

**ACTS**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Acts chapter 27 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As you may remember from our previous studies, Paul was arrested in Jerusalem by the Roman Commander there on the Temple Mount as the Jews were beating Paul to death. And this Roman Commander rescued Paul from their hands.

While in the Fortress of Antonia there was a plot against Paul's life by over 40 Jews who refused to eat or drink until they have killed Paul with their own hands. This plot was told to the Roman Commander who removed Paul from Jerusalem and brought him to Caesarea, the home and headquarters of Felix the governor.

Now, before Paul went to Caesarea, the Lord told Paul, “**... ‘Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.’**”

Acts 23:11.

But now two years pass, and Paul is still in prison in Caesarea for a crime he did not commit. He has not made it to Rome, not even close!

Also, Felix is no longer governor, Festus has replaced him, and he doesn't know what to do with Paul, he has no charges against him by which he can send Paul to Rome and make his appeal before Caesar Nero.

Because Festus was the new governor, many prominent people came to welcome him to his new position. One of these leaders was King Agrippa. He came to welcome Festus into his new position and since he knew Jewish customs, he is invited to hear Paul and see if he can find something by which they could charge Paul by.

But in the end, they find no crime and yet Paul did appeal to Caesar, and as we are told in Acts 26:32, **“Then Agrippa said to Festus, ‘This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.’”**

Thus, over 2 years after God promised Paul he was to go to Rome, he is now on his way. I am sure this is not the way that Paul expected to go to Rome, but it was what God had in mind.

I realize that as we read these stories we come up with easier ways to do things, but God’s plans and God’s purposes are perfect. And we will see that this evening as we go through Acts chapter 27.

As we open up this evening, Paul is going to board a ship to sail to Italy.

With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Acts chapter 27 beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as Paul is on his way to Rome!

## **ACTS 27**

### **VERSES 1-2**

Now begins Paul’s journey to Rome, just as God encouraged Paul, that he would go to Rome to share the Gospel.

Paul, along with the other prisoners that were heading to Rome, are put into the charge of a Centurion named Julius.

These guys were the best of the best, hand-picked by Caesar Nero and now in charge of these prisoners on their way to Rome.

In verse 1, when it speaks of **“other prisoners”** the Greek word means “others of a different kind.”

It is very possible that these other prisoners that were with Paul were on their way to Rome to die. Paul, on the other hand was going to stand trial before Caesar, he really had no charges against him.

We tend not to focus too much on that point but think about it. These men are going to die. And yet, we see God bring a man named Paul into the picture to share Jesus with them before they die! He could tell these prisoners how to get to heaven and it was only through Jesus! The grace and mercy of God!

Also, along with Paul was Aristarchus who was seized by angry rioters in Ephesus back in Acts 19:29. He also accompanied Paul to Jerusalem with gifts from the Gentile churches for the believers in Jerusalem, and we saw that in Acts 20:4. And he will minister to Paul when he was in prison in Rome, Colossians 4:10.

Now he pays his way and goes with Paul to Rome, probably to be an encouragement to Paul, an aide to Paul.

Also, we see Luke join them. How do I know that? Because we see that in verse 1 of Acts chapter 27 we once again see the personal pronoun “we” and since Luke wrote Acts, he is the one spoken of here.

We are also told that the ship they were on was from Adramyttium, which was a city of Mysia, in the northwest corner of Asia Minor.

Because it was late in the season for sailing, it was difficult to navigate by the stars and sun due to the increasingly cloudy weather. Keep in mind that is how they navigated since they did not have compasses to navigate by.

Thus, they would sail along the coast and use the coast as their map.

VERSE 3

So this Centurion, with his prisoners, entered this ship from Caesarea and covered the eighty miles to Sidon in one day! Again, they are traveling along the coast, which gave them some protection from the Mediterranean Sea, which could be very violent late in the season.

