and concern for others like Epaphroditus.
 - The implication is that Paul’s love for the Philippians led him to send some of his best co-workers to meet their needs.
- Philippians 4:2-3**
 - Paul had close relationships with the church leader and with these two leader women, and felt close enough to them to believe that they could handle being called out publicly.
 - For Paul to make this a public matter demonstrated his faith in God, in the individuals involved and in the church as a whole.
- Colossians 1:3-14**
 - This section is full of statements about Paul’s prayers for the people, expressed in very specific terms, having very specific spiritual goals.
 - However, the same terms of endearment are not found here that are found in Philippians 1, for example.

7. **Colossians 4:7-17** – Paul’s close relationships with his co-workers is again obvious, mentioning by name the following: Tychicus; Onesimus; Aristarchus; Mark; Epaphras; Luke; Demas; Nympha (a disciple in Colosse); and Archippus.
8. **1 Thessalonians 1:2-10**
 - Paul’s prayers for them are described, much as in the previous three letters, but this one is more personal in nature than the prayer section in Colossians 1 but not quite as personal as the prayer description in Philippians 1.
 - The prayer in Philippians was about his feelings for them; the prayer in Colossians (like in Ephesians 1) was for their spiritual growth; and the prayer here in 1 Thessalonians was actually more in praise of their spiritual convictions and stances taken.
 - In all such cases, much can be seen about Paul’s relationship with them and desires for their lives in Christ.
9. **1 Thessalonians 2:17-20** – Paul’s words here are full of endearment: intense longing for them – they were his glory and joy.
10. **1 Thessalonians 3** – The chapter is all about Paul’s concerns for the church, shown by his sending Timothy to help them and by his rejoicing when Timothy brought back a good report.
11. **2 Thessalonians 1:3-12**
 - This is another quite section describing Paul’s prayers for the disciples in Thessalonica.
 - The contents are varied – he begins with praising their example, moves to encouraging them in a time of suffering and ends with prayers for their strength to be used by God.
12. **Philemon**
 - This whole little book is about relationships, and very close ones at that.
 - Philemon was described as a “dear friend” whose love had given Paul great joy and encouragement.
 - Onesimus, the slave Paul converted was his “son” and his “very heart.”
 - Paul put quite a bit of “godly pressure” on Philemon to send Onesimus back to him as a needed friend and helper.
 - Finally, Paul mentions the names of five of his fellow workers, being always the relationship guy.

What Did You Learn About Paul and His Views and Practices of Prayer?

1. Paul’s Prayer for Others

- **Romans 1:8-10**
 - ◇ Paul was thankful for them, because their faith was reported all over the world.
 - ◇ He prayed constantly for them at all time, and one prayer was that he finally would be able to visit them.
- **Romans 10:1**
 - ◇ Paul’s deep-seated desire and prayer was for his Israelite brothers to be saved – in spite of the intense persecution they brought his way.
 - ◇ He attested to their zeal, but zeal without knowledge does not save. (He was not sentimental!)
 - ◇ Amazingly, his love for them went to this extreme, according to Romans 9:2-3: “I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race.
- **2 Corinthians 13:7-9**

- ◇ Paul prayed that they wouldn't do anything wrong and would pass the test, for they were not in a good place when he wrote this, actually calling his authority into question.
- ◇ He ended his challenge to them by simply saying that he was praying for their perfection.
- **Ephesians 1:16-19**
 - ◇ Paul said he remembered the Ephesians in his prayers, and had not stopped giving thanks for them.
 - ◇ His specific requests were that they would be given the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in order to know God better.
 - ◇ He also prayed that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened in order that they would know the hope to which he has called them, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe.
- **Ephesians 3:14-19**
 - ◇ He continues that prayer by kneeling in prayer before the Father for them, that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen them with power through his Spirit in their inner being,¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
 - ◇ He prayed that they would be rooted and established in love, that they would have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that they would be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.
- **Philippians 1:4-6**
 - ◇ For the Philippians, Paul prayed with joy because of their partnership in the gospel with him from the beginning until the present.
 - ◇ This consistent partnership gave Paul confidence that God who began a good work in them would carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
- **Philippians 1:9-11**
 - ◇ He continued to pray that their your love would abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that they would be able to discern what is best and would be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.
 - ◇ He further prayed that they would be filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God.
- **Colossians 1:3-4**
 - ◇ For the Colossians, Paul always thanked God, because he had heard of their faith in Christ Jesus and of the love they had for all the saints.
 - ◇ The word "always" is perhaps the most convicting thing about Paul's prayers for others, because many of us tend to pray more about ourselves than for others.
- **Colossians 1:9-12**
 - ◇ This continual prayer them for them is again stated, as Paul states that they had not stopped praying for them and asking God to fill them with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

