

Acts
When in Rome . . .
Acts 28:16-31

“When in Rome, do as the Romans do” is a proverb that means to follow the customs and traditions of a place you are visiting. It can also mean to follow the lead of those who are familiar with the situation when you are in an unfamiliar place. According to Google, the proverb is often attributed to Ambrose, who is said to have given this advice to Augustine when they were deciding whether to fast on Saturday like the Romans did, or not like they did in Milan. The phrase first appeared in print in 1777, but variations of it may have been around since the late 1500s. It is so well known that it is often shortened to just “when in Rome”.

1. When in Rome rely on God’s providential purposes.
2. When in Rome rely on God’s prescribed proclamation.
3. When in Rome rely on God’s perfect plan.

Paul’s story at the end of Acts was still being written. His faithfulness was still being proven. His mission was still moving forward and his adventure still had some liminal uncertainty. And the same is true of us, right now in this moment. Our story is still being written. Our faithfulness is still being proved, not necessarily to God, but to us. We are still living in the liminal space of no longer being what we once were, but not yet being what we will become.

For further consideration

The book of Acts has taken us from a few dozen believers in a single city to a multitude of churches throughout the Mediterranean—all in one generation. How should this motivate our gospel witness individually and as a church today? How has the Holy Spirit been changing you as we have read and studied the book of Acts? What has Acts taught you about God’s revelation, will, presence, and power? Why do you think the Holy Spirit had Luke stop writing at this point in Paul’s story? How does the book of Acts help us grow in faith and courage?