



RIDING OUT THE STORM

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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Riding Out the Storm

SERMON REFERENCE: Acts 27:9-31

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #1908

The Book of Acts tells the story of the Early Church and the missionary voyages of Paul the Apostle. In Acts 27, Paul writes about his experience sailing through a treacherous storm. Paul's gripping narrative offers us insight into riding out the storms of life.

First, we must note the reason for these storms; we will all find ourselves in ferocious waters at some point, due to the nature of this sinful world.

Storms can be engineered by our own disobedience or foolishness. God could also send us into a storm for our own development. Or, like Paul in this passage, we could also be dragged into storms by other people.

When Paul was a prisoner on his way to Rome, he was transported into a storm by others. His circumstances were out of his own control.

Acts 27:9-11 says, "So Paul warned them, 'Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.' But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship."

When we face difficulties due to other people's mistakes, Acts 27:9-20 reveals five things not to do if we want to keep the ship afloat:

1. Make decisions in haste (v. 9)
2. Depend upon worldly wisdom rather than godly wisdom (v. 11)
3. Take the easy way out (v. 12)
4. Follow the crowd (v. 12)
5. Depend upon circumstances (v. 13)

Verses 14-20 illustrate what happens when an ungodly man gets himself into a storm. His direction dissolves, his effort increases, resources are wasted, and he begins to lose hope. As a result, he becomes very foolish; he'll try to abandon ship and escape.

But the godly will react differently to the storms, as Paul says in Acts 27:22, "But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost..."

Paul's faith in God was stronger than his fear of the storm; as a result, God's promise to see Paul through to Rome was fulfilled.

Adrian Rogers says, "Every bad decision they made could not overrule the will of God. Where God does not rule, He overrules."

Life Application

Are you riding out a storm you weren't expecting? Depend upon godly wisdom and resist the temptation to take the easy way out. Do not depend upon your circumstances. Put your whole faith in God to see you through.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The Book of Acts is a narrative which tells how the early church began to spread and of the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul.
- b) Acts chapter 27 tells of the apostle Paul aboard a ship which rides into the teeth of a ferocious storm, and it teaches us about riding out the storm.
- c) Why would God devote almost an entire chapter in the Bible to telling about a ship in the midst of a storm?
 - i) Because it is more than history.
 - ii) The Holy Spirit uses this story to make an incredible illustration with a great spiritual application for all of us.
 - (1) Life is like a voyage; sometimes the sea is calm, the wind blows softly, the sun is shining, and you enjoy just sailing along.
 - (2) But sometimes the wind rises, the sky darkens, we find ourselves in the midst of a terrible storm.
 - iii) This chapter is an illustration of every human being sailing between two eternities: sometimes things are good and sometimes things are bad.
- d) In this particular story, the apostle Paul has been taken prisoner for preaching the Gospel of Christ, and they are taking him to Rome to be adjudicated.
 - i) Paul was different than most of us who see difficulties in every opportunity; he saw opportunity in every difficulty.
 - ii) Paul took every opportunity and applied to it the Word of God and found ways to triumph.
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 2:14
- e) As we see what Paul did, we will learn what we can do to ride out the storms of life.
 - i) Acts 27:20

2) THE REASON FOR THESE KINDS OF STORMS

- a) There are four basic kinds of storms in life that we all get into, whether saved or lost:
 - i) The normal storms that come just because we're part of nature.
 - (1) Matthew 5:45
 - (2) We live in a world that has both sun and rain, and all human beings will experience some storms just because we are here.
 - ii) Storms that we ourselves engineer by our foolishness and disobedience.
 - (1) Jonah got into this kind of storm when he tried to flee from the presence of the Lord and got out of the will of God.
 - (a) Jonah 1-2
 - iii) There are storms that God sends us in to for our development.
 - (1) Jesus once sent His disciples into a storm at sea because He was trying to teach them a lesson to help them grow in discipleship.



