

The  
**ACTS**  
*of the Apostles*



God invites His people to  
represent Christ through the  
relationships they build

Acts 28

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# Introduction

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- Paul and the rest of the ship's passengers find themselves washed ashore on the island of Malta, where they spend time ministering to the local people who have befriended them.
- God has kept His promise to keep them alive, and He continues to bring Paul closer to Rome, one step at a time, regardless of circumstances that try to interfere with His plan.

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# Introduction

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- We also see more of Paul's relational side as he continues to fellowship with the believers in each city he visits.
- Though the circumstances of Paul's life may be thrown into a whirlwind of trouble, his relationship with God keeps him steady as he seizes every opportunity to represent Him to others.

We can be a light to  
non-Christians through the  
integrity of our interactions

Acts 28:1-10

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# Paul on Malta

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- Everyone arrives safely on shore, confirming that no lives were lost, as God had promised Paul.
- The shipwrecked passengers encounter the local population of the island of Malta, who are of a very different culture than what they are used to.
- Luke refers to the islanders with the Greek word for barbarians, a word which simply meant “ignorant of Greek” (verse 2).

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# Paul on Malta

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- Historically, Malta was a colony of the African Phoenicians, but had since come under Roman rule.
- Luke preserves for us the irony of a situation, for the Roman soldiers and sailors are now in a place of need before people who would usually answer to them.
- They welcome the strangers, whom they might otherwise be hostile toward, and build a fire to help warm them up from the ocean.

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# Paul on Malta

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- As the team is gathering sticks for firewood, Paul is bitten by a snake that is assumed to be poisonous.
- The response of the locals reveals their superstitious beliefs and worship of other gods (verse 4).
- From a Christian perspective, we can point to God's will at work in Paul's life. He is not running away from his fate, but rather is being preserved by God's hand through storms and shipwrecks and natural dangers.

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# Paul on Malta

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- The locals watch Paul intently, waiting for the snakebite to take its effect. Paul is not shaken by the experience, however, and instead he shakes the snake from his hand (verses 5–6).
- Instantly, the people conclude that he must be a god, reminiscent of Acts 14:11–12, when the people of Lystra mistakenly attempt to worship Paul and Barnabas in response to the healing miracle God worked through them.

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# Paul on Malta

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- The group of passengers are hosted warmly by Publius, a local leader who Luke notes is the well-to-do owner of plural “lands” (verse 7). While they’re with Publius, his father becomes sick with a bacteria-borne illness that occurred often in Malta at that time (verse 8).
- Paul prays for him, God heals him, and a greater time of ministry is initiated as the islanders bring the rest of their ill to him for healing (verse 9)

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# Paul on Malta

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- As they prepare to depart for the next leg of their journey, the inhabitants of Malta honor them with gifts and provide for their physical needs (verse 10).
- God has clearly brought good fruit out of Paul's time on the island, and though Luke doesn't record any explicit examples of conversion, we can still trust that seeds of the Gospel were sown, as they have been in all the previous places Paul has visited.

We can make Christ known  
through fellowship  
with other believers

Acts 28:11-16

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# Paul Arrives in Rome

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- The group boards another ship that has come to dock at Malta, and Luke notes a seemingly trivial detail, the design of the boat's mast (verse 11).
- This detail becomes more significant when we realize that the gods carved into the boat were gods specifically asked for safe water travel.
- If the Romans' pagan ideas of religion were accurate, Paul's original ship would never have wrecked.

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# Paul Arrives in Rome

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- When they finally reach Rome, they are welcomed by the local Christians, some of whom had already heard about Paul, either from his letters or from other travelling missionaries (verse 15).
- This fellowship greatly encourages Paul at just the right time, for he has finally stepped ashore at the destination where he will plead his case before Caesar.

Christians are called to faithfully  
display Christlike character

Acts 28:17-22

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# Paul in Rome

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- Paul is still under house arrest, as Luke described him in verse 16, so he calls the Jewish religious leaders together for a visit to where he is staying (verse 17).
- He immediately begins the conversation with the inclusive use of “our”, seeking to build a bridge with the non-Christian Jewish community.
- Paul seeks to connect with the leaders through their commonalities, their shared history and culture.

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# Paul in Rome

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- Paul states his innocence in two ways.
- He declares he has done nothing wrong against the Jews, and he reports that the Romans had found him innocent of breaking any law deserving punishment (verses 17–18).
- He walks a line between rejecting the Jews' accusations and refraining from speaking poorly about them as a people. This is a “conciliatory speech” (verse 19)

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# Paul in Rome

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- Paul sees a successful first step in his conversation with the local religious leaders.
- They are intrigued to learn more about this “sect” they have observed.
- It is interesting to note that Paul is essentially starting with a blank slate in their eyes.
- They invite him to speak more about his beliefs so they can learn why this new faith is stirring up controversy.