- ◇ Paul had a purpose in praying this, namely that they would live a life worthy of the Lord and would please him in every way.
- ◇ The “every way” included bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might in order that they would have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks themselves to the Father, who had qualified them to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.
- **Colossians 4:12**
 - ◇ Finally, in Colossians, Paul mentions that their fellow-citizen of Colosse, Epaphras, was always wrestling in pray for them.
 - ◇ The purpose of his prayer wrestling was that they would stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.
- **1 Thessalonians 1:2-3**
 - ◇ Again, Paul says that they “always” thanked God for all of them, continually remembering before God their work produced by faith, their labor prompted by love, and their endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - ◇ Thus, we have the famous triad of faith, hope and love – this time as the very foundation of their service to God and others.
- **1 Thessalonians 3:10**
 - ◇ Stated in a similar way, Paul asserts that they prayed most earnestly for them night and day.
 - ◇ This prayer was that Paul and his company might see them again and supply what was lacking in their faith.
- **2 Thessalonians 1:11-12**
 - ◇ This prayer comes in a context about God’s coming judgment against unbelievers, so with this in mind, Paul constantly prayed for them.
 - ◇ He prayed specifically that God would count them worthy of his calling, and that by his power he would fulfill every good purpose of theirs and every act prompted by their faith.
 - ◇ Further, Paul and his co-workers prayed this so that the name of our Lord Jesus would be glorified in them, and they in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **2 Timothy 1:3**
 - ◇ Paul thanked the God whom he served, as did his forefathers, with a clear conscience, as night and day he constantly remembered them in his prayers.
 - ◇ Timothy was perhaps Paul’s most valued young leader and friend, and his love for him is made clear in his prayers for him.
- **Philemon 1:4-6**
 - ◇ To Philemon, Paul wrote that he always thanked God as he remembered him in his prayers.
 - ◇ His gratitude for Philemon was due to hearing about his faith in the Lord and his love for all the saints.
 - ◇ He also prayed that Philemon would active in sharing his faith, so that he would have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

- ◇ In context, Paul may be speaking of sharing his faith with fellow Christians, especially Onesimus as Paul sent him back to Philemon as his rightful owner.
- ◇ In either case, however, sharing our faith accomplishes exactly what Paul said here.

2. Paul's Requests for the Prayers of Others

- **Romans 15:30-32**

- ◇ Paul's constant praying for so many others showed how much he believed in prayer, so it is not surprising that he often asked others to pray for him.
- ◇ In this passage, he urged them to join him in his struggle by praying to God for him.
- ◇ Specifically, he wanted prayers that he would be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that his service in Jerusalem would be acceptable to the saints there, so that by God's will he could come to them with joy and together with them be refreshed.

- **2 Corinthians 1:10-11**

- ◇ Paul knew that he had been delivered from deadly perils and had the hope that he would be again.
- ◇ But his continual deliverance was based on his knowledge that the Corinthians were helping him by their prayers.
- ◇ The result was that many would give thanks on their behalf for the gracious favor granted them in answer to the prayers of many.

- **Ephesians 6:18-20**

- ◇ Paul starts out this section by giving general directions about praying – that they would pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.
- ◇ With this in mind, he said, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.
- ◇ Then he adds that they should pray for him also, that whenever he opened his mouth, words would be given him so that he would fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which he was an ambassador in chains. He repeats "Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should."

