

Words to Live By

Acts 27:1-25, Sunday AM, February 26, 2023

Prelude – Scripture: Acts 27:1-27:25 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius.² And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica.³ The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care.⁴ From there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary.⁵ When we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia.⁶ There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it.⁷ When we had sailed slowly for a good many days, and with difficulty had arrived off Cnidus, since the wind did not permit us to go farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone;⁸ and with difficulty sailing past it we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.⁹ When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul began to admonish them,¹⁰ and said to them, “Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.”¹¹ But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship than by what was being said by Paul.¹² Because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to put out to sea from there, if somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.¹³ When a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had attained their purpose, they weighed anchor and began sailing along Crete, close inshore.¹⁴ But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo;¹⁵ and when the ship was caught in it and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and let ourselves be driven along.¹⁶ Running under the shelter of a small island called Claudia, we were scarcely able to get the ship’s boat under control.¹⁷ After they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship; and fearing that they might run aground on the shallows of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor and in this way let themselves be driven along.¹⁸ The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo;¹⁹ and on the third day they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands.²⁰ Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.²¹ When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, “Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss.”²² “Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.”²³ “For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me,²⁴ saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.’”²⁵ “Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.

And now, there is finally an end to the death plots from the Jews and to the endless waiting. Paul is heading toward Caesar and Rome. But that’s not all that has happened during these years of captivity. His trials have placed him before the Jewish religious leaders, influential officers in the Roman army, and most recently, before governors Felix and Festus and King Agrippa. Paul didn’t merely defend himself and complain about the system. Time and again, Paul testified of the gospel of **the hope and resurrection of the dead**, of the **hope of the promise made by God to our fathers**. He spoke of God’s great mercy in saving him from the wrath he deserved and in giving him the mission of delivering that same message of reconciliation so they too could have their eyes opened turning them **from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God**. Those who received the message gained **forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Christ**. Remember his confident words? ²² “So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; ²³ that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” What crosses your mind as I recount Paul’s testimony? Does it affect you? It DID affect those listening. While Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad.” I’m “not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth.” ²⁶ “For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner. ²⁷ “King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do.” “In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian.” “I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains.” Far from cautiously protecting himself, Paul builds on what these men know about God, calling them to bow to the truthfulness of these claims and submit to God. There is no true hearing of God’s Word that doesn’t demand a response. As we begin this morning, worship the power of God to reconcile you to Himself through the work of Christ. Know His mercy instead of His wrath.

*Hymn #196: There is a Fountain

How was Paul treated as he was herded off with other prisoners for the trip to Rome? We don’t know much, but our passage says he was allowed to see friends along the way. He was not alone, but friends alone would not be enough for faithfulness and joy in service for what lay ahead. God was with him! Does God go with you? What? Do you mean the facts of who God is and what He does, or His presence? YES. Your theology must LIVE. Sing not only the presence of God, but worship God for all He is and does for those who trust in Him as Lord.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): O Lord My Rock and My Redeemer *Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Declare His Glory Scripture:

Romans 8:18–39 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.¹⁸ For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.¹⁹ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.²⁴ For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.²⁶ In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?³³ Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies;³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?³⁶ Just as it is written, “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Offering: *Doxology:

WHY is Paul on a boat to Rome as prisoner? Paul, couldn’t you have defended yourself differently? Perhaps, but he was so consumed with the mission given him and a gospel worth giving all to spread. God was great/glorious. Declare His glory among the nations. But that greatness was not distant. The security Paul knew came first from the love of God toward Him and then from the trustworthiness of God’s promises to him for the future.³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Believing this, no wonder Paul could speak so confidently of the love of God for those who are His.³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.³⁸ For I am convinced that nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. This love ran under and through ALL—trials, death threats, and today, a storm. Do you know the gospel? Are you saved? It’s not merely a possession, it is a living reality—God’s love shown through Christ makes ALL your pain and sacrifice secondary. Yes, it’s real, but it does NOT fill the screen. His love fills that screen and calls you to live for what is beyond that suffering. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Sing the love of God.

***Hymn #512: My Savior's Love**

What a storm today. Even the weathered seaman were scared for their lives. But GOD was with them. Listen as pastor preaches of the angel sent by God to encourage Paul. But the angel is not the focus. God is the focus. He promised His own He would be with them. Remember? Lo, I'm with you always, even to the end of the age. Jesus is not a teddy bear—He's the Lion and the Lamb. First you must face God as your Judge and find yourself coming up short. Then, you can see His gracious means of reconciliation, come to Him, live for and under Him and then know the protection and provision of God. He is for you! Nothing can separate God's children from His love !

***Hymn (Powerpoint): Jesus Strong and Kind**

Message: Words to Live By Acts 27:1-25

***Hymn #271: Standing on the Promises Prayer**