

"The Road to Rome"**Part 12****Acts 22-28**

Introduction: The last time we were together we started into Acts chapter 27. It is in this chapter that we find Paul on a ship headed to Rome to stand before Ceasar. God sees this journey as very important because He inspires Luke to record many details and this journey takes up all of chapter 27 as well as the first 16 verses of chapter 28. Chapter 27 of Acts could be called the "Storm Stories of the Apostle Paul", and the reason is because in this chapter we do not go very far until we find the ship in the midst of a great storm. In our last study we discussed how storms are part of our lives as we pass through this world that is under the curse.

Job 5:7

⁷Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

We all pass through storms, and it is important that we understand that each and every storm is permitted by our Lord. Each storm is for a purpose. It can be for chastening, it can be redirection, or it can be for the purpose of refining us. Notice the words of Job concerning the storms that he faced in his life.

Job 23:10

*¹⁰But he knoweth the way that I take: **when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.***

The storm and all that happened on Paul's journey to Rome had purpose. It was not wasted by the Lord. In the storm there were 276 men that would witness the grace and the power of God.

As we come to our study tonight, I want to revisit some of what we looked at the last time.

"The Storm"**Part 2****Notice Acts 27:1-12**

There is something here that I want to look at one more time with some different thoughts. Paul had a great deal of experience when it came to sailing.

2 Corinthians 11:25

²⁵ *Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, **thrice I suffered shipwreck**, a night and a day I have been in the deep;*

Paul knew the seas and therefore when he admonished the men on the ship not to sail, he knew what he was talking about. But the majority overruled his words, and they would sail right into the face of the storm.

Application:

As I meditated upon this text I thought about how this applies to our lives. Have you ever watched someone face decisions in life and deep down inside you knew that if they chose the wrong path it would lead to a “shipwreck”? You give your learned advice, but you get overruled and those you are advising are set on moving in the direction that they desire to go. What do you do? We need to follow Paul’s example and surrender the situation into the hands of the Lord. Paul did not try to force the situation. He spoke the truth and left it in God’s hands. We must keep in mind that God can use the “shipwreck” to bring a person to Jesus Christ or He can use it just to bring a struggling believer back to where they need to be. It is in the “shipwrecks” of life that God often shows forth His mighty power. Many times, we overstep our bounds, and we then interfere with the plan of God. Our intentions are good, and we might be trying to prevent our loved ones from experiencing deep heartache, but it might just be the heartache that God will use to do what He desires to do in their lives. Keep in mind that some people need to hit rock bottom before they begin to look up.

Now let us keep in mind that Paul is directly in the center of the will of God for his life. With that said let us notice some verses pertaining to this storm.

Notice Acts 27:9

There was danger involved.

Notice Acts 27:14

Here we see that there was a tempestuous wind meaning a strong head wind.

Notice Acts 27:17

There was fear involved.

Looking at these verses we can understand that storms bring uncomfortable situations. They take away our comfort zones. This is a good thing. You and I can find ourselves in a spiritual rut if we are not often challenged. Therefore, when the storms come, they challenge our faith which is good for us because when True faith is tried it will grow stronger.

James 1:3-4

³ *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*

⁴ *But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

1 Peter 1:6-7

⁶ *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*

⁷ *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

There is yet something else that storms do in our lives.

Notice Acts 27:13-20, 38.

They had to cast out the tackling of the ship as well as the wheat that was on the ship. The tackling was the furniture that had weight to it. They were doing what they could to raise the ship higher so that it would not run aground. They also tossed out the wheat. This was a wheat ship and that was where their paycheck would come from. But in this storm that was not important. It was all about survival.

Application:

Storms have a way of changing our priorities. It is in the storms of life that we learn what is important and what is not. Without storms the human heart will often focus upon the things of the world. As we know these things will all pass away.

Matthew 6:19-21

¹⁹ *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*

²⁰ *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*

²¹ *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

The word “rust” in verse 19 means “to eat”. The people in Jesus’ day invested in three things. Garments, grain, and gold. The moths could destroy the garments, the rodents and worms could eat the grain, and the thieves could dig up the gold wherever it was hidden and that was often in the walls of their houses. Jesus’ point in this section is the heart. If we are not tried in the storms of life, we can allow our focus to be upon “stuff” and then “stuff” consumes the heart. But let a storm come and shake the man’s life and in the storm the man will realize that “stuff” is not that important, but things of eternity are of great importance. When the storms come upon people we often focus upon material losses when we should consider the spiritual gains.

Notice Acts 27:21-26

In these verses we see something very interesting. Before the storm hit it was the centurion and the others on the ship that were calling the shots. But now we see that Paul has come to the place where he is leading and they are listening to him.

Application:

Storms can bring about one of two reactions in a person’s life. They can make you better or they can make you bitter. Too many people become bitter when there are storms in their lives. They become bitter toward the people around them, or they become bitter toward God and blame Him for the change that has come into their lives. I have watched people become bitter toward almost everyone around them when their world was shaken up. If you desire to see the true character of an individual just watch how they respond in the midst of the storms. Storms will reveal what is in the heart of the person.

Illustration:

If you have a cup with a tea bag in it and you pour in boiling water, you will then have a cup of tea. If you do not like the taste of the tea because it is bitter, it is not because of the boiling water but because of the tea bag. You need to change the tea bag so that you get tea that is not bitter. In the same way when we get into hot water experiences in life/storms/trials/challenges and there is a bitterness that shows up in our lives it is the fault of the storm. It is a problem of the heart. The heart must be changed in order to get a sweeter experience. Paul did not show forth bitterness in the storm, but he continued to show for the sweetness of the Holy Spirit. How could he do this, what was the key to his response? His relationship with the Lord and his surrender to the Holy Spirit.

The more we know our Lord the greater the peace in the midst of the storms and the less bitterness will flow from our lives.

Isaiah 26:3

³Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Philippians 4:6-9

⁶Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

⁷And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

⁹Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

As we get back to our text, we can see that Paul had three anchors to keep him solid in the storm.

1. The anchor of identity.

Notice Acts 27:23

Paul knew that he belonged to God. He was God's property. He understood that God would do what was best with His property in this situation.

Matthew 6:27-33

²⁷Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

²⁸And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

²⁹And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

³⁰Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

³¹ *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

³² *(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

³³ *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

2. The anchor of service.

Notice Acts 27:23 again.

Paul knew he was in God's will and he was on a mission from God. Therefore, he would be kept by God until the mission was complete. This is also true for us. We are here for a purpose and a time, and our lives are preserved until our mission is over.

Revelation 11:3, 7

³ *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.*

⁷ *And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.*

3. The anchor of trust.

Notice Acts 27:23-25

Paul knew what God said, and he believed God would be true to His Word.

Conclusion:

The storms will come and when they do it is the believer who is close to the Lord that will stand and rise above the storm.

Psalms 61:1-3

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

² *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

³ *For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.*