

WEATHERING THE STORM Sunday School- November 11, 2012

Unifying Topic: PAUL SAILS FOR ROME

Lesson Text

I. The Voyage To Rome Begins (Acts 27:1-2)

II. Paul Encourages The Men (Acts 27:33-38)

III. Shipwrecked But Saved (Acts 27:39-44)

The Main Thought: And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land. (Acts 27:44, KJV).

Unifying Principle: In times of crises, our panic can lead us to behave irrationally. What helps us avoid panic and act with a level head? Paul's confidence in God's faithfulness enabled him to act calmly and assure all the ship's passengers that they would survive the storm.

Lesson Aim: To examine Paul's faith during the storm and assess how it served him on board the ship in ensuring his and the other passengers' safe arrival to dry land.

Life Aim: To encourage participants to trust in God through all of their trials, regardless of what they may be.

27:1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

27:2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

27:33 For And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

27:34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

27:35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

27:36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.

27:37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

27:38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

27:39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

27:40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

27:41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

27:42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

27:43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:

27:44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

HISTORY:

Paul's innocence has been declared and verified again mind you by Roman officials. However, because he had appealed his case to Caesar, it had become a formality to carry it out. He is now headed to Rome to make his **sixth** defense or plea before a group of people.

LESSON:

Acts 27:1-2 The Voyage To Rome Begins

27:1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. The time has arrived when Paul is to go to Rome along with other prisoners under the guard of Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. Julius may have been on detached duty, performing such tasks as escorting important prisoners. This would be the last journey for Paul. Never again would he return to his beloved Palestine and people, not as far as Acts is concerned. The fact that the prisoners were being shipped to Rome for trial would mean...

- that some had appealed to Caesar just as Paul had.
- that others were condemned to appear as combatants in the gladiatorial shows of the Roman arena to feed the immoral and violent cravings of the populace (*general public*).

Note how the believer is counted among the worthless, the violators, the useless, and the prisoners of society.

27:2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. The group took passage on a ship from Adramyttium. The

Adramyttium refers to a seaport on the Aegean opposite the island of Lesbos. The ship was to hug the coastline, stopping at ports all along the coast unloading and loading cargo. It was only temporary transportation until Julius could find a larger ship in one of the ports that was heading directly for Rome, Italy. Paul had allowed two traveling associates to accompany Paul: Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica as a servant, and some say Luke as his physician.

Our lesson skips: — The ship had come into danger. ¹After 14 days of drifting on the Mediterranean Sea the sailors realized that they were getting near land (v. 27). In the middle of the fourteenth night of the storm, the crewmen tested the waters and discovered that they were approaching land (v. 28). So in the darkness of the night they dropped their anchors and waited for daylight, hoping that they might make it to the shore safely (vv. 29-30). Under this tremendous pressure some were about to jump overboard, and Paul warned them that they would not live unless they remained with the ship (vv. 31-32).

Acts 27:33-38 Paul Encourages The Men

27:33 For And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. The scene begins with the beginning of daybreak. Paul urges all on the ship to eat. Going through a storm is very difficult. And those that had become seasick and had difficulty preparing food caused the passengers and crew to not eat anything; they fasted for two weeks (14 days). However, soon, they would have to swim to the shore and they needed strength.

27:34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. Paul encourages the ones on the ship to eat some meat for their health. He used a common Jewish saying, so all would understand that he meant business by telling them "*not an hair fall from the head of any of you.*" Paul knew that fear was upon the men but he is still demonstrating his faith in the midst of the storm. The invitation to eat was extended by Paul, and the assurance of God's saving promise (vv.23-25) and power was given again.

27:35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Paul focuses upon God—giving thanks to God in the midst of them all, not quietly, but boldly and loudly before eating the bread. He breaks it and then eats it, just as he had seen his Master the Lord Jesus Christ do. Paul being among non-Christians was not ashamed to honor God. The word says, "*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven*" Matt.10:32.

27:36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. Those on the ship began to rejoice because of the encouragement Paul had given them. They all were of good cheer as they ate the meat. Paul, the prisoner was the one who compelled them to rely on God, eat meat and give God thanks at a time in their lives when they thought they were going to die; even the centurion saw this. Paul's action speaks for itself.

27:37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. Could you imagine 276 passengers probably on a small ship? When Paul was speaking, all of them were listening and trusted the one that had faith because he trusted God, the faithful One.

27:38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea. Now that they had eaten their fill, they began to lighten the ship by throwing all the cargo overboard—the wheat was cast overboard so the ship could go over the waves more easily. Therefore the ship's owner's attempt to bring his cargo to Rome in time to get the best price had now totally failed.