Now this is interesting to me. As they port in Sidon we are told that “**. . . Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him liberty to go to his friends and receive care.**”

Think about that. Paul was a prisoner heading for Rome. Yes, there were no formal charges against him and you could say that was the reason that Julius let him go and see his friends and receive care from them.

But I think Julius also saw that Paul was a man he could trust. Think about it. If Julius let him go and Paul fled, Julius was responsible for him. So I believe that Julius saw that he could trust Paul and because of that he gave him the liberty to go and visit his fellow Christians in Sidon before they set sail again!

I guess you can say that Paul’s godly character and display of Christian love were seen by Julius.

Now let’s make this applicable to our lives. When people come in contact with you, do they trust you, do they see the character of God shining through you, that you are different?

They should and the only way that will happen is as you spend time with the Lord, as you surrender to the Spirit’s leading in your life. Because the more you do, the more of His nature, His character will shine through you!

Now, one more point before we move on. When it says that Julius let Paul not only visit his Christian friends there in Sidon, but also to “**receive care**” the word that Luke uses is a medical term.

It is very possible that Paul was still sick and maybe that is why Festus let Luke accompany Paul to Rome, since Luke was a doctor. But there in Sidon, the brethren cared for Paul's needs as well.

#### VERSES 4-8

As they set sail from Sidon, they continued northward and westward, sailing with the mainland to their right and the island of Cyprus to their left, hoping for some protection from the wind and waves.

And as you can see, sailing from east to west in the Mediterranean Sea was difficult, especially this time of year. The prevailing winds blew from the west, so the ships would sail to the east of Cyprus and proceed with difficulty along the southwest coast of Asia Minor and to the east of Crete.

Now, as they continue westward they port in Myra which is a city in Lycia.

The reason they stopped here was because it was where the grain ships stopped from Alexandria, Egypt before going on to Rome with their shipment of grain.

The ship they were on from Adramyttium wasn't going any further, so Julius boards this Alexandrian ship to complete their journey to Rome.

This was a grain freighter, taking grain grown in Egypt to Italy, as I have said.

According to Hughes, the typical grain freighter of that period was 140 feet long and 36 feet wide with a draft of 33 feet. It had one mast with a big square sail, and instead of what we think of as a rudder, it steered with two paddles on the back part of the ship. They were sturdy, but because of its design, it couldn't sail into the wind.

And, according to Acts 27:37, there were 276 passengers on board, including Paul, Luke and Aristarchus, besides the other prisoners.

As they set sail once again, they continued hugging the coast until the winds prevented them from continuing in this direction, and from Cnidus they sailed southward to the southern part of Crete and stopped in Fair Havens until the weather improved for them.

### VERSES 9-10

As I have said, sailing on the open Mediterranean Sea was dangerous as it got late in the season. In fact, sailing on the open Mediterranean Sea ceased during the winter months, from around mid-November until at least February.

In fact, you would be a fool to travel during this time. It was also very dangerous to travel, even though some did, from around the middle of September until the middle of November, and then, as I have said, they would not sail until the weather improved, sometime in February.

F. F. Bruce makes that very point as he wrote, “The dangerous season for sailing began about September 14 and lasted until November 11; after the latter date all navigation on the open sea came to an end until winter was over.”

Now, just to give you a timeframe of where they were at on the calendar, the Fast was over, which was speaking of the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur which occurred early in October that year, and if the year is 59 A. D., then it would have occurred on October 5<sup>th</sup> that year.

That means that the time for sailing was for the most part, over. It was time to stay in port or face the consequences of sailing during those stormy months.

And Paul, recognizing the danger, said to them, “. . . ‘Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives.’”

Acts 27:10.

How could Paul speak with such confidence about the dangers that were ahead if they continued to sail on? Some say it was the Lord who told him, who warned him of the danger.

That is possible, but we don’t see that in the text here, at least not yet.

I think Paul was speaking from personal experience. You see, the Greek word translated “perceive” in Acts 27:10 means “*to perceive from past experience.*” So again, I think these words of warning were from Paul’s personal experience of sailing!