God uses us to send the message of  
the Gospel throughout the world

Acts 28:23-31

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# Paul's Teaching

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- Paul receives a large number of guests at his rental home as he continues his conversation about the Gospel with them (verse 23). God has provided him with yet another large platform to proclaim the Gospel.
- Luke records a summary of his teaching points that matches the teaching method he used in the past with Barnabas at Antioch (cf. Acts 13) and was used by Peter in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 2 and 3).

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# Paul's Teaching

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- Paul concludes his time with this audience by reflecting on the vision of the prophet Isaiah, whom God used to deliver judgment on everyone who rejects His voice (vv. 26–27; cf. Isaiah 6:8–10).
- Jesus Himself refers to this passage when teaching with parables (Luke 8:10). If a person has rejected God, His Word will reveal his deafened hearts. Conversely, open eyes will reap a harvest of good fruit from the seeds that are planted.

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# Paul's Teaching

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- Paul concludes this time of sharing by declaring a poignant truth: God's message of salvation has continually been rejected by the Jewish people, from whom the Savior of the world arose, and now God has seen fit to release the Gospel into the world regardless of its future Jewish audience.
- Paul speaks with hope that the Gentile nations will hear about Jesus and come to believe in Him (Luke 2:29–32, Matthew 12:15–21; cf. Isaiah 42:1–4, 60:1–3).

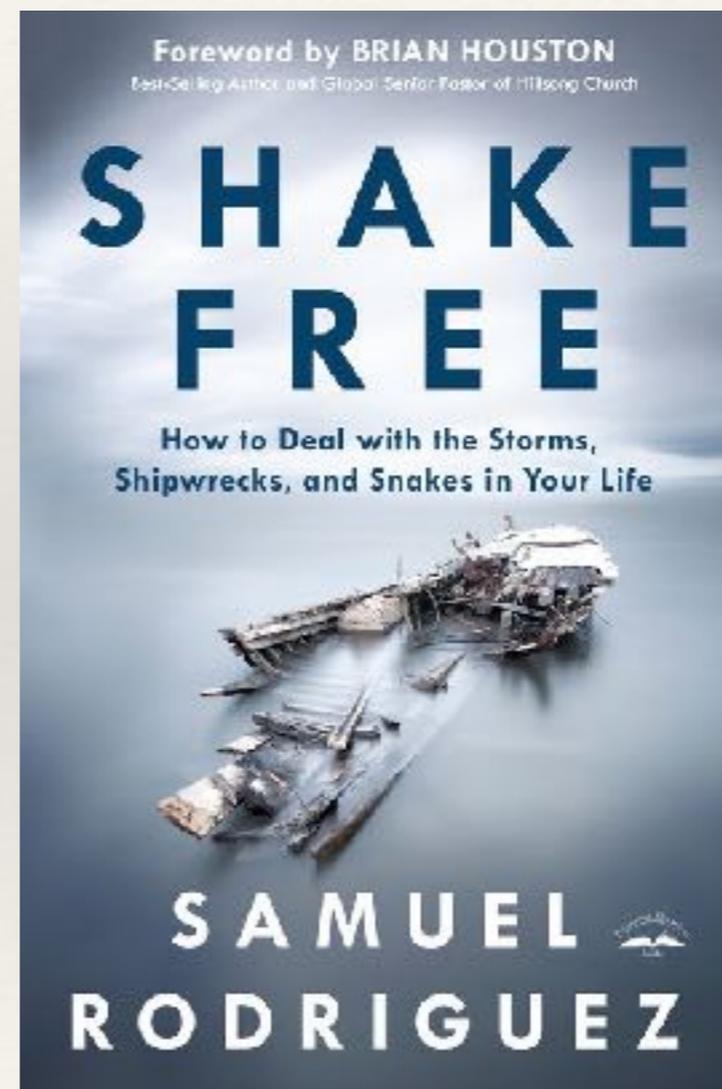
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# Paul's Teaching

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- It is tempting to think the book of Acts is about Paul.
- But if this book were about defending Paul, Luke would have wrapped up his biography with a more conclusive ending by recording his martyrdom for the Gospel.
- Instead, Luke leaves his reader with the open-ended statement that the Gospel was still being shared with “boldness” and “without hindrance” (verse 30).

