

Week of June 10-June 16

## **STILL GOING...**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Acts chapter 28

One of my favorite commercial characters is the Energizer Bunny. It was a great marketing tool for the company's batteries. You remember the pink bunny with the beating drum, don't you? In many of the commercials, the bunny had to overcome great difficulties but he just kept going and going.

In the book of Acts, we see the gospel message doing the same. Luke makes it a point to show us how the church's witness to Christ and the advance of the gospel was unstoppable in spite of opposition, persecution, imprisonment, etc. From an original band of a dozen disciples, the church grew to have an enormous presence throughout the empire of Rome. Each step of the way, the church's amazing growth is recorded by Luke. Acts 2:41 – *“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”* Acts 2:4 – *“But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.”* Acts 5:14 – *“Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.”* Acts 6:7 – *“So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”* Acts 9:31 – *“It [the church] was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.”* Acts 11:21 – *“The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.”* Acts 12:24 – *“But the word of God continued to increase and spread.”* Acts 13:49 – *“The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.”* Acts 19:20 – *“In this way, the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.”* Finally, in the last verse of his book, Luke powerfully concludes his history of the early church by stating, *“Boldly and without hindrance he [Paul] preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.”* In other words, the message was still going.

We shouldn't be surprised. Jesus promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against his church and that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached in all the world as a testimony to all nations before the end would come. In other words, Jesus expected the gospel to keep going and going until his return in spite of opposition or difficulty and it has. What started in the book of Acts didn't stop with Acts 28. Today, over **2.3 billion** people now profess faith in Christ. Quite a jump, isn't it, from the original 120 jammed into an upper room prayer meeting in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost? But, we're not done yet. There are still people who need to know about Jesus. We're still called to share the good news in the power of the Holy Spirit and, with all due respect to the Energizer Bunny, the Holy Spirit's power will outlast his...hands down!

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** When is the last time you shared the gospel with someone? Pray for the Holy Spirit's empowering and an opportunity to share the good news this week.

**Take-a-way:** *Whenever believers bear witness to Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, the gospel message keeps going and going.*