- (a) Matthew 14:22-33
- (2) Sometimes we do get into storms not because we're out of the will of God, like Jonah was, but because we're in the will of God.
- iv) We get into some storms because we're dragged into them by other people.
 - (1) Paul, a seasoned traveler who'd been through shipwrecks, knew that this ship ought not to sail and he tried to warn everybody, but they wouldn't listen.
 - (2) As a prisoner guarded by a centurion, Paul had to go along and do what the higher power said.
 - (a) Many times we're in storms and they're not of our own making.
 - (i) Little children are often dragged along into a storm because of ungodly or un-wise parents.
 - (ii) We get into difficulty because of authorities that are over us.
 - 1. America sometimes goes into storms because of bad leadership and we see ourselves sailing into judgment due to laws and rules made by Congress, the President or the judges.
 - (3) Paul really didn't want to sail, but he was at the mercy of others making the decisions.
 - (a) Acts 27:9-11
 - (i) On one side is a man of the world, a businessman motivated by profit.
 - (ii) On the other side is the man of God with his spiritual radar.
 - (iii) The centurion decided to listen to the evidently successful ship owner rather than Paul, the religious fanatic prisoner.
 - (4) The decision to sail was a grave mistake, and many of us today are in danger of making the same kind of bad decision which will lead us into a storm.
 - (a) Five ways to sink a ship (or five ways to make a bad decision):
 - (i) Just make your decision in haste.
 - 1. Acts 27:9
 - 2. Some people make some of their biggest life decisions without waiting on real leadership from the Lord.
 - 3. If you're in the middle of a decision, wait on God and bloom where you're planted until God moves you.
 - 4. Don't think that just because time is passing by you've got to do something. The Holy Spirit of God does not push. He leads, He guides, He doesn't shove.
 - (ii) Depend upon worldly wisdom rather than godly wisdom.
 - 1. Acts 27:11
 - 2. Don't go to the people of this world to find out what you should do.
 - 3. Forsake any counsel that is not based on the Word of God.
 - (iii) Take the easy way out.
 - 1. Acts 27:12
 - 2. You're almost always going to get into trouble if you make your decision based upon what would be easiest.
 - 3. We're called to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.
 - a. 2 Timothy 2:3



4. So many people make their decisions led by sensual desires, driven by the flesh rather than being led of the Spirit.
- (iv) Just follow the crowd.
 1. Acts 27:12
 2. The crowd outvoted Paul, but the majority is almost always wrong.
 - a. Twelve spies went to spy out the land in Joshua's day. Only two said it could be conquered. The ten were wrong and the two were right.
 - b. The people of Israel voted for a king. They got Saul. God gave them what they wanted, but after a while they didn't want what they got. The majority was wrong.
 - c. The crowds shouted for Barabbas to be released and for Jesus to be crucified. This most heinous crime was done at the will of the majority.
 - d. Do you know what the majority generally is? A lot of people pooling their ignorance.
- (v) Just depend upon circumstances.
 1. Acts 27:13
 2. They saw that the sun was shining, the sea was calm, the wind was blowing softly, and concluded, "It must be the will of God."
 3. That soothing south wind was soon to turn into a ferocious storm that would sink their ship.

3) THE REACTIONS TO THE STORMS OF LIFE

- a) Acts 27:14-21
- b) What happens when an ungodly person gets into a storm?
 - i) Dreams dissolve
 - (1) The ship's captain, the owner and the centurion were not as strong as they thought they were, and found themselves aboard a floundering vessel driven along by winds they could not control.
 - ii) Work increases
 - (1) Acts 27:16-19
 - (2) They began to labor with a desperate effort, trying to get it all back together.
 - (3) The devil will tell you it is hard to be a Christian; that is a lie.
 - (a) Matthew 11:28-30
 - (b) Proverbs 13:15
 - (c) Not that there is no discipline in being a Christian or hardships to endure, but grueling toil and laboring in desperation—that comes with sin.
 - iii) Resources are wasted
 - (1) Acts 27:18, 21
 - (2) Sin is one of the most costly things around.
 - (3) Everything they thought was so precious, they're now throwing it overboard.
 - (4) The worldly man spends the first half of his life gaining his wealth, then spends the last half of his life spending his wealth to get his health back. He's unhappy in both halves of his life, and what a colossal waste it is.
 - iv) Hope is lost