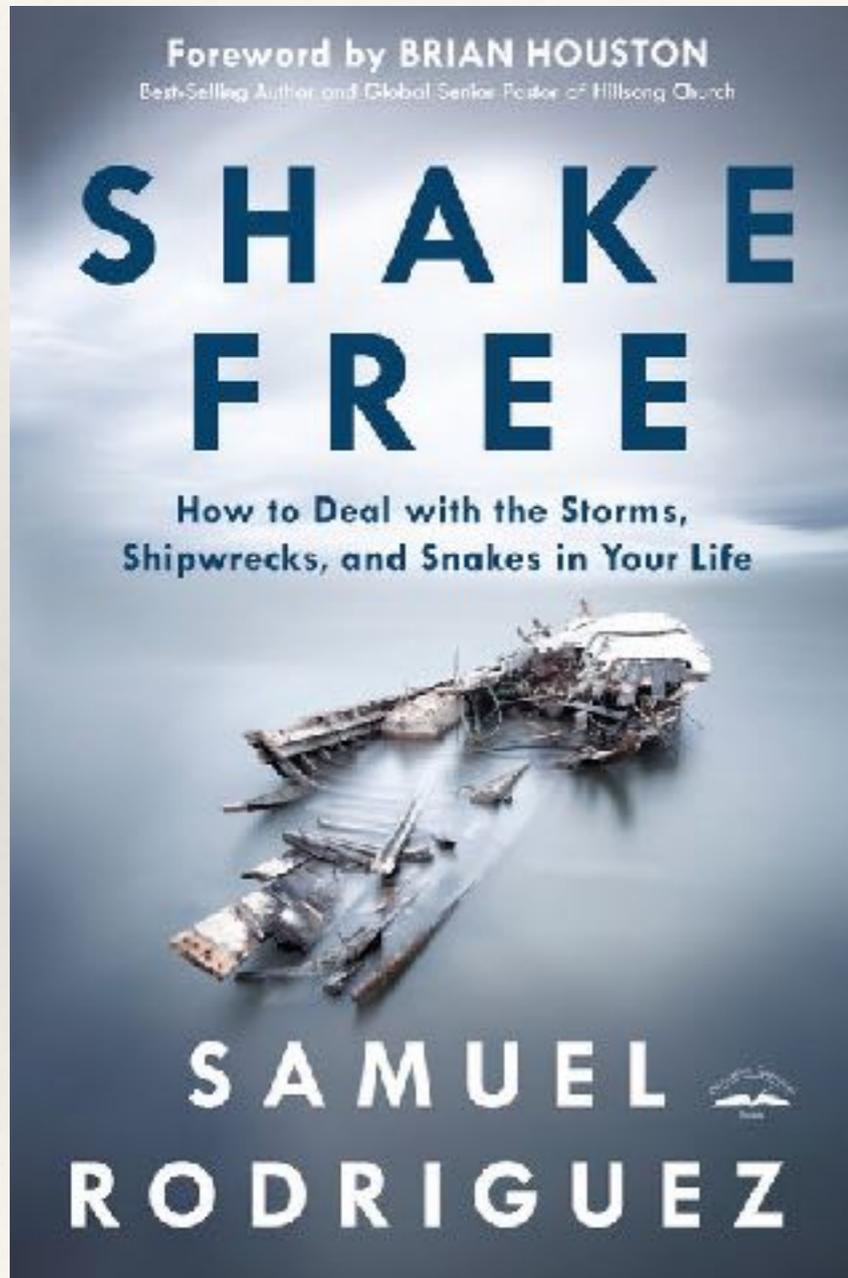
# Application



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# Shake Free

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- Samuel Rodriguez is a pastor in Sacramento, California
- He is the president of the National Hispanic Christians Leadership Conference
- He offered the prayer at Donald Trump's inauguration
- He spoke at the men's conference

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# Shake Free

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- No doubt you've heard the question, Are we there yet?
- Paul must have wondered about that many times after being arrested, waiting in Caesarea, having two trials, getting on a ship, facing a life-threatening storm, surviving a shipwreck, and then a snakebite.
- Through all the twists and turns, Paul knew he would eventually get to Rome. We should learn from his perseverance, that we will get where we are going.

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# Shake Free

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- On Paul's ship, it didn't take long for problems to start.
- Acts 27:4 - "The winds were against us."
- Paul warned them of the possible dangers, but they continued on just the same.
- Acts 27:14-15 - "The ship was caught by the storm" and they could not head into the wind, "so we gave way to it and were driven along."

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# Shake Free

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- Perhaps you have read Sebastian Junger's best-selling book, *The Perfect Storm*, or have seen the movie.
- Paul was caught in a "wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster" and was swept out to sea.
- At some time or another we will face storms we cannot control (addiction, depression, bankruptcy).
- Paul learned that sometime you can even make it without your ship.

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# Shake Free

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- Trapped in a doozy of a story, Paul and his shipmates had to throw the cargo and tackle overboard and had gone days without food.
- Sometimes we need to lighten our load (old tennis racket, boxes of textbooks, maybe we will need a snowblower in Sacramento).
- Best-selling books: *Minimalism: Live a Meaningful Life* and *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*.

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# Shake Free

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- If you survived the storm, you can shake the snake.
- The Bible is filled with strange, amazing, miraculous events (Noah, Moses, Daniel, miracles of Jesus).
- Paul had gone through horrible ordeals throughout his life and just survived a shipwreck and a snake “fastened itself on his hand” (Acts 28:3).
- Paul just shook it off.

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# Shake Free

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- If you ever attended a class reunion, you know that it is full of surprises (most likely to succeed, cheerleader).
- When God works through underdogs, many don't know how to respond.
- The people of Malta expected Paul to swell up and die.
- People might expect you to quit your job, file for divorce, declare bankruptcy, or give up hope.

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# Shake Free

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