

Scripture Acts 27 Paul Sent to Rome

(1 opening slide) Intro

We are going to look at a physical storm very accurately detailed by Luke.

We are going to see how God uses Paul in the midst of the storm.

We are also going to look at how we react to storms in our lives.

The Entre'

(2) A storm does not make you who you are, it reveals your character

(3) Listen to Godly advice and act upon it

(4) Storms bring us face to face with the reality of what has value and is truly important

(5) A friendship formed in the storms of life may be very important to you

What do we do with a passage like this? It is a very detailed account of the journey of Paul to Rome, with a bit of adventure thrown in. I have to admit, at my first reading I was like this is pretty objective, asking where are the “nuggets” here that I can share with you all. So I started down the “trail” as Matt calls it and found all kinds of commentaries that back up what Luke tells us. This also shows Luke’s style of writing. Attention to detail. He was a Doctor, so we should not be surprised.

(6 Paul’s life timeline)

Acts 26 review

Paul appeals to Caesar and to Caesar he will go at the direction of King Agrippa.

Acts 27:1-20

(7 map) The Voyage to Rome Begins

27 And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. ²So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. ³And the next *day* we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care. ⁴When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under *the shelter* of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. ⁵And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia. ⁶There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board. **Us, is Paul, Luke and Aristarchus.**

⁷ When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under *the shelter of* Crete off Salmone. ⁸ Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

Paul's Warning Ignored

⁹ Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, ¹⁰ 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." ¹¹ Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul. ¹² And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, *and winter there*.

(8 the island of Crete) In the Tempest

¹³ When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. ¹⁴ But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon. ¹⁵ So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive. ¹⁶ And running under *the shelter of* an island called Clauda, ¹⁷ we secured the skiff with difficulty. ¹⁷ When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis ¹⁸ Sands, they struck sail and so were driven. ¹⁸ And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship. ¹⁹ On the third *day* we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands. ²⁰ Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us*, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.

A group of prisoners under the supervision of Julius, a Roman Centurion and his troop (A centurion was an officer in charge of 100 men) of men in charge of getting this group of prisoners to Rome. We are told later there were 276 people on this ship, so at least some of them were Roman soldiers. (Praetorian Guard) Paul is added to this group, though did occupy a different level of status amongst the prisoners. He was a Roman citizen who appealed to Caesar. That was his right as a Roman Citizen. Luke does not tell us if how or if Paul was chained during the voyage at sea.

V .3 "Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends to be cared for."

How were Luke and Aristarchus allowed to go? This was not common. Some commentators believe that Luke and Aristarchus went as "servants" of Paul. It is also thought Luke may have served as a ship's doctor previously as he describes in detail the particulars of the journey on the ship. He was putting into this chapter a lot of detail that someone unfamiliar with travel on ships would not have.

This section is actually one of the more technical bits of writing in the bible. We are given this detail from Luke perhaps as a hint that something spectacular is about to happen. If you know the rest of this chapter, indeed it is another miracle in scripture that while the ship they are on will be destroyed, and evidence of poor decisions by the leaders on board will come back to bite them, no one will perish. Luke provides us detail as if to say, hang on, there is a God sighting ahead, "trust me, I was there".

V. 6 There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy, and put us on board. So as we sometimes change planes on a route across the country, they changed ships.

(9) 140 x 36 5,000 sq ft 18 sq ft per person

V 7-12 Long slow trip to Fair Havens

V 13-20 Hope to hopeless

Review?

(Acts 23:11) ¹¹ But the following night the **Lord** stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for **Me** in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

2 Corinthians review of Paul's' "adventures"

If we remember back to this chapter, Paul definitely needs encouragement. He is human after all and has to be thinking is this really worth it. I had a pretty good life before, why take on this struggle. Paul had to be very convinced about what he has heard and seen. If you want to see what repentance looks like, look at Paul's life. From executing Christians, to being willing to endure the same torture he supplied, upon himself. Is this just divine payback? I think more this is the forming of a saint in the forge of adversity. If you know metallurgy, heating and cooling and drawing out steel makes it the material less brittle, and more ductile or bendable so that it can flex or bend instead of breaking. Paul was taken from a very hard state; to one able to bend with the trials he would face proclaiming Christ.

