

**“Hope in Life’s Storms”
Acts 27**

Big Idea – Storms will either draw me closer to God or push me away from God – it’s my choice!

This pandemic we’ve been going through is certainly a storm of life. Today we’ll look at a true story from the Bible in Apostle Paul’s life where he goes through a literal storm.

Several times in the Bible Paul mentions that he wanted to go to Rome to preach the Gospel (ie. Romans 1:14), but never thought he would be going as a prisoner through jail and shipwreck. But God had promised him in Acts 23:11 that he would testify in Rome and he never gave up on that promise.

Notice last two verses of Acts 26:31, 32. Now look how Acts 27 starts out.

1. Everyone needs friends – vs. 1-3

“we” re-introduces Paul’s physician friend Dr. Luke, also we meet Aristarchus, and a Roman centurion who treated Paul kindly.

How many friends do you have? True friends, not acquaintances. How do you get friends?

A friend is someone who is walking in for you, when everyone else walks out on you!
Wow!

Paul thought he had a friend in Demas, but remember what Paul said about him in 2 Timothy 4:10? “Demas has forsaken me having loved this present world...” Yet Paul had other good friends, and didn’t seem to have a problem making friends even among those who were not believers, or were another nationality.

The Roman centurion “kindly” allowed Paul to visit with his “friends” in Sidon.

Now notice their journey continues and they sailed close to the isle of Cyprus because there were “contrary winds” - headwinds that held them back. Leads us to the next point:

2. Storms/contrary winds are a constant in life – vs. 4-9

They sailed against the headwinds until they came to city of Myra, got on a larger ship and tried to sail on to Italy, but had to head into the safe harbor called Fair Havens.

Contrary winds and lack of progress do not mean that one is out of the will of God. Often we are right where God wants us to be – He wants us to learn something in the process.

3. Paul tried to warn everyone – vs. 10

We know from Paul's letter to Corinth (2 Cor. 11:25) that he had already been shipwrecked three times. The word "perceive" means to judge from past experiences.

They refused to listen and set sail anyway, due to a soft/gentle south wind, "supposing" they could make it.

But they ran right into a typhoon, a Nor'easter.

4. Sometimes we can get ourselves into storms by:

Impatience – vs. 9 "much time had been spent"

Accepting "expert" advice contrary to God's will – vs. 11 – listening to so-called experts

Not listening to God's messenger – vs. 10 – they wouldn't listen to God's man

Trusting "ideal" conditions – vs. 13 – going only by what they could see

5. God's Word gives good news when all hope of being saved appears to be gone – vs.20

With men things look impossible, but with God all things are possible.

"Paul began as a prisoner," said Joseph Parker; "he ended as the captain." Paul "took over" the situation when it was obvious that nobody else knew what to do. A crisis does not make a person; a crisis shows what a person is made of, and it tends to bring true leadership to the fore. Paul gently rebuked the centurion, pilot, and captain for ignoring his warning. Soon they would discover that God had spared all of them only because of Paul.

6. Paul encouraged them – vs. 21-26

Paul let them know he had heard from God "to whom I belong and whom I serve"

Twice he told them to “take heart” have courage. Said God told him to “Fear not”

7. Paul warned them – vs. 27-32

He reminded them he had tried to tell them about the danger. Then he reassured them that no one would die – the ship would be lost, but no one would die.

He told them they’d better eat as it had been 14 days since they’d eaten. He knew they were going to need their strength.

8. He set a good example – vs. 33-38

He did what he told them to do, got food, thanked God for it and ate.

9. He rescued them – vs. 39-44

God used the Roman centurion Julius to save Paul and the other prisoners.

What Paul said God told him came true – “they all escaped safely to land”

10. Practical lessons we can learn from storms:

They often come when we disobey God – ie. Jonah

Jonah hated the Syrians, and didn’t want them to get saved, get spared. A racist!!

They reveal character – trials just reveal what’s already on the inside.

Storms can’t hide the face of God or hinder the purpose of God

Isaiah 46: 8 “Remember this, and do not forget it! Think about these things, you who turn against God.

9 Remember what happened long ago. Remember that I am God, and there is no other God. I am God, and there is no one like me.

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

11 Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.

They can give us opportunities to serve others and bear witness to Jesus Christ

Listen again to the words of this song: Does it make any difference to you (repeat line)

If a soul dies in sin, God has called you to win, will it make any difference to you.

Will his blood be required at your hand? Will you warn the lost as God planned?

Will you make plain the way? Will you work while it's day? Is the Lord working daily through you?

Paul was a VIP on the ship because:

He knew how to pray – during this pandemic storm have we prayed more?

He had faith in God – during this storm have we exercised faith in God?

He was in touch with God – are you in tune with God?