

"The Road to Rome"

Part 15

Acts 22-28

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts 28 we sat on the island of Milita where Paul and the other 275 men on the ship landed after the shipwreck. When they arrived the inhabitants of the island were very friendly and built a fire to warm them. Keep in mind it is late October, and it is raining. As the fire burned Paul helped by gathering sticks and as he was close to the fire a venomous snake bit him and held on. He simply shook the snake into the fire and was not affected by the bite. This amazed the islanders because they expected him to swell up and die.

Notice Acts 28:1-6

In this we looked at how to deal with snake bites in our own lives. Last week I told you that Paul shook off more than one snake. He shook off three snakes.

1. The snake of crisis.
2. The snake of criticism.
3. The snake of cynicism.

➤ **Three months on the island**

Notice Acts 28:7

In the area they were in there was land that belonged to the chief man of the island, a man named Publius. He then received them and lodged them courteously which means he treated them as long-time friends and he showed great hospitality.

Notice Acts 28:8

This man's father had dysentery and Paul laid hands on him and healed him. There are several thoughts here that we need to consider. First of all, let us notice that Paul prayed before he laid hands on him. Paul prayed before he acted.

Application:

This is the pattern that we are to follow in our lives. We should seek the will of God before we act. Many have neglected to invite God into the situation that they were facing

and for that reason they learned that they were not in the will of God and the choice they made put them in a very difficult situation.

Jonah 1:1-5

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

² Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

³ But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

⁴ But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

⁵ Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

Jonah found himself in the middle of a storm as he made the choice to step outside the will of God.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The second point to consider from this verse is that God chose to heal Publius' father, but he allowed Paul and all on the ship to experience shipwreck.

Application:

God works differently in our individual lives. In one person's life he may calm a storm and in another person's life he may allow them to experience shipwreck. He may lead us through a major storm while He chooses to completely heal the person sitting next to us. How am I to face the times when I am not healed or the times when the storm is so severe

that it feels like my life will be torn apart, when I look to my neighbor and his life looks to be filled with blessings? Let us be reminded of what Moses recorded.

Deuteronomy 32:4

⁴ *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*

No matter what we face and no matter what we must go through we can be sure that our God always does what is right and what is best for each of us. Notice what David wrote.

Psalms 145:17-18

¹⁷ *The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

¹⁸ *The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.*

Notice Acts 28:9

The word "healed" here is not the same word as in the previous verse. Some believe that this word means these people were treated and possibly by Doctor Luke. If this was the case, then this was the first medical missionary ministry. Notice the words of Swindoll.

"A cursory reading of the event could leave us with the impression that everyone who came received a similar miracle. Not so. The original term used by Dr. Luke to describe the people's being "cured" is altogether different from the one he used for Publius' father. The latter word is the word from which we get our English word, "therapy." One reputable source writes: "It might better be translated...were treated. It suggests not miraculous healings but medical treatment, probably at the hands of Luke the physician."

This goes right back to our previous thought. God can heal a person instantaneously or He may choose a slower healing or maybe it is His will to not heal at all. Whatever God's will is we can be sure it is perfect and good.

Notice Acts 28:10-11

Paul and the others were honored with many honors and were given things that were needful. Keep in mind that they had lost everything but their lives in the storm. After three months they departed the island.

Application:

I want to pause here and consider some thoughts from the island experience. We are never told that Paul preached the Gospel to these people, but we can be sure he did and one day we will most likely meet some of the island people in heaven. The healings were for the purpose of proving that the message of the Gospel was authentic. Keep in mind that the miracles in the book of Acts were to validate the message of the Apostles. Satan had raised up false apostles and the church needed to know how to distinguish between the true Apostles and the false. The Apostolic gifts would allow the people to know the true Apostles. Jesus Himself used His miracles to prove He was who he claimed to be.

Matthew 9:2-7

² *And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*

³ *And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.*

⁴ *And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*

⁵ *For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?*

⁶ *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.*

⁷ *And he arose, and departed to his house.*

Getting back to the point, the miracles of healing would have confirmed the message of the Gospel that Paul preached on the island. We are not however given any details of his preaching. Why? Because the Holy Spirit desires for us to see something else. In the storm and the time, they spent on the island we can see that God continued to meet the needs. Therefore, as we continue our journey through life and as we face storms and even shipwrecks, God can use whoever He desires to meet our needs. That is one of the points we are to learn from their time on the island.

Philippians 4:19

¹⁹ *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Let me remind you of what the unsaved islanders provided.

Notice Acts 28:2 - Warmth and shelter.

Notice Acts 28:7 – Lodging.

Notice Acts 28:10 – Supplies.

Let us now get back to our text.

Notice Acts 28:11-13

Castor and Pollux were pagan navigation gods that were attached to the front of the ship. "Fetched a compass" means they compassed around the end of the island.

Notice Acts 28:14

Here is an interesting verse. They searched and found believers in this area, and they spent 7 days with them. These people therefore had a seven-day Bible conference with Paul teaching every day. There is a question that comes up here. How did these people get the Gospel? We are not told exactly but we can piece together some facts.

Acts 2:1-5, 10.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

¹⁰ Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

These people carried the Gospel back to Rome and it spread to many others.

Application:

As we read this, we can see what a difference a few people can make when they are willing to speak the Truth of the Gospel into the lives of others. Here the Gospel traveled over

1400 miles from Jerusalem as it was carried by a few people from Rome. It was shared and now 145 miles from Rome there is a church.

Matthew 16:17-18

¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

¹⁸ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Notice Acts 28:15

When word traveled that Paul and company were in the land believers came out to meet them. Notice closely that this meeting caused Paul to take courage. This means Paul became filled with confidence. What a testimony this was to Paul to see how far the Gospel had traveled and what a difference it made.

Conclusion/application:

Some day we will know how God used our service, and we will rejoice in that. But for now, we must learn from passages such as this, and we must walk by faith and believe that what we are doing for the Lord does make a difference. Like the Apostles on the day of Pentecost we cannot see beyond the day we are in. But as we serve the Lord, we can be sure that even after we are gone God will use the effort we poured into serving him.

Galatians 6:9

⁹ And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.