

The Fragrant Gospel

Acts 28:23-31

How do I **react** when
others take **offense** at
the gospel?

Outline of Acts (1:8)

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in **Jerusalem** (ch2-7), and in all **Judea and Samaria** (ch8-11), and to the **ends of the earth** (ch12-28)."

You Will Be My Witnesses

1. Paphos, Pamphylia
(ch13-14)
2. Philippi, Corinth
(ch15-18:22)
3. Ephesus, Greece
(18:23-19:19)



Paul's Journey to Rome (ch21-28)



Acts 28:23 (NIV) (p.1/4)

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. ...

Acts 28:24-25 (NIV) (p.2/4)

Some were convinced by what he said,
but others would not believe.

They disagreed among themselves and began to leave
after Paul had made this final statement:

“The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors
when he said through Isaiah the prophet: ...

Acts 28:26-27 (NIV) (p.3/4)

“ ‘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 heart 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.’ ...

Acts 28:28-31 (NIV) (p.4/4)

“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 the Lord Jesus Christ --
with all boldness and without hindrance!



Philippians 3:17 (NASB)

Brethren, **join** in following my **example**,
and **observe** those who walk
according to the **pattern** you have in us.

Ac28: The Fragrant Gospel

1. Paul's heart: **Persuasion** (v23)
2. Hearers' response: **Partition** (v24-25)
3. Holy Spirit's prophecy: **Promise** (v26-27)
4. Paul's lifestyle: **Proclamation** (v28-31)

Paul and the Jews

- **Persecution:**
Acts 13-14, 17-18, 21
- **Heart for Jews:**
Romans 9-11

Rembrandt, "Apostle Paul", ~1633 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)



Romans 9:2-3 (NIV) (p.1/2)

I have great **sorrow** and unceasing **anguish** in my heart.

For I could wish that I myself
were **cursed** and **cut off** from Christ

for the sake of **my people**, those of **my own race**,
the people of **Israel**. ...

Romans 9:4 (NIV) (p.2/2)

Theirs is the **adoption** to sonship;
theirs the divine **glory**, the **covenants**,
the receiving of the **law**,
the temple **worship** and the **promises**.

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1. Persuasion: v23 (NIV)

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.

Nikolas Bodarevsky, "Trial of the Apostle Paul", 1875. Transcarpathian Regional Art Museum, Ukraine.



1. Persuasion: v23 (NIV)

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.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 (NASB)

My **message** and my **preaching**
were not in **persuasive** words
of wisdom, but in demonstration
of the **Spirit** and of **power**,
so that your **faith** would not rest
on the **wisdom of men**,
but on the **power of God**.



1. Persuasion: v23 (NIV)

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**.

Raphael, "St. Paul Preaching in Athens", tempera cartoon for Sistine Chapel, 1515.



Acts 17:22-24 (NASB)

“Men of **Athens**, I observe that you are **very religious** in all respects.

For while I was passing through and examining the **objects of your worship**, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN **UNKNOWN GOD**.’

Therefore **what you worship** in ignorance, **this I proclaim** to you.”

Declining Share of
Americans Express
Absolutely Certain Belief
in God

Do you believe in God or a universal spirit? How certain are you about this belief?

1. Persuasion: v23 (NIV)

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.

Do I love my pious countrymen?

**Love them enough to lay out the
gospel clearly to them?**

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2. Partition: v24-25 (NIV)

Some were **convinced** by what he said,
but others **would not believe**.

They **disagreed** among themselves and began to **leave**
after Paul had made this final statement:

“The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors
when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

The Sign of Contradiction

(Rembrandt, "Simeon's Song of Praise", 1631. Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague.)



Luke 2:34-35 (ESV)

Behold, this child is appointed for
the **fall** and **rising** of many in Israel,
and for a **sign** that is **opposed** --
and a **sword** will pierce through your own **soul** also --
so that **thoughts** from many hearts may be **revealed**.

Matthew 10:34,37 (NIV)

Do not suppose that I have come to bring **peace** to the earth.

I did not come to bring peace, but a **sword**.

[...]

Anyone who loves their **father or mother** more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their **son or daughter** more than me is not worthy of me.

[Albion_Soeborg_Medieval_Sword_16](#), National Museum Copenhagen. © Søren Niedziella, CC-BY 2.0.