We are on the edge of disaster here. This is the climax of the story

A storm does not make you who you are, it reveals your character

(10) V 21-32

²¹ But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. ²² And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. ²³ For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, ²⁴ saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' ²⁵ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. ²⁶ However, we must run aground on a certain island."

²⁷ Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. ²⁸ And they took soundings and found *it* to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms. ²⁹ Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. ³⁰ And as the sailors were seeking to escape

from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, ³¹ Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." ³² Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

14 days no navigation, estimated 476 miles at 1.5 mph

(11 Ship in storm at sea anchor)

Reactions: What is revealed about the character on that ship?

Self preservation:

The sailors wanted to take off on the lifeboat and lie about it. Granted taking the lifeboat was no guarantee either, but at this point it may have been seen as a chance they would be willing to take. No concern for others, obviously not convinced with the plan, or lack of a plan that was in place. How common it is in the midst of life's storms for use to choose self-preservation.

Paul is now the captain of the ship. He has hope, he knows what he has been told and believes it. It does not mean he knew how, but he knew who. The Centurion and the soldiers believe enough to thwart the escape. Not only that, but the lifeboat gone now also.

Paul becomes the leader on this ship. He gets a word from God that not only is God going to save Paul and get him to Caesar, he is going to save all 276 people on the ship. In a sense Paul becomes the real Captain. He carefully provides guidance at the start of the journey, which is ignored. But when the plan comes apart, Paul takes leadership to bring a message of hope. Emergent leadership in a crisis. If we were called into a storm, would we bring a message of hope?

Notice how he does it. Words of encouragement. Breaking bread and sharing a meal. He keeps everyone on the boat, and enables those with their duties to have courage to fulfill them. The sailors were doing what they could. Step by step, lightening their load, strengthening the ship, tossing the cargo over, and then setting 4 sea anchors. They knew danger was coming. They could hear it. They needed to hold on till they could see and make what they hoped would be a landing of some sort. They could not turn the ship around. They had to prepare to drive the ship on shore.

What do we do when we sense real danger? Paul had every right to say "I told you so" and yet does not condemn the decision makers. Really what is the point of looking back, it will not change what is right in front of you.

Possible reactions

Violence Escape Denial Pray or just become completely ineffective.

Do we even retreat or escape from the church...

They lost hope, stopped eating or trying and just waited to die.

With Paul's encouragement, the sailors do their job to the best of their ability. They anchor the ship. The rest are given something to do. Throw the grain overboard. We learned some of this in our training for Mass Casualty training. You have to gain the support of the walking wounded so that you can help those who cannot live without aid. Paul provides Godly advice; hence we have another key to surviving the storm

Listen to Godly advice and act upon it.

Paul knew the sailors were about to jump ship. He tells Julius they are about to flee, and if they do, we are all dead. The sailors still had work to do; Paul holds them in place to do it. They knew to anchor the ship, and prepare to beach. None of the others on the ship had these skills. It is not like Paul knew what needed to be done, other than we all are needed to do our jobs, for the safety of us all. We see God is in control, but he uses us to accomplish his purposes.

Isn't this how God works? When we read scripture we see the hand of God clearly throughout, but that is not always creating, or directly intervening, often it is by using us.

Should we jump ship when it gets tough? Where would we be, if every time we were in a storm, we just bolted towards saving ourselves? Yes, we would save ourselves, but no one else. How many marriages get discarded because it gets hard, and the immediate answer is to save ourselves? Before we take any drastic measures, weather the storm. It could be that all the things are within reach, including those you may be blaming for the storm, to survive the storm. Once the storm is over, then it is time for introspection, growth.

Sometimes we really have to stretch to trust Godly advice. How much sense did it make to cut the only lifeboat adrift? Yet doing that ensured the sailors stayed on the boat. Sometimes we have to let go of what makes sense in human terms to embrace God's word and advice.

Why did they listen to Paul? He had done no miracle before them. He did have something to offer though, and that was hope. I am sure his character was on display as they worked through the many long days of hanging on to life, but waiting to die.

Listen to Godly advice in the storm and act on it

V 33-38

³³And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. ³⁴Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you." ³⁵And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. ³⁶Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves. ³⁷And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship. ³⁸So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.

Paul serves communion.

Luke would be the only one on that ship to make this connection, and he does not miss.