- (1) Acts 27:20, 29
- (2) They rejected God's light and now they find themselves in darkness.
- (3) The stars, the sun, the moon, the land—all of these things disappeared so they had no way to navigate, and their hopes all vanished as well.
- v) They get very foolish
 - (1) They begin to make foolish plans because they don't have stars to steer by, so there is sort of an inner compass that takes over.
 - (2) Acts 27:30-31
 - (3) Some sailors were trying to sneak off the ship, demonstrating a form of escapism that was built upon selfishness.
 - (a) Examples of how people today try to escape storms they could have avoided:
 - (i) Alcoholism
 - (ii) Divorce
 - (iii) Running away from home
 - (iv) Suicide
 - 1. This is the ultimate act of selfishness and cowardice that never, ever solves a problem.
 - (4) The world is full of desperate people hopelessly lost in the storms they were warned not to get in to.
- c) What happens when godly people get into storms?
 - i) It is a blessing to see how the godly go through storms.
 - ii) Acts 27:22-25
 - iii) Two times, the apostle Paul announces, "Be of good cheer."
 - (1) Some today think Christians don't know what we're talking about when we give a good message in the midst of the dark days that we're in.
 - (2) There are three classes in America: those who are afraid, those who don't know enough to be afraid, and those who know their Bible.
 - iv) Paul knew who he belonged to and that Jesus was with him on board that ship.
 - v) Paul could have a smile on his face in the midst of the storm because he trusted in Jesus, who gave him songs in the night when he was in a dungeon at Philippi.
 - vi) Paul had the assurance of God's promises, and we might even picture him walking the deck of that ship, quoting the reassuring Word of God.
 - (1) Psalm 107:23-30
 - vii) Being able to have hope and strength and be encouraged—that's the difference in the reaction of those who know the Lord and those who don't know the Lord when they get into a storm.

4) THE RESULT OF THE STORMS OF LIFE

- a) God's plan was to get Paul to Rome to testify, and he did go to Rome.
 - i) Acts 27:23-24
 - ii) Acts 23:11
 - iii) Acts 28:14



- b) This story is a great illustration in God's Word showing divine sovereignty and human responsibility at the same time.
 - i) It was not God's plan that the ship set sail and ride into the storm.
 - ii) God's ultimate plan was not thwarted by the ship sailing.
 - iii) What was on that ship:
 - (1) The apostle Paul
 - (2) Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians
 - (3) The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts
 - (4) The sovereign will of Almighty God
 - iv) Every bad decision the people made could not overrule the will of God.
 - (1) We serve a mighty God, and where God does not rule, God overrules.
 - (a) Christians may fail, they may flounder, they may sin, but if they belong to Jesus Christ, there's a sovereign power that says "One day My child will be just like My Son the Lord Jesus, and all Hell can't stop it."
 - (b) We are predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son.
 - (i) Romans 8:29
 - (c) The church, founded by the Lord Jesus Christ, sometimes makes bad decisions, and many times we do things we shouldn't do as a church, but God is building for Himself a bride and all Hell can't stop it.
 - (i) Matthew 16:18
 - (d) All of the rulers of this world and the people who are against our Lord, they make their laws against Him, rejecting His commandments, His Word, His morality; yet nothing will stop Jesus from ruling eternally.
 - (i) Psalm 2
 - (2) We are on the winning side. He cannot fail. He must prevail.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) There was a storm, but Paul believed God and said "Be of good cheer," and they made it to Rome.
- b) The centurion believed the owner of the ship who was wrong to sail.
- c) All of life comes down to: who do you believe?
- d) Paul said I believe God. Don't make a mistake of believing the wrong person or you may be engineering a storm that you'll not like at all.
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Take God's Word and turn with me please to Acts, the book of Acts chapter 27. If you know anything about the book of Acts, you know that the book of Acts is a narrative. It tells how the early church began to spread. And it tells of the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul. And in Acts chapter 27, it tells of the apostle Paul aboard a ship, and that ship rides into the teeth of a ferocious storm. And it tells how Paul went through that storm, if you will, how Paul rode out the storm. That's what I want to talk to you about today, is riding out the storm.

