

**THE BIG IDEA:** The hope of the church is that the King of the church cannot be stopped.

### The Take-Off

Today we wrap up 35 weeks of walking through the story of the first church in the book of Acts.

We'll be spending time in the last 20 verses of chapter 28 and we're going to find the truth of this final "wrap it all up"

**Big Idea:** The hope of the church is that the King of the church cannot be stopped.

Now, this Big Idea contains an element that all of us can relate to, and all of us want even if we're not so sure about Jesus, the church or the Bible.

All of us would love to find the secret of having relentless energy.

We all know who this is, right? [PIC OF ENERGIZER BUNNY]

And if I asked you to raise your hand if you know the slogan that goes with the bunny, most hands would go up, right?

So a battery company has cornered the advertising market with the promise of perpetual energy, and yet as much as we would like to have that be our story, we probably relate more to this picture, don't we? [GIRL ASLEEP ON TOILET]

We have such a depletion of energy that in 2012 annual sales of energy drinks and shots were 12.5 billion dollars.

So before we start talking about 5 awesome benefits of today's Big Idea, let me be very clear that what we've seen throughout the book of Acts isn't that you and I can't be stopped, but that the church can't be stopped because she has as her leader a King who can't be stopped.

In our own strength, you and I may start well, and we may feel like the energizer bunny, but our energy is not limitless and we will eventually find ourselves asleep on the toilet.

But in the strength of our King - the true pastor of the church in Acts and today - our hope is that because he can't be stopped, neither will those who are walking with him.

1 quick verse to make sure you know that's Biblical, and then we'll jump into the last teaching from Acts.

Philippians 4:13 - "I can do all things (sounds like a self-help book to this point) THROUGH CHRIST (that's the key - the King who can't be stopped)

Knowing that, we find 5 benefits of following a King who cannot be stopped, and we'll see all of them played out in the last chapter of Acts.

#### 1. This gives us freedom (verses 11-14)

- a. There's a pretty interesting tidbit at the beginning of our passage, and I want to make sure we see it.
- b. Notice that the boat that took Paul on the final leg to Rome was a ship dedicated to false gods.
- c. It may not seem like much, but it's worth noting that the modern church probably would have boycotted it!
- d. I don't mean to suggest that the ends justify the means, but I do want to submit that when the King of the church can't be stopped, then he can use all kinds of means to get you to the end.
- e. There are too many examples for the time we have this morning, but often throughout the Old Testament God would use ungodly nations to accomplish godly ends
- f. And that one truth can give us all kinds of freedom as we journey with Jesus.
- g. The ungodly culture that surrounds us is NEVER more powerful than the hand of God around us.
- h. How do we live with freedom and godliness in an ungodly culture?
- i. Galatians 5:13 sheds some light on that question: use your freedom to serve others, not yourself
- j. Paul was on an ungodly ship, but he didn't act ungodly. He lived for Jesus in order to lead others to Jesus.
- k. That one principle can help us live in freedom even when we're in ungodly situations.

#### 2. This gives us a family (verse 15)

- a. So Paul is sailing on a pagan ship in total freedom, not religiously locked up and not hiding ungodly behavior from other believers around him
- b. And look who came to him in verse 15! Brothers from as far away as 45 miles - no small effort in that day - to see and encourage Paul at the end of a long journey
- c. One of the genuine characteristics of the church is that we are a family
- d. Just like your family, we may disagree and get on each others' nerves, but at the end of the day the grace of God through Jesus has taken a group of unwanted orphans and placed us smack dab in the middle of a family
- e. Ephesians 2:17 tells us that Jesus came to the near and the far, and verse 19 says that now we're family

- f. If you want to be a part of people who make serving a friendly competition, then you want to be in the family of God.
  - g. Romans 12:10 - outdo one another in showing honor!!!
  - h. Only in the family of God will you find people going the second, third or even the 45th extra mile, and that leaves each of us encouraged, just like it did Paul in verse 15.
3. **This gives us a forum (verses 17-28)**
- i. The unstoppable King of the church doesn't just give us freedom and a family, but he is always looking to give us a forum to share with unbelievers
  - j. We see in verse 16 that Paul was under guard in Rome, and yet he was still put in a position to point people to the things that God was doing
  - k. And Paul didn't cram the truth down their throats, either.
  - l. He simply shared his story in verses 17-20, and that sparked a desire in the Jews to hear more (verse 22)
  - m. Not only that, but verse 23 says that THEY ARRANGED THE MEETING to hear more
  - n. The point? Nothing can stop God from putting you in a position to speak the truth to those that need to hear it
4. **This gives us faith (verse 28)**
- a. Guess what happens when you see how unstoppable the King of the church is?
  - b. You are filled with faith and confidence to follow him (like a running back following the biggest blocker!!!)
  - c. Verse 28 - Paul said to the Jews with full confidence that God was sending the gospel to the Gentiles and they would listen
  - d. No doubt, no wavering.
  - e. No matter how bad the journey may have been, Paul found himself here at the end reflecting on all that he had seen, and the words he spoke were full of faith and hope, a lot like the words of Tom Hank's character at the end of the movie "Castaway"
  - f. [Castaway clip]
  - g. When our hope is in the King of the church who cannot be stopped, we, too, will "keep breathing, because you never know what the tide might bring."
  - h. Keep looking. Keep trusting.
  - i. Live full of faith because God's plan will not be stopped.
5. **This gives us a future (verses 30-31)**
- a. The end of the book is a bit abrupt.
  - b. We know that Paul stayed 2 years in a rented house and preached boldly about Jesus, and then...it's over.
  - c. Or is it?
  - d. Many scholars believe that the end is so abrupt because it was God's way of saying that the book is still being written through us - you and me - as the church still does the mighty works that God has created us for (Ephesians 2:10)
  - e. And so the end of Acts isn't the end at all.
  - f. It's just the end of the beginning, and the baton has been handed to us to carry the kingdom with confidence into the future.

### The Landing

As we wrap this series up, let's repeat the Big Idea again and then I'll show you one final picture that I want you to take with you as you head out.

Remember: **the hope of the church is that the King of the church cannot be stopped.**

What that means for each one of us is that nothing we face can keep us from pushing the kingdom of God forward.

Even the worst situations - and we've seen a number of them in Acts - can be used in the hands of Jesus to do for us exactly what this cat is experiencing. [SHOW PIC OF CAT LAUNCHED FROM TUBE]

Just like the early church, today God is launching us out into a world that needs truth and grace and hope.

We can walk confidently, because as Paul said in verse 28, we've "been sent to the world, and they will listen."

Let's pray.