Paul is not Jesus with the disciples in the boat and the storm they were terrified by. Jesus calmed the storm. Paul does not have this power, but he does unite the ship in purpose by breaking bread and sharing a meal. We now have the sailors back on task, and they begin to do their part. At this point the ship and cargo are counted as loss.

Storms bring us face to face with the reality of what has value and is truly important.

The hope in unloading the ship is that it will now ride higher in the water thus make it further inland to minimize the time in the water. They are still at anchor, waiting to know what lies in front of them. Side note, there are very few places you could set an anchor from those days and it would hold against this kind of storm. It just so happens that the sea floor in this area has a large amount of clay in it, this then would hold anchors. It is extremely rare for that to occur at the depths they are at.

V 39-44

Shipwrecked on Malta

³⁹When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. ⁴⁰And they let go the anchors and left *them* in the sea, meanwhile losing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. ⁴¹But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

⁴²And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape.⁴³ But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump *overboard* first and get to land, ⁴⁴and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

Daylight comes and they see a way. The actions had to be coordinated as there would be no time to drift with the storm further. They have a target and they are going to have

to "power" into it. They are aiming at what is now called St Paul's Bay. As it turns out the same sea floor with a high clay content exists where the ship stuck and held.

(12 high altitude of Malta and Sicilia)

(13 Closer view of Malta)

Side note: I do have experience with beaching a boat in rough water. Not nearly on this scale, but we sacrificed an engine and outdrive to to get to the beach. One wave.

A storm does not make you who you are, it reveals your character

The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners, as they would be held accountable for any of the prisoners who were lost.

For the soldiers, it was common to give them the same punishment as their prisoner was to receive if they let them escape. Many if not most of the other prisoners were likely sentenced to death, thus killing the prisoners was a form of self preservation. Julius becomes a key figure in this chapter.

A friendship formed in the storms of life may be very important to you

Wouldn't it be interesting to speak with Julius sometime after this event? Perhaps even after Paul's death (most agree Paul was martyred, and likely by beheading) How could you not be impacted by being with Paul on this voyage. Paul earned the respect of Julius. It would not have gone un-noticed that Paul became the captain of that ship.

Take aways:

Storms do not make you who you are, they reveal your character (can you see yourself in any of the people in this chapter?

Storms make us realize what is really important. I look at this chapter and reflect on the storms in my life. Wow, am I humbled at my petty, self preserving attitude towards many of those storms.

Friendships formed in the storm should not be ignored (Luke and Aristarchus volunteer to go with Paul, Julius and Paul. Julius knew when to let Paul lead.)

Listen to Godly advice in the storm and act on it

Don't be surprised by the reactions of self preservation, unless we have an eternal focus, it will likely be the common reaction. We should not fault those around us who

may respond this way. Without hope in Christ, and eternity, all you have is yourself and what is around you at the moment.

Don't leave the ship. God is sovereign, he has a plan, and it includes all of us.

Examples

The storms of life show us what is important:

Acts 2 The early church after the crucifixion and resurrection we are told

They sold all their possessions and lived in community

Storms do not make you who you are, they reveal your character

How was Paul able to endure what he did?

Foreshadowing

We are told that Ananias was told he would open Paul's eyes so that Christ would "show him how much he would suffer for the sake of my name"

A death for Christ did not have to be scary ordeal

Maybe we have to go back to Acts 7 and we are told about how Stephen died for Christ. Stephen looked to heaven and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "And as they were stoning him, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do hold this sin against them." **And when he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was consenting to his death.**

II Corinthians 11:8

I have served more prison sentences! I have been beaten times without number. I have faced death again and again.

4 I have been beaten the regulation thirty-nine stripes by the Jews five times.

25 I have been beaten with rods three times. I have been stoned once. I have been shipwrecked three times. I have been twenty-four hours in the open sea.

26-27 In my travels I have been in constant danger from rivers and floods, from bandits, from my own countrymen, and from pagans. I have faced danger in city streets, danger in the

desert, danger on the high seas, danger among false Christians. I have known exhaustion, pain, long vigils, hunger and thirst, going without meals, cold and lack of clothing.

28-29 Apart from all external trials I have the daily burden of responsibility for all the churches. Do you think anyone is weak without my feeling his weakness? Does anyone have his faith upset without my longing to restore him?