

Lessons from a Shipwreck

Acts 27:26-44 Sunday AM, March 12, 2023

Prelude – Scripture: Acts 27:18-44 The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo;¹⁸ and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.¹⁹ 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.²⁰ 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.²¹ 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."²² "For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me,²³ saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.'²⁴ "Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told."²⁵ "But we must run aground on a certain island."²⁶ But when the fourteenth night came, as we were being driven about in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors *began* to surmise that they were approaching some land.²⁷ They took soundings and found it to be twenty fathoms; and a little farther on they took another sounding and found it to be fifteen fathoms.²⁸ Fearing that we might run aground somewhere on the rocks, they cast four anchors from the stern and wished for daybreak.²⁹ But as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship and had let down the *ship's* boat into the sea, on the pretense of intending to lay out anchors from the bow,³⁰ Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved."³¹ Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the *ship's* boat and let it fall away.³² Until the day was about to dawn, Paul was encouraging them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have been constantly watching and going without eating, having taken nothing."³³ "Therefore I encourage you to take some food, for this is for your preservation, for not a hair from the head of any of you will perish."³⁴ Having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and he broke it and began to eat.³⁵ All of them were encouraged and they themselves also took food.³⁶ All of us in the ship were two hundred and seventy-six persons.³⁷ When they had eaten enough, they *began* to lighten the ship by throwing out the wheat into the sea.³⁸ When day came, they could not recognize the land; but they did observe a bay with a beach, and they resolved to drive the ship onto it if they could.³⁹ And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea while at the same time they were loosening the ropes of the rudders; and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they were heading for the beach.⁴⁰ But striking a reef where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern *began* to be broken up by the force of the waves.⁴¹ The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none of them would swim away and escape;⁴² but the centurion, wanting to bring Paul safely through, kept them from their intention, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land,⁴³ and the rest *should follow*, some on planks, and others on various things from the ship. And so it happened that they all were brought safely to land.⁴⁴

We've followed Paul on mission as he proclaims to the Gentiles the gospel of reconciliation with God through Jesus and new life through the power of the Spirit of God lived to the glory of God. Most of the Jews didn't get it, but not because Paul doesn't try. All the credentials a Jew would want to trust the biblical reasoning of Paul to persuade them, but it was not enough. But now Paul is in the hands of the Roman government. First the Roman commander, then governors Felix and Festus, King Agrippa, and now back in the hands of a Roman commander on the way to stand before Caesar. But these large events encompassing a couple of years seem so far in the past as we now the storm shrinks our focus to minutes, hours, and days. Storms tend to shrink our focus. What good is your past when you are fighting for your life in the present. What good are future plans if you are not sure about existing the next hour. Last week, we talked about the Providence of God, and it is living under this Providence that leads Paul to speak with hope in the midst of chaos and fear. An angel of God came to Paul saying, '**Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.**' So what do you do with this? Tell everyone you had a weird dream? Argue about whether God reveals Himself this way? No, it goes beyond the incident. We are talking about a very present God who is watching and working to bring about His good plan. Acknowledging that along with what He has said and done in the past gives confidence to think clearly and continue living inside and toward that will in the present. And THIS is what Paul does.²⁵ "**Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.**

Trust God's Providence! Then trust and obey His Word! That's a firm foundation for living in God's world.

*Hymn #275: How Firm a Foundation

It's the 14th night—2 weeks of storm. No sun or stars for much of this time, and with it, a loss of sense of exactly where you are and where you need to go. How do you sleep? What and when do you eat? Even with exhausting work to keep the boat afloat, there is too much time to think about how, when, and where you might die. Any order along with any sense of roles dissipate as the storm drags out everything but survival. People start thinking individually, sailors seek to escape the ship—the lifeboat is lowered to the sea. Chaos—little reasoned thinking other than "we've got to get out of here." Paul again speaks up, "**Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved.**" If you are living under God, then you need to keep His order. If it seems impossible, a class I attended this week covering the lament psalms reminded us that it's okay to complain/to cry out. Just do it to the One who can do something about it. Remember the psalmist in Psalm 55, **17 Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, And He will hear my voice. 18 He will redeem my soul in peace from the battle which is against me, For they are many who strive with me.** NASB95 Cry to God. He hears and His actions will be on your behalf inside His Providence as you are seek to obey Him.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): Master the Tempest is Raging *Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Precious Lord Scripture: Psalm 66

For the choir director. A Song. A Psalm. 1 Shout joyfully to God, all the earth: 2 Sing the glory of His name; Make His praise glorious. 3 Say to God, "How awesome are Your works! Because of the greatness of Your power Your enemies will give feigned obedience to You. 4 "All the earth will worship You, And will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your name." Selah. 5 Come and see the works of God, Who is awesome in His deeds toward the sons of men. 6 He turned the sea into dry land; They passed through the river on foot; There let us rejoice in Him! 7 He rules by His might forever; His eyes keep watch on the nations; Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah. 8 Bless our God, O peoples, And sound His praise abroad, 9 Who keeps us in life And does not allow our feet to slip. 10 For You have refined us, O God; You have refined us as silver is refined. 11 You brought us into the net; You laid an oppressive burden upon our loins. 12 You made men ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water, Yet You brought us out into a place of abundance. 13 I shall come into Your house with burnt offerings; I shall pay You my vows, 14 Which my lips uttered And my mouth spoke when I was in distress. 15 I shall offer to You burnt offerings of fat beasts, With the smoke of rams; I shall make an offering of bulls with male goats. Selah. 16 Come and hear, all who fear God, And I will tell of what He has done for my soul. 17 I cried to Him with my mouth, And He was extolled with my tongue. 18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear; 19 But certainly God has heard; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer. 20 Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer Nor His lovingkindness from me.

Offering: *Doxology:

Now that we are all staying on the boat, EAT! You haven't eaten well in fourteen days. You must. It is **for your preservation**. Why eat if I'm not going to live. Paul doesn't live in that world. He lives under God's promise. Here, he has been told that he will be in Rome and that no lives will be lost. Then we must continue caring about all the seemingly normal, mundane parts of ordered living even when things seem out of control. Not only does he tell them to eat, Paul took bread, broke it, and gave thanks to God **in the presence of all**. This, combined with His eating widened their perspective, and they were encouraged and ate. Paul was a light in the middle of a crooked and perverse generation. Crooked, not merely because of evil actions, but because of no absolute that comes from living under God's good, providential rule. Church, do what you were saved to do and praise the Lord right now for what He IS and HAS done. Do it NOW, right in the middle of any storms you are facing. **5 Come and see the works of God, Who is awesome in His deeds toward the sons of men. 6 He turned the sea into dry land; They passed through the river on foot; There let us rejoice in Him! 7 He rules by His might forever;** This God is MY God. Learn this song with me.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): O Give Thanks

Now that we've thanked God for His provision, get back to work. But not just work, HIS work—looking to Him for what He values in your circumstance. This will keep you focused even in the face of new dangers that seem to threaten the promises of God like the soldiers wanting to kill the prisoners so they wouldn't escape. No, look to Jesus. His call calms your fears and gives you something to do right now. Contemplate this as Pastor prepares to preach on lessons from a shipwreck.

***Hymn #375: Jesus Calls Us**

Message: Lessons from a Shipwreck Acts 27:26-44

***Hymn #46: God Leads Us Along**

Prayer