Keep in mind that Paul has logged some 3,500 miles by sea, gathering in those frequent sailing miles.

Not only that, but he was also involved in three shipwrecks, according to what Paul tells us in II Corinthians 11:25.

How would you like to sail with this guy? I am sure that those frequent sailing miles were taken away!

And we see that Paul warns them not to continue on this journey until the weather improved, until after February, otherwise the ship and the lives of the people on board would be in jeopardy!

Listen to how they responded to these words by Paul.

VERSES 11-12

As Paul gets done speaking, and Julius, the Centurion heard what Paul said, he didn't agree with Paul. But he did listen to the Helmsman and the owner of the ship, and they decided to move on, not to stay in Fair Havens.

Why did he decide to sail on? What was the big deal?

First of all, the name "*Fair Havens*" was not really accurate. What I mean by that is that Fair Havens was not a good place to harbor a ship for there was little protection from the storms that would come. In other words, the ship would be in danger of being torn apart.

Also, Fair Havens was not a fun place, you might say, to stay for a few months. It was a small town and not much to do there.

And lastly, and maybe more importantly, they had much grain on the ship and didn't want to lose this precious cargo by waiting in Fair Havens because of the danger of the ship being torn apart during the storms that would come, since Fair Haven's port offered no protection from these storms. Money is important, and it outweighed the danger of sailing so late in the season, at least in their minds.

And they decided to at least try and make it to Phoenix, which was a harbor of Crete some 40 miles away and more suitable to harbor their ship there for there was protection for the ship from the storms. And they would spend the winter months there, it would be better for the men, there was more for them to do there in Phoenix than in Fair Havens!

Now think about this, try to rationalize this in your mind as they were doing. Phoenix was only 40 miles away, it was on the same island of Crete, and if the weather looked good, they could make it without a problem, or so they thought!



As Christians, that is how we think sometimes, and it is not a good way to think. In Proverbs 3:5-6 we are told, “**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.**”

How important that is for us to understand. That we don't lean on our own understanding of situations, of what we should do. But we would trust in the Lord and let Him direct our paths.

I think those words from Paul were from personal experience, but it doesn't mean that this was his own understanding of the situation. God can use our personal experiences to guide us, to direct us, and I think that is what was going on here with Paul. But no one wanted to listen to his warning.

Look at what happens next!

#### VERSES 13-15

At first the wind blew softly, and in a favorable direction. It looked like it was a perfect time to sail from Fair Havens to Phoenix. Again, it was only 40 miles away!

Make no mistake about it, that's always the way it is. When you don't listen to the Word of the Lord, when you go your own way, when you do your own thing, at first, you're just blown along softly. But when the fierce winds come - which they always do - you're blown away totally.

So as they set sail with the favorable winds, they headed out towards Phoenix, staying close to Crete.

But then their worst nightmare came upon them. A dangerous windstorm came roaring down upon them and it was so famous, these wind storms, that they called them Euroclydon. Not a good thing when they have a name for these storms that blew on the Mediterranean Sea!

Also, the word translated “**tempestuous**” gives us the English word “typhoon.” And, like I have said, sailors called this special wind *Euroclydon*, a hybrid Greek and Latin word that means “a northeasterner.”

All who sailed the Mediterranean Sea feared these storms. And for this ship, they had one main sail and no rudder. They used oars which were on either side of the ship.

But now the winds were so strong they couldn’t guide the ship any longer and they were just driven to where the wind was blowing them, they lost control!

What a lesson for us. You see, in this story I see a picture of the Christian.

You know how it is. The Lord tells us “No, don’t do that!” or “No, don’t go there!” and we ignore Him, we do our own thing.

And, like I have said, as we start out the winds may blow softly, not much trouble, God must be in it and then comes the Euroclydon, and we are blown away.

What should we do then?

I think the lesson is simple.

Don’t be impatient but wait on the Lord, make sure you have peace in your heart before you go forward.