Acts 27:39-44 Shipwrecked But Saved

27:39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. Daybreak had come but they didn't recognize the coastline, but noticed a bay with a beach and wondered whether they could get between the rocks and be driven up onto the beach. They took counsel as to whether they could attempt to run the ship safely into the shore.

27:40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. They finally decided to try. They let the anchors go into the sea, hoisted the mainsail and headed for the beach. The rudder bands were loosed (two large steering oars on either side of the ship) and they attempted to make the shore with a small "foresail." ²*The mainsail (foresail) being hoisted showed good judgment, though the distance was so small, as it would not only enable them to steer more correctly than without it, but would press the ship farther on upon the land, and thus enable them the more easily to get to*

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/peer-pressure-adds-to-the-present-peril/>

² <http://bible.cc/acts/27-40.htm>

*the shore*¹ (Penrose).

27:41 And falling into a place where two seas met, —Being carried by the wind and waves into a place where two seas met, they didn't make it. This was ³where two bodies of water joined. This was due to a small island on the coast of the larger, Salmonetta on the coast of Malta. When they moved into the bay, they did not see the inlet coming in on the other side of Salmonetta, but when they saw it, they saw that two seas met. This is called an "*isthmus*" because the Sea touches it on both sides. **27:41b ...they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.** They ran the ship aground and the "*forepart*" (bow) was stuck in the sand and could not be moved, while the force of the waves against the "*hinder part*" (stern) began breaking the ship in two. Why did God not just allow the ship to make it safely to shore without wrecking?; Why was the trial made so difficult for the crew and passengers?; Very simply...

- trials are used by God to cause men to turn to Him for salvation.
- trials prove that a person really trusts God.
- trials make a believer stronger so he can stand against even tougher trials in the future and demonstrate the presence and power of God to a greater degree. The world needs to see the demonstration of God's presence and power, and the only way they can see it is in the life of believers as they go through trials.

27:42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. The soldiers were governed by a law. It was a merciless law, a code of the world that was devoid of morality. They, the soldiers themselves were held accountable, and would be killed themselves if any of their prisoners escaped. Had Paul not stepped to the forefront as he had and won the confidence of the centurion, all the prisoners would have been put to death by the soldiers' counsel.

27:43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: A respect and friendship developed between Paul and Julius, the centurion. Note how God overruled both the soldiers' plan to kill the prisoners and the shipwreck to fulfill His promise and Word. The centurion however, willing to save Paul and many of those who could swim did so. Everyone had to leave the ship, but the ones that could swim were the first to get in the water before it completely broke up.

27:44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land. Some people could swim, so they swam to the beach. Some people could not swim, they held on to objects that floated; pieces of the boat. So they too got to the beach. Nobody drowned. Everyone was safe. God did exactly what he had said and promised. He saved everyone and vindicated His messenger. But note: each one had to go through the frightening trial of being shipwrecked and scrambling to shore. The storm was weathered only by trusting God's messenger.

SUMMARY:

Paul never seemed to be able to do anything half-heartedly and the journey to Rome is itself an exciting and unusual story. At the determined time, Paul and a group of prisoners had collected at the headquarters of the Roman official in Caesarea, and they were sent to Rome under the charge of Julius, a centurion, and the cohort of Augustus' band. Aristarchus and Luke accompanied Paul. The group took passage on a ship from Adramyttium which was a port near Troas on the Asian coast (27:1-2).

A storm has arisen with all those that had embarked upon the ship. ⁴As the day dawned, Paul encouraged them to eat. It had been fourteen days since they had eaten. Paul indicated they needed food for nourishment and survival. He reminded them they all would be safe. Paul then took bread, gave thanks to God, and began to eat before them. They were all encouraged by Paul and ate as well. After they had eaten enough, they threw the wheat into the sea to lighten the ship. There were two hundred seventy-six people aboard the ship (27:33-38).

At daylight, they saw a bay with a beach, though they did not recognize the land. They desired to drive the ship onto the beach. They let the anchors go into the sea, hoisted the main sail, and headed for the beach. The ship ran aground "where two seas met" and the "prow stuck fast" - the ship was immovable. The waves violently began to break up the ship. The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to keep any from escaping. The centurion stopped the soldiers' plan. He wanted to save Paul. The centurion commanded all who could swim to jump overboard and swim for shore. The rest floated on boards or parts of the ship. They all escaped safely to the island (27:39-44).

APPLICATION: Paul, a prisoner was the one who compelled all on the ship to rely on God, and give thanks at a time in their lives when they thought they were going to die. Our journey may start off ruff, but Jesus will get us to our destination when we carry Him on the ship. Pray and be encouraged with His Word in your ruff times to weather all your storms!

³ <http://bible.cc/acts/27-41.htm>

⁴ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_27.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>