

UNSTOPPABLE CHURCH

Then and *Now*
in 30 Minutes



Episode 43 - Anchored

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THE SETTING



We've come to **the Church of St. Priscilla**, near the Circus Maximus in **Rome**. The church was built on the foundations of an early church located next to the house of Priscilla and Aquila, two of Paul's co-workers whose tent-making business saw them travel across the empire, using their homes in Rome ([Rom 16:3](#)), Corinth ([1 Cor 16:19](#)), and Ephesus ([2 Tim 4:19](#)) as a base for the Church.

The Circus Maximus was a chariot-racing stadium and entertainment arena, the largest in the empire, measuring 2037 x 387 ft (621 x 118m) with capacity for 150,000 spectators. This was where the 'ludi' ('public games') were held that could last from one day to spectacular celebrations over several days, with religious ceremonies, public feasts, horse and chariot races, athletics, plays, recitals, beast-hunting, and gladiator fights. Some even included public executions.



The Church of St. Priscilla



Inside the Church of St. Priscilla



BIBLE READING

[1 Tim 4:11-16](#); [2 Tim 3:10-4:5](#)



KEY IDEAS

What kept Paul running?

What was it that kept Paul running in his race, despite everything that was thrown at him? It was the fact that he was anchored - first, in the work of Christ, and second, in the Word of God. We looked at the first anchor in episode 41, so let's now focus on the second one. For Paul, the Word of God wasn't just a few favourite Bible texts, as so often with many Christians today; rather, it was the whole of Scripture - not random doctrines, but the whole story. So, we find in his preaching and his writings:

- An understanding that Christianity was not a new religion, but rather the completion and fulfilment of the old religion that went right back to Abram.
- A use of stories from the Old Covenant to illuminate the New Covenant - for example, the story of Hagar and Sarah as a picture of Law and Grace in Galatians 4.
- An interpreting of the Old Testament's sacrifices as foreshadowing the work of Christ on the cross.

This is why so much of Paul's writing can only be properly and fully understood in light of a knowledge of the Old Testament - a challenge to us not to avoid that part of God's Word.

Why God's Word is important

Paul encouraged young pastor Timothy to root himself deeply in God's Word (1 Tim 4:11-16) and told him why (2 Tim 3:10-4:5). At the heart of everything lies the fact that:

· **"All scripture is God-breathed"** ([2 Tim 3:16](#)). The Greek word for 'God-breathed' is theopneustos and means 'breathed out by God', reflecting God's personal involvement in the writing of Scripture- not just by taking something the writers wrote and thinking "That's good! We'll use that!" but rather, so working in the hearts and minds of the writers through his Spirit that what they wrote was exactly what he wanted written - yes, in their own individual styles and ways, but still exactly what he wanted.

· This divine inspiration of Scripture is what makes the Bible **revelatory, authoritative and final** - an inspiration not just of the ideas but of the actual words, as Paul argues in [Gal 3:16](#). It is this inspiration that means we aren't free to change the Bible to suit our needs or the latest cultural trends.

This gives Scripture its purpose - not just to fill our minds with knowledge, but to fill our lives with change; to show us what God is like, what he wants and where he is heading so that, through his Spirit, we can line up with that. That purpose is reflected in the imagery of the races that Paul used to illustrate the Christian life (Php 3:12-14). He wanted to ensure that he hadn't run the race in vain (e.g., Gal 2:2; Php 2:16; 2 Tim 4:7). Even now, awaiting execution, he could write, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" ([2 Tim 4:7](#)) - a man who was truly anchored.



1. How anchored are you in the Bible? Do you read it regularly? Do you just stay in familiar books and passages or seek to read the whole of Scripture?
2. How can being anchored in Scripture help take us through tough times? Do you have your own experiences of this?
3. How could a new resolve to stay anchored in Scripture help the Church to become unstoppable once again?



For a behind-the-scenes glimpse into what was involved to create this podcast series listen to Mike and David recounting their experiences!

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