

Refuge City Church — November 20, 2022

“Shipwrecked Faith” [Acts 27]

Introduction

- **Last Week:** Paul gave his 5th documented defense of the gospel before King Agrippa; sharing the gospel, and giving us a great template to share our faith as the Lord gives us the opportunity.
- **Today:** He officially begins his journey to Rome... “After I have been [to Jerusalem], I must also see Rome.” [Acts 19:21]
- **A story from the Mayflower** [the Puritan/Pilgrim trek across the sea to the New World in 1620]
 - The trip would cover some 3,000 miles at sea, and take over 2 months.

Verses 1-20

- **Verses 1-2:** “And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius. And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica.”
 - Augustan cohort = 1,000 Roman soldiers; led by Centurion Julius.
 - “Adramyttium” = port city located in Troas [Asia; modern western Turkey]; Most likely a cargo/grain ship, as passenger ships were not a ‘thing’.
 - Traveling companions = Luke [writer; ‘we’ language], Aristarchus [mentioned in Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 1:24]; voluntary prisoners.

- **Verses 3-20 [Read]**

1. Notice the details given by Luke.

- *Sir William Ramsay*, archeologist/historian/New Testament scholar; expert on Roman era Asia Minor and Greece [1851-1939]
 - His initial thought on the use of scripture: He had gained the impression in his studies that these were quite unworthy of consideration for a historian; anything having to do with religion belonged to the realm of the theologians, not that of the historians. However, once he started to look in to them...
 - “Luke’s narrative was trustworthy, it was for me exceptionally valuable, as giving evidence on a larger scale. There was nothing else like it. No other ancient traveller has left an account of the journeys which he made across Asia Minor... To determine the value of this narrative was a fundamental condition for my future work.”
 - Over the years the opinion gradually forced itself upon him that Luke’s history of early Christian origins was unsurpassed for its accuracy.

2. Notice the terminology used to describe the journey!

- If we have learned anything throughout our study of the book of Acts, it’s this: “God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.”

Verses 21-26

“Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. But we must run aground on some island.”

- In the midst of uncertainty, who do we do? [the whole trip, Paul’s faith did not waiver]
 - For the centurion, sailors, captain of the ship, they trusted in themselves and their own wisdom.
 - By all accounts, they should have been sufficient as ‘professionals’ in their trade.
 - However, professionalism does not guarantee success.
 - Paul’s earlier advice was discounted. But remember how often Paul sailed around the Mediterranean during his travels [est. 3,500 miles], and had experienced multiple shipwrecks [2 Corinthians 11:25, “Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea...”]
- For those who trust in the Lord, faith needs to take on a more secure understanding.
 - **Romans 15:4**, “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”
- Faith in God means “I believe everything God tells me, without question.”
 - **Isaiah 41:10**, “fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
 - **Isaiah 43:2**, “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.”

Stormy Comparisons

Jonah	Disciples	Paul
Jonah 1	Luke 8:22-25	Acts 27:4-44
Fear. Trust in other gods. Casting lots [gambling] to figure out the outcome.	Fear. Lack of faith, even in the presence of Jesus. Who had told them they would go to the other side.	Fear. Trust in own wisdom.
God’s truth prevails. From which comes supernatural peace in the midst of chaos & discipline.	Jesus speaks. From which comes supernatural peace in the midst of chaos.	God speaks. Peace prevails. Promises fulfilled.
Result: Trust. Increased faith. Obedience.	Result: Trust. Increased faith.	Result: God’s faithfulness proven to all.

Verses 27-44 [Read]

- God’s sovereignty, faithfulness, provision, and promises fulfilled!

Stormy Lessons

1. What can cause the storm?

- Disobedience [Jonah]
 - The rough waters we experience [chaos of a storm or lack of provision/direction of famine], may be rooted in a selfish mentality of spirit... “I’ll do it my way”.
 - **Jonah 1:12**, “...for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.”
 - **QUESTION:** Is every ‘storm’ caused by a disobedient spirit? No. But it should cause us reflection either way as a catalyst to keep us in tune with the Lord and in step with the Spirit.
 - **Psalm 139:23-24**, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

2. Revelation in the storm.

- Consider the disciples experience with Jesus [Luke 8]
 - They were not disobedient, but the storm revealed their lack of faith.
 - **Luke 8:25**, “Where is your faith?”
 - Jonah: purification through rough waters and becoming seafood.
 - Israelites: fear gave way to experiencing all that God can do for those who are obedient to His calling.

3. God is greater than the greatest storm!

- Storms do not indicate a lack of God’s presence.
- He will speak in the most chaotic of circumstances, but we must be quiet enough to listen.
 - **1 Kings 19:11-13**, [God speaks to Elijah] “And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord.” And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but *the Lord was not in the wind*. And after the wind an earthquake, but *the Lord was not in the earthquake*. And after the earthquake a fire, but *the Lord was not in the fire*. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave...”
 - **Psalm 46:10**, “Be still, and know that I am God.”

4. Does God want to use you to minister/encourage others who are going through their own storm?

- Someone else’s storm [disobedience or revelation] may ripple in and disrupt your peace.
- What are you going to do in that situation?
 - Joseph: **Genesis 45:5**, “And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.” [save life]
 - Israelites: Needed the faith of Moses. **Exodus 14:10, 13-14**, “...they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord... And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” [faith of others to bring encouragement to carry on]

- The Good Samaritan: **Luke 10:34**, “He went to him and bound up his wounds...set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.” [when we can’t help ourselves]
- Ananias: **Acts 9:17**, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” [encouragement and prayer]
- Random strangers: **Acts 27:24**, “Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.” [to help you complete a task]
- God will bring others into our life to help us find peace in the storm, bring correction to our disobedience, encourage us, and help us accomplish His will.
 - In a storm? = Accept that help.
 - Placed in someone else’s storm? = Be that help!

5. Prayer & Thanksgiving

- What did Jesus do prior to and during His storm? PRAYER
 - **Luke 22:42**, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” [when you know the storm is coming]
 - **Luke 23:34**, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” [pray for those who persecute you]
- What did Jonah do in the middle of his storm? PRAYER & PRAISE
 - **Jonah 2:2, 9**, “I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice... But I *with the voice of thanksgiving* will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord!” [repentance]
- What did Paul do in the middle of his storm? LISTENED & ENCOURAGED
 - **Acts 27:25, 35-36**, “So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told... And when he had said these things, he took bread, and *giving thanks to God in the presence of all* he broke it and began to eat. Then they all were encouraged...”
- What did the Israelites do on the other side of their storm? PRAISE
 - **Exodus 15:2, 13 NLT**, “The Lord is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. This is my God, and I will praise him— my father’s God, and I will exalt him! “With your unfailing love you lead the people you have redeemed. In your might, you guide them to your sacred home.” [recognize God in all things]
 - **Psalm 27:14**, “Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!”
 - **Psalm 55:22**, “Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.”
 - **Psalm 89:1**, “I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.”

Conclusion

- **A story from the Mayflower**
- **REMEMBER:** “God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.”
 - As you go through storms...
 - Remember who is in control. God is sovereign.
 - Reflect on who you are in Christ, what God wants for you, and for you to do.

- Rely on those He brings into your life, either for encouragement, correction, or help.
- Rejoice in His faithfulness and provision!
- **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”