Understanding God’s will is not done by taking a vote, it is not a democracy but a theocracy, governed by God! Obey His will.

Don’t test the winds to see if you should go, make sure you have the conviction of the Holy Spirit and not your own conviction.

Lastly, if it is easy don’t think it is of God, that can get you in trouble.

It is like the woman who was an alcoholic, got saved and then had an urge to drink. So she got in her car and said, “Lord, if you don’t want me to go to the bar, don’t let my car start!”

That is foolish and sadly, it is a true story! Be directed by Him or you will be blown away by the winds of this world!

And, as you will see, things are not going to get better, but much, much worse for them!

#### VERSES 16-20

Clauda was an island about 23 miles southwest of Crete. And this island gave them some shelter from the fierce winds and waves and thus, they had a short brake to get the ship ready to bear the brunt of this violent storm.

They brought in the lifeboat or the skiff on board instead of dragging it behind the boat, which they usually did. But now it was probably full of water.

They also took cables to undergird the ship to hold it together during this storm, a practice that is known as frapping.

Now as the winds blew again, these winds were driving them, and they feared they might run aground in the shallow waters of Syrtis Sands, which was feared by all who sailed in these waters.

Syrtis Sands was off the coast of North Africa and was known as the graveyard of ships. Not a good name!

Thus, not knowing where they were at, where they were going, they put down the sail and tossed out the anchor hoping to slow down and not end up in Syrtis Sands or this graveyard for ships!

Now we don't see this in the New King James Version but in the NASB we are told in verse 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.**"

And things are so bad now that they start to lighten the ship by tossing some of the tackle overboard and it seems like all were involved in helping out, even the prisoners.

Also, keep in mind that many of those on board were seasoned sailors and yet, this storm was so awesome, so powerful that after many days, they gave up all hope of getting out of the situation alive.

Paul warned them, they didn't listen and now fear was growing. They did not know where they were. They could no longer navigate by the sun or stars because of the storm. They were tossed to and fro and they thought they were all going to die.

Maybe some of the remembered the words of Paul, "**. . . 'Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives.'**" Acts 27:10.

Paul warned them about the storm, and he was right. Therefore, he must be right regarding what else he told them, they were all going to die!

We look at this and think it is a disaster. But let me say this. It is a great place to be because then you have only one place to turn, to Jesus, for Jesus alone saves.

If you think you can save yourself, be good enough to enter into heaven, you won't make it, you will perish!

They are at the end of themselves. There was nothing that they could do. “**... all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.**” Acts 27:20. And now we will see God step in and give them not only hope but direction!

#### VERSES 21-22

We are told that that these men, including these sailors, took a “**long abstinence from food.**” What was that about?

Think about it. First of all, they were very busy trying to keep the ship from sinking. Also, they were probably seasick! And they lost all hope of living and that can also take away your appetite.

It is not due to them fasting and seeking God for direction! Not at all. They just could not eat!

I remember a cruise Julie and I were on several years ago when a bad storm hit the ship. And things were rocking and rolling. People could not eat with all the up and down that was going on. The ship itself was tilted some 7 degrees to the side because of the wind and waves!

Now me, not being a sailor, did not think much about it. So I went on deck for a walk, while Julie stayed inside.

And they were closing all the doors so no one could get out on the deck, it was too dangerous!

And as my wife stood by one of the doors, one of the workers told her to get away, they are closing all the decks.

And she told him that her husband was outside. As I was walking by the door all of a sudden I got pulled back inside.

When the crew is nervous because of the storm, now I was nervous! Obviously we made it through the storm safely, but I can't imagine how these men felt on that ship. Our ship was huge and much different than what they were sailing in!

Now as Paul sees what is going on, he sees them in this hopeless situation, he reminds them of what he warned them before they set sail. Now if that is all he did, "***I told you so!***" type of response, then it would be meaningless to them at this point.

