

Saturday

Please read Philippians 1:12 & 4:22. These two verses serve as sort of an epilogue to Paul's unexpected journey to Rome. Think about the storm you're currently facing. What epilogue would you like to see God write?

Thank God today for His amazing love for you. Thank Him for His grace in your life. Please pray for the services this weekend. Pray that as we jump back to Proverbs people's lives will be blessed and we will all grow in wisdom.



Pressing On Toward the Finish

ACTS 28:1-16; 30-31
JUNE 15 & 16, 2013 • MARK SPURLOCK

AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

I will receive strength to press on when God brings...

1.

Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. *Acts 28:1-3*

When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live." But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. *Acts 28:4-6*

There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. *Acts 28:7-9*

Key step: Being willing to _____.

2.

They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, **they furnished us** with the supplies we needed. *Acts 28:10*

After three months we put out to sea... We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. **There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them.** *Acts 28:11-14a*

And so we came to Rome. The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. **At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged.** *Acts 28:14b-15*

Key step: Being willing to _____.

3.

When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him. . . For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He **proclaimed** the kingdom of God and **taught** about the Lord Jesus Christ — with all boldness and without hindrance! *Acts 28:16,30–31*

Key step: Being willing to _____.

Epilogue

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has **actually served to advance the gospel**. *Philippians 1:12*

All God's people here send you greetings, **especially those who belong to Caesar's household**. *Philippians 4:22*

Daily Meditations

Monday

Please read Acts 28:1–16, 30–31. As we wrap up this amazing incident in the apostle Paul's life, what has most impacted you?

How has studying this story changed your attitude towards going through life's storms?

How can you apply what you've learned about surviving life's storms in your own life, or use it to encourage someone in your life?

Thank God today for the Bible and the opportunity to study it. Ask God to give you the wisdom to apply what you've learned through this story and the courage to live it!

Tuesday

Please read Act 28:1–6 & 2 Corinthians 4:7–10 & 12:8–10. What do these verses tell you about some of the ways God can bring purpose from your pain?

Please read Romans 8:28. How have you seen God bring something good out of a painful experience?

How does knowing that God can bring purpose from pain give you the strength to press on in the storm?

How can you follow Paul's example and serve, even in your pain?

Thank God today for at least one way He's brought purpose out of your pain. Talk to God about the storms you're currently in. Ask God to strengthen your faith today and remind you that He is at work in the storm.

Wednesday

Please read Acts 28:7–9. How does God use Paul's unexpected journey to bring hope to the people of Malta? How do you think that impacted the people of Malta? How do you think it impacted Paul?

Please read 2 Corinthians 1:3–7. How does this passage say God uses our pain to help others?

How does it encourage you to know that God can use your pain (and His comfort) to bring comfort to others in pain?

Thank God today that in His economy, pain is not senseless. Pray that you will experience His comfort today and that you will have opportunities to comfort others.

Thursday

Please read Acts 28:10–15 & Philippians 4:10–20. Recall a time when God used an unexpected person or situation to bring you encouragement in a difficult time.

Think about people in your life (or maybe even a group of people that you don't know but are in your community) who are dealing with life's storms. Write down some ways you can take part in God's work of strengthening them in the storm. Then write down how you'll do it!

Thank God today for the unexpected sources of encouragement He has provided for you in the past. Pray that He'll provide opportunities for you to reach out and be His hands and feet to people in your life and community. Pray for the courage to go where He asks you to — even if it looks stormy.

Friday

Please read Acts 28:16, 30–31 & 2 Corinthians 4:16–18. In the middle of the storm, it doesn't often feel "light and momentary", so why does Paul say that?

As you read these two passages, what rewards do you see?

How does it give you strength in the moment to know that there are eternal rewards ahead?

Thank God today this life is not all there is. Thank Him for the hope of heaven and the promise of eternal rewards. Pray for the faith to "fix your eyes on what is unseen." Pray for the opportunities and courage to share the hope of heaven with someone you encounter today.



Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.
Philippians 1:12