A close-up photograph of a man's hands holding a baby. The baby is wearing a white onesie with colorful patterns of stars, clouds, and small animals. The man's hands are gently cradling the baby's head and shoulders. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

... anyone who loves their **son or daughter**
more than me is not worthy of me.

img: [Bryan Dilts](#)

Beneath the Cross of Jesus



Elizabeth Clephane 1868, Scotland

Upon that **cross of Jesus**
Mine **eye** at times can see
The very **dying** form of One
Who **suffered** there for me;

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And from my **stricken heart** with tears
Two wonders I confess;

Has the **sword** of Christ's kingship
pierced **my own** soul?

Am I willing to let it
divide my loved ones?

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3. Promise: v26-27 (NIV)

“ ‘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 **heart** 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.’

Ever Hearing, Never Understanding

Parable of **Sower**: Mt 13, Mk 4, Lk 8.

John 12: Isaiah saw His **glory**

(Van Gogh, "The Sower", 1888. Kröller-Müller Museum)

Isaiah 6:9-10 (ESV)

Go, and say to this people:
“Keep on **hearing**, but do not understand;
keep on **seeing**, but do not perceive.”

Make the heart of this people **dull**,
and their ears **heavy**, and **blind** their eyes;
lest they **see** with their eyes,
and **hear** with their ears,
and **understand** with their hearts,
and **turn** and be **healed**.

(img: TobiasD)

Romans 7:7-8 (NIV) (p.1/2)

I would not have **known** what sin was
had it not been for the **law**.

For I would not have known what **coveting** really was
if the law had not said, “**You shall not covet.**”

But **sin**, seizing the **opportunity**
afforded by the commandment,
produced in me every kind of coveting.

Romans 7:13 (NIV) (p.2/2)

In order that sin might be **recognized as sin**,
it used what is **good** to bring about **my death**,
so that through the commandment
sin might become **utterly sinful**.

Romans 9-11: A Partial Hardening

- Did God's Word **fail?** → Rom 9:6
- Is God **unfair?** → Rom 9:14
- Isn't it all God's **fault** anyway? → Rom 9:19
- Why didn't the **pious** attain salvation? → Rom 9:32
- How then is **anyone** saved? → Rom 10:8-10
- Are they lost **forever?** → Rom 11:1-2
- So they just suck, and we **rule**, right? → Rom 11:18-21

... lest they **understand** with their hearts,
and **turn** and be **healed**.

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Isaiah 6:11,13 (NIV)

Then I said, “For **how long**, Lord?”

And he answered:

“Until the cities lie **ruined**
and without inhabitant, [...]
and the land is utterly **forsaken**.

[...] But as the terebinth and **oak**
leave **stumps** when they are cut down,
so the **holy seed** will be the stump in the land.”



Romans 11:5 (NIV)

So too, at the present time
there is a **remnant** chosen by grace.

How do I **react** when
others take **offense** at
the gospel?

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4. Proclamation: 28-31 (NIV)

“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 the Lord Jesus Christ -- with all **boldness** and without hindrance!

Paul After Acts

- 2 years to see **Nero**
- Probably **acquitted** at trial (2Tim4)
- Possible preaching in **Spain** (Rom15)
- **Beheaded** in Rome under Nero (acc. to Eusebius)

Pierre-Étienne Monnot, "St Paul" (Nave of the Basilica of St. John Lateran, Rome). © Marie-Lan Nguyen



4. Proclamation: v31 (NIV)

He **proclaimed** the *kingdom of God*
and **taught** about the *Lord Jesus Christ* --
with all **boldness** and without **hindrance**.



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2 Corinthians 2:14-16 (ESV)

Thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in **triumphal procession**, and through us spreads the **fragrance** of the **knowledge of Him** everywhere.

For we are the **aroma of Christ** to God

among those who are being **saved**

and among those who are **perishing**,

to one a fragrance **from death to death**,

to the other a fragrance **from life to life**.

Do I exude the
fragrance of Christ
in my daily life?

2 Corinthians 2:15-16 (ESV)

For we are the **aroma of Christ** to God
among those who are being **saved**
and among those who are **perishing**,
to one a fragrance **from death to death**,
to the other a fragrance **from life to life.**