But Paul does not leave them in this hopeless situation, he gives them hope. He tells them that their lives will be spared but the ship will be lost.

I'm sure at this point the people were wondering how they would be saved, it seemed impossible and who is this guy named Paul?

Well, Paul is going to tell them how God will spare them and who he is as we read on.

But what I love about this is in this hopeless situation, there is nothing like having a man or woman of God present. An atheist doesn't comfort anybody in a hopeless situation.

#### VERSES 23-26

I think that Paul was worried. He was warned that if they went out to sea they were all going to die.

Also, the other reason I say that Paul must have been a little worried is that the angel of the Lord said to Paul, "**Do not be afraid . . .**"

So God sends this angel to encourage Paul. And as this angel gave him these words of encouragement he saw God's hand upon him and the situation he was in.

And thus, he would be able to encourage the others.

And notice that Paul identifies himself as a child of God and that God has told him that he will get to Rome and share his faith there.

Thus, his life and their lives will be spared.

How are they going to be spared? They are going to run aground on an island, which one, Paul doesn't know, he just trusts God that what He has promised He is able to bring to pass!

And notice that Paul did not say, "***I believe IN God.***" Even the demons believe ***IN*** God, but they are not saved!

Paul said, "**I believe God.**" Paul declared his total confidence in God's knowledge of his situation and His promise in his situation.

And if you think about it, there was no hope, there was nothing to believe in regarding the situation that they were in except to believe God, to trust in His Word to them.

And we need to remember that. We need to trust in God's Word to us, to believe in His promises to us because what else are you going to put your trust in? There is nothing else!

Make no mistake about it, the storm and the danger were real, but God was more real to Paul than the dreadful circumstances. May we learn from that and apply these things to our lives!

Let me ask you this. Do you have the assurance of God as you go through the storms of life? Do you trust in His promises to you as the waves are crashing in upon you? You should!

Remember what Paul said, "**I believe God**" not just "***I believe in God***" and so should we!

You see, not all storms are bad that we go through.

There are storms of ***PERFECTION*** where the Lord is drawing us closer to Him, getting us to trust in Him more.

There are storms of *CORRECTION* where God is correcting us, getting us back on track.

Then there are storms of *PROTECTION* where something might blow up, not go the way you thought but God allows it to protect us from something.

And lastly, what I see here with Paul, storms of *DIRECTION* for God needed Paul to go to the island of Malta to share his faith, to share Jesus with the people of Malta before he goes to Rome!

How do you know which one you are in, which storm you are going through?

Talk to God, read His Word, let Him speak to your heart and be open to His direction in your life!

#### VERSES 27-29

Think about all that they have been through so far. They have spent two entire weeks in the misery and terror of the storm.

Also, notice what Luke tells us here, that they “**... were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea ...**” Acts 27:27.

The Adriatic Sea lies between Italy and Macedonia or Greece. So what seems to have happened to them is that they were driven up and down the Adriatic Sea in this storm, passing between Crete and Sicily. They are out in the deep, out in the open sea. At least for a time.

But now, to their surprise, it sounded like they were getting close to land. How did they know. They probably heard the surf pounding on the shore and they realized they must be getting close to land.

Realizing the danger of being shipwrecked, they took some soundings, using a weight attached to a rope. In doing so they found that they were at a depth of 120 feet, then 90 feet.



What that told them is that they were getting closer and closer to shore. And since it was night, they did not want to crash into the land so they tossed out of the boat their four anchors and prayed for daybreak so they could see where they were going and decide the best plan of action.

Isn't that interesting. The threat of shipwreck and death made them men of prayer. How true that is in our own lives as things seem to be heading for disaster.

Now let me ask you this. Should they have been afraid? No and the reason is simple. Paul already told them what God was going to do. He told them, "**... 'Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'**" Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that **it will be just as it was told me. However, we must run aground on a certain island.**" Acts 27:21-26.

