

Acts: The Church on Earth

Shipwrecked (Take Courage)

Acts 27:13-44

In Acts, we're looking at the Church on Earth

- The **body** of Jesus - living, moving, doing the things He did and does
- By the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. Possessed by God.
- The church isn't perfect, but it's **called** to be Holy

Previously

- Preached to Gentiles, rejected by the Jews
- On trial for stirring up the people...yet no crime
- Paul preaches to kings and rulers, appeals to Caesar
- Set sail for Rome
- Roman escort - Julius the Centurion
- Paul, Luke and Aristarchus - Favor
- Trying to get to Rome before winter. Paul convinced everyone would die. Captain and owner eager to press on, Julius goes with the Captain and owner

What do we do in the storms of life?

Are we prepared?

Are we lost?

What's our outlook on the weather?

Do we always think it's stormy?

Do we get tossed by the slightest drizzle? (Maryland drivers, I hear Arizona is similar)

[Matthew 7:24-27 NKJV] "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

[Pray]

Read 27:13-20

Winds can be deceiving

There's times before a big storm when the weather is very nice. Everything seems great. If I didn't have the luxury of a weather report I'd have no idea major snow would be falling in a few hours.

Euroclydon

A storm almost as bad as a hurricane in the Mediterranean. Swirling clouds, strong winds, large waves, heavy rain in the Fall.

Growing up on the East Coast, we were very familiar with similar storms, called Nor'Easters Heavy rain or snow, flooding, hurricane-force winds and blizzards. They were usually the worst in the winter. November-March.

These look like hurricanes from satellite photos.

They let the boat drift

Powerless to fight the storm, to navigate through the wind...they let the boat go where the storm wanted.

This is not a good feeling I'd bet, to be at the mercy of the storm. To want to go one direction, try with all your might, and be pulled so much in another you have to give up and go with it.

Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not break. Pastor Chuck Smith

Lee of Cauda

Cauda is an uninhabited island located 23 miles West of Cape Matala on the south coast of Crete in Greece.

Windward / leeward, shelter to some degree from the waves from the land mass

Really nothing else between them and Africa except hundreds of miles of stormy sea

The large vessel towed a rowboat behind. To get to shore, get to another vessel, or maybe for a lucky few to use as a lifeboat.

Modern ships have lifeboats for everyone. Cruise lifeboats.

If the ship goes down fast though, who knows if you'll get on one...

For Paul and everyone, this will be more like the Titanic than a Mediterranean Cruise - although maybe like the Costa Concordia.

Ropes to undergird the ship

They amazingly were able to pass ropes underneath the ship, maybe they start in the front and walk them back. Just trying anything to strengthen the hull.

Videos of ships in storms, north atlantic, large cargo vessels, military boats...it is absolutely frightening. I couldn't imagine being on a wooden ship in one...

Perfect Storm movie - true story of shipping vessel lost in hurricane in the Atlantic

The wind was blowing them to shallower water...not necessarily a good thing in a large vessel.

They were afraid of running around.

So not only were the sails down, they took the whole mast down, too.
Kept being driven...

That's just day one.

Day two, more of the same...but now they're throwing cargo overboard

Remember the owner of the ship?

Wanting to press on? Likely for business concerns? Also fearing the ship wouldn't survive winter in that small, unprotected port.

Those losses are inevitable now...

In all of this, it was God's will that Paul would be on this journey

[2 Corinthians 11:23-30 NKJV] Are they ministers of Christ?--I speak as a fool--I [am] more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty [stripes] minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; [in] journeys often, [in] perils of waters, [in] perils of robbers, [in] perils of [my own] countrymen, [in] perils of the Gentiles, [in] perils in the city, [in] perils in the wilderness, [in] perils in the sea, [in] perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn [with indignation]? If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.

Paul knew that whatever situation he was in, if it was for the gospel, was God's will for his life.

Jonah 1:1-16 (Jonah fled, God sent a storm, became a witness to those men and they gave their lives to God)

Day Three

Threw the tackle overboard - everything that would have been used for the cargo

They are fearing for their lives. In three days they've gone from fighting the storm to fighting for their lives. All tools, all precious cargo...gone. Not only loss of business, profits, but also tooling.

Didn't see the sun. Didn't see the stars.

Ships navigated with the stars...interesting that we use man-made stars, in a sense, to navigate today - GPS.

Many days - maybe they even lost accurate count by this point -

All hope that they would be saved was lost.

These were sailors. They were on these waters for a living. This was a large vessel making long journeys regularly. These weren't locals swept out to sea. And they were all very afraid. And all had lost hope.

I wonder if Paul's words from before they left were echoing in their ears...

[Acts 27:10 NKJV] saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives."

No hope.

We can endure many things, if we have hope.

The rat experiment

Without hope...we truly are lost.