I love this twenty-seventh chapter of the book of Acts and preach from it from time to time because when you open the Bible there, you can smell the salt air. There's just something about this story. It's one of the most gripping stories. If you listen you can hear the booming thunder. You can see the lightning as its fingers flash across the bosom of the sky. You can hear the old ship creak and groan. You can hear the moaning and the whistling of the wind. It is an incredible story, the story of a ship in the midst of a storm.

But that brings up a question even before we begin to read. Why would God take almost an entire chapter in the Word of God and tell us about a storm and a ship in that storm? Because it is more than history. The Holy Spirit has taken this story and made an incredible illustration with a great spiritual application for all of us, because you see life is like a voyage. Sometimes the sea is calm, sometimes the wind blows softly, sometimes the sun is shining, and thank God for those times, and maybe that's where you are right now just sailing along, and if you are, enjoy it. It's a gift of God. But sometimes the wind rises, sometimes the sky darkens, sometimes we find ourselves in the midst of a terrible storm. And that's the way life is. This chapter is an illustration of every human being sailing between two eternities. Sometimes things are good and sometimes things are bad.

Now in this particular story, before we break in, I want to remind you that the apostle Paul is a prisoner. He's been taken prisoner for preaching the Gospel of Christ, and they're taking him to Rome to be adjudicated. He started out, by the way, on this ship as a prisoner, but we're going to find out, before it was over he was the captain. You know, Paul was different than most of us. Many of us see difficulties in every opportunity. The apostle Paul saw opportunity in every difficulty. Acts 16:25, you put him in prison, soon he becomes the jailer. He's singing songs in the night. Acts chapter 26, you put him before King Agrippa and he's the defendant. Before long he's the prosecuting attorney. He takes every opportunity and applies to it the Word of God which says in Second Corinthians 2:14, "Thanks be unto God who causeth us always to triumph in Christ Jesus." And if you're in a storm right now, we're going to look and see what Paul did and then see what we can do. Learn how to ride out the storm.

Now, even before we read, well, let's just read a little bit here. Look in Acts chapter 27 verses 20 through 25 if you will. He describes the storm, "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us." Now folks, that just old English for saying it was a big one. "No small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away." Maybe that's where you are. I mean, you're in the midst of a terrible storm, and all hope seems to vanish from you. "But after long ab-



stinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, 'Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you, be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, 'Fear not, Paul, for thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.' Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me."

Well, let's back up a little bit and basically three things I want you to see as we look in this passage of Scripture today. First of all, the reason for these kind of storms. And secondly, I want you to see the reaction of people when they get into storms, good people and bad people, godly and godless. And then thirdly, I want you to see the result of the storm; what it does in the lives of those who are people of God and in the lives of those who don't know the Lord.

Now we all get into storms, whether you're saved or lost. Actually, basically, there are four basic kind of storms in life: one, **just the normal storms that come because we're part of nature**. The Bible says in Matthew 5 verse 45, "God makes it to rain upon the just and the unjust." And if you're a human being you live in a world that has storms just because we're here. That's one kind of storm we get into.

There's another kind of storm that we get into, and these are **the ones that we ourselves engineer by our foolishness, and they're caused by disobedience**. And that's the kind of a storm that Jonah got into when Jonah tried to flee from the presence of the Lord. You remember that story. He spent the night on a foam-blubber mattress, you remember he was swallowed by a whale. What was the problem with Jonah? He was out of the will of God and he ran right in the teeth of a storm.