Everything is happening according to the plan and purposes of God and yet, their fear showed they did not believe. May we believe God in what He has said to us in His Word and then walk accordingly!

#### VERSES 30-32

Not all the sailors trusted Paul. We see here that some of the sailors panicked and tried to escape by pretending to let out the anchors but instead they were letting down the lifeboat and they were going to jump ship, hoping to make it safely to land.

Paul sees what is going on and speaks up saying “... **‘Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.’**” Acts 27:31.

And what is interesting here is that this time the Centurion listened to Paul and they let go of the ropes that held the lifeboat, sending it crashing into the Sea.

What a beautiful picture of Christ we have here.

When we are in Christ we are safe, He is our protection, even in the fiercest of storms.

But at times we panic, we get nervous and we jump ship, we jump out of His arms and into our own lifeboat – and what a mistake. The result, you will sink!

And many times we see people do their own thing instead of listening to God, they go at it on their own and it is manifested in not reading God’s Word, not fellowshiping with other believers, they don’t go to church, they don’t share in communion and they don’t pray!

Again, that is a dangerous place to be.

Listen to what Paul said once again, “... **‘Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.’**” Acts 27:31.

One writer gave to us this perspective. He wrote,

In 1902, a fire broke out, which flared up rapidly in the home of an elderly woman. Asleep in the upstairs bedroom was her grandson, whom she tried to rescue before she died in the process. Someone outside heard the screams of the five-year-old boy, however, and found a way to climb hand-over-hand up a drainpipe, until he made it to the roof, broke through a window, and pulled the boy out to safety.

This story, which appeared in the St. Louis Globe Herald, generated quite a bit of interest in the orphaned boy. During the hearings which followed, a schoolteacher came forward and gave reasons why he felt he should be appointed the boy’s guardian.

So did a wealthy businessman, a minister, and several other upstanding people in the community.

The little boy, however, looked down and never raised his eyes –until a man came through the back doors of the courtroom, walked up to him, and opened his hands. The boy looked at the charred and badly blistered hands of the stranger, and jumped into his arms, saying, “This is my dad.”

And the judge pounded the gavel and said, “So be it.”

So too, I’m asking you to look at the hands of One Who loves you so much He absorbed the heat of hell to pull you out of eternal destruction. I’m asking you to listen to this One Who says, “Trust me. Don’t jump ship, or all will be lost.”

Precious people, Jesus will come in a way that will blow your mind if you don’t jump ship. I don’t care what the sailors of society are saying about breaking commitments, bailing out, and giving up. Cut the ropes. Let the lifeboat crash in the sea below. Stay on board. . . .

- Jon Courson, Acts, pp. 338-339

#### VERSES 33-34

Notice the faith of Paul. If he thought they were all going to die, what would be the point of eating? There would be no point!

But Paul believed that they would survive, and they would need their strength to make it through. Thus, he tells them to eat!

God wants us to be practical, not to be foolish. They needed to eat, to get some strength for what was ahead of them. Thus, Paul tells them to eat or as my grandmother would always say to me, “Mangia, Mangia!”

VERSES 35-38

In the midst of this storm, in the midst of these unbelievers Paul was not afraid to bow his head and give thanks to God for the food they were about to partake of.

How about you? At work do you quickly say, “Thanks for the food!” so no one will see or hear you praying? Or are you bold, bowing your head thanking God for all He has given you, not being ashamed that people will see you pray before your meal?

As Paul prayed, were the people affected by his actions?

Absolutely! We are told, “**then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.**” Acts 27:36.

Make no mistake about it, Paul’s words and actions encouraged them, and they did eat.

Paul was an example to them. His faith was strong.

Remember, he did not say “*I believe in God*” but “**I believe God!**”

And the people did respond in a positive way to Paul’s faith in the Lord. Again, they not only heard Paul’s words, but they saw his faith or that he lived what he said that he believed! And that is what people should see as they look at our lives, our words and deeds match up!