- **Philippians 1:18-19**

- ◇ Paul had enemies in Philippi who were preaching the true gospel with wrong motives, to stir up trouble for him.
- ◇ However, as long as Christ was preached and people were having the opportunity to learn of him, Paul just rejoiced.
- ◇ Underneath this faithful attitude was his knowledge that through the prayers of the Philippians and the help of the Holy Spirit, it was all going to turn out for his deliverance.

- **Colossians 4:2-5**

- ◇ Again, Paul begins by giving the Colossians the directions to devote themselves to prayer, while being watchful and thankful.
- ◇ He then asked them to pray for him and his company, so that God would open a door for their message, and that they would proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which he was in chains.
- ◇ He asked for their prayers that he would proclaim it clearly, as he should.

- ◇ He applied this evangelistic principle to them by saying that they should be wise in the way they acted toward outsiders and to make the most of every opportunity.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:25**
 - ◇ Here we have just a simply request: “Brothers, pray for us.”
 - ◇ Just knowing that people are doing this for me is more important than words can express. (I need prayer!)
- **2 Thessalonians 3:1-2**
 - ◇ Paul requested their prayers for them so that the message of the Lord would spread rapidly and be honored, just as it had been with the Thessalonians.
 - ◇ Additionally, he asked them to pray that he and his co-workers would be delivered from wicked and evil men, knowing that not everyone has faith.
- **Philemon 1:22**
 - ◇ Paul asks Philemon to prepare a guest room for him, in the hope that he would be restored to him in answer to his prayers.
 - ◇ Here Paul asks for something very specific that was physical in nature, but for an ultimate spiritual purpose.

3. Paul’s Directions About How To Pray and For What To Pray

- **Romans 12:12**
 - ◇ Paul often wrote short little admonitions that call everyone higher, and this is one of them.
 - ◇ He writes: “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”
- **Philippians 4:6**
 - ◇ This is another of those short admonitions about prayer, but it is full of meaning.
 - ◇ The verse reads: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”
 - ◇ As the old saying goes, “don’t worry about anything, but instead pray about everything.
 - ◇ Prayer here is seen as the cure for anxiety.
 - ◇ Interestingly, thanksgiving is called for in the midst of casting our anxieties on him (1 Peter 5:7).
 - ◇ Probably Paul’s point here is that the key to the future is the past – remembering how many times God has brought us through the hard times, which reminds us that he is not likely to stop doing that now!
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**
 - ◇ Another brief Scripture golden nugget: “Be joyful always; ¹⁷ pray continually; ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”
 - ◇ These build upon one another – if we are to be joyful always, we are going to have to pray continually; and like in Philippians 4, being thankful in all circumstances is showing faith that God is good and will ultimately bless us in all situations (as he always has).
- **1 Timothy 2:1-4**

- ◇ This is one passage that says much prayer should be offered for government officials.
- ◇ The purpose of these prayers are that we can live peaceful and quiet lives – not to have lives of ease, but to provide an atmosphere of peace in which all men can hear and respond to the gospel.
- ◇ Regarding public officials, we must keep in mind what Paul wrote in Titus 3:1-2: “Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good,² to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.”
- **1 Timothy 2:8**
 - ◇ This verse is brief, but also full of meaning.
 - ◇ Men in churches all over the world were to lift up holy hands in prayer, not unholy ones – by living one type of life outside the assemblies and another type within church gatherings.
 - ◇ Unholy hands would be by those involved in anger and disputes, and holy hands would be by those refusing to practice these things.
- **1 Timothy 4:3-5**
 - ◇ Paul here addresses an early form of ascetic Gnosticism, in which the flesh was to be denied by refusing to get married and refusing to eat certain foods.
 - ◇ Paul said that God created these things to enjoy with thanksgiving by believers.
 - ◇ These two things were to be consecrated by the word of God and prayer.
- **1 Timothy 5:5**
 - ◇ In this context, Paul is giving direction about widows and how they should be cared for (by their families or in some cases, by the church).
 - ◇ A widow really in need was one without any family, and she was to put her hope in God and continue day and night in prayer to God, asking him for help.