Now there's a third kind of storm. They're storms that **God sends us into for development**. Remember the story there in the Gospels, in Matthew chapter 8 and verse 18, where Jesus commanded His disciples to get in a ship to go to the other side of the sea? And Jesus knew that a storm was brewing. But there He was trying to teach them a lesson for their development, for their discipleship. And sometimes we do get into storms, not because we're out of the will of God like Jonah was, but because we're in the will of God.

But now here's the fourth kind of storm we get into. We get into some storms because **we're dragged into them by other people**. That's where the apostle Paul was. Now he was a prisoner, but he was also a mariner. I mean, he had been through shipwrecks before. He'd sailed before. He was a seasoned traveler! And he knew that this ship ought not to sail, and he tried to warn everybody, but they wouldn't listen to him. He was guarded by a centurion. He had to go along. The higher power said, "We're going to sail," and he sailed with them.

Now some of you can really identify with this. Many times we're in storms and they're not of our own making. Sometimes children get into difficulty because of their parents. I mean, little children are born with ungodly parents or unwise parents, and these little children are just dragged along into a storm because of the parents. Sometimes we get into difficulty because of authorities that are over us. Sometimes folks, America goes into storms because of bad leadership, because of bad leadership. And sometimes Congress or the President or the judges make laws and rules and we're aboard the ship of state! And we see ourselves sailing into judgment. We say, "I wish I could get my hand on the tiller. I wish somehow that I could do this." But we're just aboard the ship of state, we're prisoners as it were, and that's very much like the apostle Paul was. Paul really didn't want to sail.



Look if you will in Acts 27 verses 9 and 10, “Now when much time was spent and when sailing was now dangerous.” There’s a certain time in the Mediterranean, especially in those days, you didn’t sail. “Because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them. And said unto them, ‘Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives.’”

Now, the apostle Paul had his spiritual radar. He was saying, “Don’t sail, don’t sail, don’t sail.” But again the matter was taken out of Paul’s hands. There really wasn’t much he could do about it. Look in Acts 27 verse 11, “Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and owner of the ship more than those things which were spoken by Paul.”

Now you have a businessman, he owns the ship, he is a shipping tycoon, he’s motivated by profit, he’s led by worldly wisdom. And so over here you have the man of God, and over here you have the man of the world, and the centurion has to make a decision. So he just says, “Well, I’m not going to go with the religious fanatic. I’m not going to go with the prisoner. I’m going to go with the man who is obviously a successful man. He owns this ship.” And so he said, “We are going to sail.”

Now, let me just tell you right now the mistake the owner of the ship made. And it’s the kind of a mistake that you can make. Let me give you five ways to sink a ship. Okay? I’m talking about your ship. Let me just tell you five ways to make a bad decision. And many of you today are in danger of making this kind of a bad decision. And you’re going to sail into a storm and it will not be a storm for your development. It’ll be a storm because of your disobedience and because of your ignorance.

Number one; **just make your decision in haste.** Look if you will in Acts 27 verse 9 again, “Now when much time was spent. Now when much time was spent.” They said, “Hey, time is going fast. We’d better do something.” Decide in haste, repent in leisure. There’re a lot of folks who say, “Well, let’s do something, even if it’s wrong.” Sometimes people get married that way, they marry in haste. Sometimes people make business decisions that way. Sometimes a man will just quit school, quit a job, leave a church, go someplace, move out of a city. No real leadership from the Lord. Listen to me, my friend. If you’re in the middle of a decision, you wait on God! Bloom where you’re planted till God moves you. Don’t just simply think that just because time is passing by, that you’ve got to do something. They said, “Well, much time is spent.” Learn this. This compulsivity, if that’s a word, I hope it is. Whatever it is. Every word’s got to start somewhere, anyway. So, the Holy Spirit of God does not push! If you feel something between your shoulder blades pushing you, that’s not the Holy Spirit. He leads, He guides. He doesn’t shove.