[1 Corinthians 15:19 NKJV] If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

A Christian's hope is not just for this life...it is ultimately for the next one.

The reality of this world is that it is passing away. And our hope is not in this one.

Granted, even if we were to be wrong, annihilation was the end for us all, we do have better lives. Happier. Hopeful. Joyful.

[Psalm 73:2-5, 16-18 NKJV] But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. For I [was] envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For [there are] no pangs in their death, But their strength [is] firm. They [are] not in trouble [as other] men, Nor are they plagued like [other] men. ... When I thought [how] to understand this, It [was] too painful for me-- Until I went into the sanctuary of God; [Then] I understood their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.

:21-32

Abstaining from food - probably for rations. Maybe even fasting in some last ditch hope.

Paul...he doesn't mince words..."I TOLD YOU SO"

Using it to get them to listen to him now, to believe him now...

Take Courage

"The angel of God of whom I belong"

Paul knew he **belonged** to God - original wording "of whose I am"

Paul knew his life was not his own, but was hidden in Jesus.

If Jesus said he'd survive. He'd survive.

God has given all those who sail with you

God is merciful. These men would be saved as a witness of God's love for them

Were they needed at all to save Paul? No. But Paul was there to save them.

Nevertheless we must be shipwrecked

There are consequences to setting out despite the weather, the outlook, the advice contrary to God's

Paul didn't lose anything, but the world around him lost everything

God's word for us might be life, but it will cost us a lot, sometimes everything. But we'll walk away with our lives, our faith, and maybe even those around us.

The storms he sends us, sometimes, are there to get our attention - that we need to throw it all away if we want to live. We will go down with the ship we're sailing on. The ungodly relationship. The career. The lifestyle. But if we act now. If we turn to him now. There's a life to be had in Him, but it will take courage to survive it.

Fourteenth night...two solid weeks (somebody was counting accurately)

I mean, there's divine providence that they're there and not in Africa. Based on later verses it seems they were further south than what we'd call the Adriatic - more the Ionian in modern terms.

Supposed again...but this time they're right

Could tell by the wind, the water, the sounds and experience

Soundings

We have radar, they had simple tech...but it worked.

Dropping a line into the water and measuring

'Dead reckoning' letting a similar rope off the back of the ship to get speed they could accurately plot courses. Not unlike how modern subs navigate with speed and heading only

The water was fast getting shallower

They dropped FOUR anchors from the back. This was a big ship. They put it all in the water to hit the brakes as fast as possible.

The sailors wanted off. They knew they were close. So they began to sneak off by lowering the boat and just pretending to lower another anchor.

**Paul rats them out. But in order to save everyone's lives.
"Live together die alone"**

Sun was about to come up, Paul urges them to eat. They needed their strength to swim.

They were all encouraged. The food. The hope. The prayer. Paul's faith. Being together.

The importance of fellowship. We can't do this alone. Especially when it's stormy.
And stormy times are coming for us all in this country, especially believers

276 people. That's a large boat!

They knew it was the end now, so they threw everything out

Midlife crisis - the goal - the end is coming, get rid of everything that's in the way of getting there. Not go back to do the things you could waste your time on when you had the time

:39-44

They had no idea where they were. They knew the sea, but they didn't recognize the shore.

They saw a good spot to aim for.

Rollerblading downhill as a kid, when going too fast, cars coming, aiming for the best spot to wipe out in

Cut the anchors loose (not another cheap decision)

At all costs they wanted to live

Even cut the rudders loose! Multiple rudders - another sign of a huge ship

Put the sail back up, full speed

Front gets stuck, rear gets demolished by the powerful waves - this was not water you'd want to swim in

Currents in the Bahamas

Soldiers plan to kill the prisoners - remember, soldiers liable for the prisoners, Would face death penalty or at least the prisoner's sentence if they lost the prisoner

This would have included Paul!

God used the Centurion Julius here again! Favor from God through this unbeliever. And he did so by saving all the prisoners.

I think we should just think about that for a second...it's no small thing.

Those who could swim...there were those who couldn't. That would be nightmarish. Just grabbing a hold of a piece of something knowing that it was certain death if you didn't...

But, they all escaped, and safely made it to land.

Without a ship. Without the cargo. After a two week long nightmare.

Tiny island in the middle of the mediterranean. Amazing they got there. 550 miles through straight sea from Crete. Their journey was probably all over the sea if we could see the path.

It was a miracle they were even there. It was a miracle they all survived. It was divine providence that they were kept alive by the Roman guards. But all along God would have this journey in life for Paul. It was his destiny to go to Rome. To go to Caesar. And to preach the gospel.

The men on this ship walked away with their lives, and an undeniable testimony that God is real.

The storms in life that God allows - are not only for us - but for those around us to come to faith in him. To see that we're not living for this world, but that our anchor is in heaven.

Take courage

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jer 29:11