

STORM STORIES

SURVIVING LIFE'S TEMPESTS

PART 6: SURVIVING THE STORM OF CRISIS

We ...came to a place called Fair Havens... sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Fast. So Paul warned them, "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous ..." Acts 27:8-10

Three common reasons we sail into storms

•Guidance from _____

But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. Acts 27:11

•Guidance from _____

Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. Acts 27:12

•Guidance from _____

When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. Acts 27:13

Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the "northeaster," swept down from the island. Acts 27:14

Four common reactions to storms

• _____
The ship was caught by the storm... so we gave way to it and were driven along... they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. Acts 27:15-17

• _____
We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. Acts 27:18,19

• _____
When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. Acts 27:20

• _____
In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow... the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away. Acts 27:30-32

Paul's confidence in the storm

After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "...I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost..." Acts 27:21,22

Four anchors for the soul

1. God's _____

"Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me..." Acts 27:23

2. God's _____

"...and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.'" Acts 27:24

3. God's _____

"So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me." Acts 27:25

Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. Acts 27:29

4. God's _____

Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food --you haven't eaten anything. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive..." After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. Acts 27:33-36

Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. The islanders showed us unusual kindness. Acts 28:1,2

The point:

God's purpose for you is even greater than _____ !

Resources used in the preparation of this message:

Rick Warren, *Answers to Life's Difficult Questions*

John Rousemaniere, *After the Storm*

Daily Meditations

This week's memory verse:

"Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed." Psalms 107:28,29

Monday

What is the greatest "storm" you are facing now?

How can Paul's example and the principles from this story help you in your situation?

This week, we'll read through the story of Paul's shipwreck verse-by-verse. Read Acts 27:1-12. Can you recall a time when you were warned not to do something, but you did it anyway? What happened?

How did the Lord use it for something good anyway?

Ask God to help you remember and heed His warnings to you! Bring to Him the storm of crisis you are facing right now.

Tuesday

Read Acts 27:13-26. Look at Paul's reaction to this crisis: He combined urgent instruction with hope, common sense, a sense of calm, and absolute perseverance. By comparison, how do you tend to react to a crisis?

Note in verse 23 that even Paul had to be reminded of something he already knew. Why do you suppose the angel appeared to Paul?

What does God want to remind you of today?

Ask God to help you remember His promises when you are in a storm of crisis. Pray for those going through crisis now-- by name, if you can.

Wednesday

Read Acts 27:27-32. When have you felt "caught up by a northeaster", driven across the sea by the wind? What happened? What did you learn from the situation?

In verse 30, what were the sailors trying to do?

When have you been tempted to bail out of a stormy situation, to sneak away in a lifeboat? What happened? What did you learn?

Ask God to help keep you in the boat -- to keep you from bailing out on a stormy situation, whether it's your marriage, your relationships, your ministry... Ask Him to help you stay encouraged through His Word.

Thursday

Read Acts 27:33-38. What does Paul encourage the 276 people on board to do?

How does he lead by example?

I love the practical advice Paul gives here! It's interesting to me that this sort of practical advice is very typical of the Bible. For example, look up 1 Kings 19:3-7. What is the angel's advice to Elijah?

Look up Matthew 15:32, Mark 6:31, and John 21:9-13. How does Jesus show his concern for the disciples in these verses?

Sometimes we can become so spiritually minded that we forget to take care of physical needs -- and when we don't have enough food and rest, we can become vulnerable to depression, anger, poor decision-making, and so on. Why do you suppose we don't take care of ourselves very well when we are anxious or depressed?

Ask God to help you eat right, sleep well, and exercise appropriately. He made you a physical as well as a spiritual being, and he cares about your well-being! This is an important part of enduring through the storm of crisis.

Friday

Read Acts 27:39-28:16. In light of the fact that God wanted Paul to get to Rome, why do you think He allowed all the events of chapter 27 to happen?

How do you suppose God used the shipwreck to strengthen Paul's faith?

How do you suppose it influenced some of the other passengers, such as the centurion?

Verses like Acts 27:42-44, 28:7, and 28:16 hint at the respect with which Paul was held by the Roman officials after this incident. What conclusions do you draw from these verses?

How has God used a disaster in your life for ministry? What have you learned from this?

Think specifically of a "shipwreck" in your life that God used for His glory. Thank Him for it!

Saturday

Complete any devotions you may have missed and polish up the memory verse. Please pray for the services this weekend. Thanks!

Some questions this week adapted from *The Serendipity Bible* edited by Lyman Coleman