Number two. You’re going to make a mistake if **you depend upon worldly wisdom rather than upon godly wisdom.** Look again in Acts 27 verse 11, “Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.” You go to the people of this world. You say, “Tell me what to do.” Some of you have marriage problems, and you’re going to an ungodly counselor. And he’s telling you what to do. You forsake any counsel that is not based on the Word of God. One woman went to a psychiatrist to try to get help about her marriage, and the psychiatrist had been married four times. There’re people trying to tell you what to do, advice contrary to the will of God. One way you’ll sink your ship is, make your decision in haste. Number two, another way to sink your ship is to depend upon worldly wisdom rather than godly wisdom.

Number three, **take the easy way out.** Look if you will in Acts 27 verse 12. The Bible says they sailed,



“Because the haven,” that is, the port, “was not commodious to winter in.” They weren’t comfortable. And so they made their decision on the basis of what would be easy. You’re almost always going to get in trouble this way. We’re called upon to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Do you know why an animal eats and drinks? Because it wants to eat and drink. Do you know why an animal copulates? Because it wants to. It is just simply led by its sensual desires. And there’re so many people who make their decisions on the animal plane rather than on the spiritual plane. Rather than being led of the Spirit they are driven by the flesh.

Here’s the fourth way you can sink your ship, **just follow the crowd**, just follow the crowd. Look in Acts 27 verse 12 again. Of it, “The haven was not commodious to winter in, and the more part advised to depart thence also.” That is, they polled the crowd. They said, “What does everybody want to do?” Now there was a crowd on that boat, and when they took a vote two-hundred-seventy-two hands went up. Paul is outvoted. They said, “Let’s sail.” Learn this and learn it well, everyone listening to me; the majority is almost always wrong. Almost always the majority is wrong. “Fifty thousand Frenchman can be wrong.” Don’t get the idea that if everybody says it, that it’s right, that we have morality today in America by majority.

Twelve spies went out to spy out the land in Joshua’s day, in Numbers chapters 13 and 14. Ten said, “It can’t be done.” Only two said, “It could be done.” The ten were wrong, the two were right, isn’t that right? In First Samuel chapters 8 through 10, when the people didn’t have a king and they wanted a king, the people of Israel, they should have been a theocracy, but they wanted a monarchy. They said, “How many of you want a king?” And they all voted for a king. They got Saul. God gave them what they wanted but after a while they didn’t want what they got. Majority was wrong.

In Matthew 27 verses 20 through 22, when Jesus was there before Pilate. Pilate said, “I’m going to release a prisoner to you. Do you want me to release Jesus or Barabbas?” The Bible says that they shouted for Barabbas to be released and for Jesus to be crucified! The majority said, “Release Barabbas and crucify Jesus!” Never a more heinous crime has ever been committed on this Earth, but it was done at the will of the majority. And there’re many times when young people want to do something, or adults, and you’re trying to find out what you ought to do. You go from person to person to person to person and you ask people, trying to rack up enough votes to get permission to do what you already wanted to do anyway. You sink your ship that way by going with the majority. Do you know what the majority generally is? A lot of people pooling their ignorance. That’s what it is.

Now, here’s another way to sink your ship. **Just depend upon circumstances**, make your decision upon circumstances. Look in Acts 27 verse 13, “And when the south wind blew softly, supposing they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.” The wind just blows so soft. They said, “Look at this! The sun is shining, the sea is calm; the wind is blowing in our direction. It must be the will of God.” Do you know there’re a lot of people who are just led by circumstances? And they say, “Well, I just told God; if He didn’t want me to do it, don’t let it happen.” You know people like that, I mean, that’s people. They said, “Well, I asked God, ‘Lord, it must be Your will. It looks good.’” Just circumstances! And that soothing south wind was soon to turn into a horrible, ferocious storm that would sink that ship. There’s five ways to sink a ship. It’s still happening today. These are the reasons for the storms of life.

Let’s talk a little bit about **the reaction to the storms of life**. How do people react? Well, let’s begin now in Acts 27 verse 14 and read through verse 15, “But not long after, there arose against it a tempest-



tuous wind, called Euroclydon. And when the ship was caught up, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive." What does that mean? They couldn't control it. I mean, the wind now just picks up the ship and they said, "We can't turn this way, we can't turn that way." And it's just blown along by the storm.