I like the way A. W. Tozer spoke regarding Paul and his faith coming alive before these people. He said,

When the “south wind blew softly,” the ship that carried Paul sailed smoothly enough and no one on board knew who Paul was or how much strength of character lay hidden behind that rather plain exterior.

But when the mighty tempest, Euroclydon, burst upon them, Paul’s greatness was soon the talk of everyone on the ship. The apostle, though himself a prisoner, quite literally took command of the vessel, made decisions and issued orders that meant life or death to the people.

And I think the crisis brought to a head something in Paul that had not been clear even to him. Beautiful theory was quickly crystallized into hard fact when the tempest struck.

- A. W. Tozer

We are also told that they threw the wheat overboard. Why did they throw the wheat overboard?

They were trying to lighten the ship to have it ride higher in the water and thus, allowing them to get closer to the land before the ship was grounded.

#### VERSES 39-41

They let the anchors go; leaving them in the sea.

They also untied the rudders that were previously raised, lowering them into position.

And then they hoisted the mainsail and made for shore!

As they moved towards land the boat ran aground with its prow or the front of the ship stuck in the sand and the back of the ship was loose, being torn in pieces.

As we will find out next time, they are going to land on the island of Malta some 600 miles west of Fair Havens in Crete!

That was some storm!

Please understand that landing on Malta was not just some chance happening. That is where God wanted them to go and we will see that as we get to Acts chapter 28 next time and we conclude the story of Acts.

But back here, with the ship stuck in a sandbar where two seas meet, the ship is breaking up, as I have said. And notice what the soldiers want to do with the prisoners.

VERSES 42-44

Now this does not seem right. The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners, why? To the soldiers, it made sense to kill the prisoners, because according to Roman military law a guard who allowed his prisoner to escape was subject to the same penalty the escaped prisoner would have suffered.

That means, in the case of most of these prisoners, death!

But notice that Paul found favor with this Roman Centurion. And maybe it was that there were no charges against Paul and thus, being a Roman citizen, he was responsible to keep him safe.

We don't know for sure. It could also be the way that Paul was before this man. That he saw he could trust him.

It was probably both. And thus, no prisoner was to be put to death, but they were to swim ashore.

Some swam in and some used surfboards to get in, and you thought surfing is a relatively new thing!

And guess what, they all made it safely to shore, all 276 of them, just as the Lord had said!

Where they landed is called St. Paul's Bay today!

It truly is a miracle that they survived this storm.

It is as Ramsay said, "Only the rarest conjunction of favorable circumstances could have brought about such a fortunate ending to their apparently hopeless situation . . . all these circumstances are united in St. Paul's Bay."

It is as the angel of the Lord told Paul, “... **‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar, and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’**” Acts 27:24.

God fulfilled His promise, not only to Paul, but to all these men; sailors and prisoners! You see, God’s Word *NEVER* fails!

Now as we close this evening, things really don’t look too good, they are shipwrecked on an island, not sure yet where they are. It is rainy and cold.

But as dark as this may be, chapter 28 sheds light onto God’s purpose and plan for this event and in the end, Paul will make it to Rome just as God promised!

God said to Paul, “**Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.**” Acts 23:11.

And once again, what God promised He will bring to pass and we will see that next time as we finish up the book of Acts. You see, God’s Word *NEVER* fails!

I know that I just said that, but we do need to be reminded and sometimes we need to be reminded of that fact often. Just because we don’t understand the situation, can we trust the Lord? We need to!

Let me leave you this evening with these words from Paul in Romans chapter 4 as he spoke of the faith of Abraham, and said, **“He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore ‘it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”** Romans 4:20-25.

May we learn to trust God more and more, believe in His promises to us and as we go through those *STORMS OF PERFECTION, STORMS OF CORRECTION, STORMS OF PROTECTION* and *STORMS OF DIRECTION*, that we listen to the Lord and learn from Him what we need to do next so that we too can land where God wants us to land; that we too may witness of Jesus to a people who don't know Jesus!