What's the first thing that happens to an ungodly man when he gets himself in a storm? Well, **they just let her drive.** What I mean by that is; there are broken dreams. The old ship's captain and owner and the centurion, not as strong as they thought they were. The Bible says, "They couldn't bear up." I've seen it happen many times. These people, these moguls, these tycoons, these know-it-alls, let the storm come, and they find themselves now driven by winds that they cannot control. They're at the mercy of forces that they cannot understand, dimly comprehend. They're aboard, a floundering vessel, dreams dissolve.

Number two, **they begin to labor with a desperate effort.** Look, if you will, in Acts 27 verse 16, "And running under a certain island which is called Claudia, we had much work to come by the boat." That is, they got on the lee side of that island. And things lightened up a little bit and they said, "Hey, we've got to get this thing straightened out." And so now, with beads of perspiration on their brow and their backs aching, they're trying to get the tackle of the ship back together. They're trying to get it all back together, and they are working with much labor. You know what the devil will tell you? The devil will tell you, "It is hard to be a Christian." That is a lie. Jesus said in Matthew 11 verses 29 and 30, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." The Bible says in Proverbs 13:15, "The way of the transgressor is hard." I don't mean there's no discipline in being a Christian; I don't mean that at all. I don't mean there's no hardness in being a Christian. Yes, we're to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, but as far as the labor, the grueling, gruesome toil, that comes with sin. There're so many people who are making this desperate effort to try to put things back together. The old devil has lied to you.

But not only do dreams dissolve and not only does work increase, but **resources are wasted.** Look, if you will, in Acts 27 verse 18 and following through verse 21, "And being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship." What does that mean? They started throwing stuff overboard. "And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship." Why they're just dumping things into the ocean. And then look in verse 20, "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was taken away. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, 'Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me.'" "Oh," he said, "I told you, I told you," "and not have loosed from Crete." Now look at this last sentence now, "and not to have gained this harm and loss." One of the most costly things around is sin, sin. These people, they work and they waste. They're throwing it overboard. Everything that they sought, thought was so precious, is not precious now. The worldly man spends the first half of his life gaining his wealth. He spends the last half of his life spending his wealth to get his health back. And he's unhappy in both halves of his life. What a colossal waste it is.

And there're people sitting in this building who would give everything they possess right now to have their son sober again; to have their family back again; to have the emotional stability of a loved one restored again. But these people aboard the ship, they're driven by the wind. They wander, they labor, they work, they throw it overboard, they waste.



People talk about a war on poverty. You know what we need in America? A war on sin. I mean, when people get right with God, the Bible says in Psalm 35:27, “God takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servants.” And so their resources are wasted.

And then **they lose hope**. Look if you will, in Acts 27 verse 29 of this same chapter, “And fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast out four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.” “Oh! If I just had some light, if I just knew what to do!” They rejected God’s light. And now they find themselves in darkness. You see, listen, the sailors of that day, they didn’t have the modern instrumentation that we have today. They sailed by the stars, the sun, the moon, the land, the shore. But the Bible tells us in Acts 27 verse 20 all these things disappeared. They’re gone! All of the things that they said were so important, their business charts, their surveys, their polls. All of these things, they’re gone. What do you do, dear friend, when the stars go out of your night and the sun disappears out of your day? These people in this stygian darkness, wishing for the day. Hopes vanish.

And then you know what they do? **They get very foolish**. They began to make foolish plans because they don’t have stars to steer by, and so there’s sort of an inner gyro that takes over. Look if you will in Acts 27 verses 30 and 31, “And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under color as though they would have cast anchors out of the flagship. Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, ‘Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.’”

Now there were some sailors aboard. They said, “Let’s pretend we’re going to let an anchor out of the bow of the ship. There’s a little boat there, there’s a little lifeboat there. We’ll get in that lifeboat. We’ll get off this big ship. We’ll escape.” Paul said, “You tell those guys if they don’t stay on the ship, there’s no hope at all.” What was this? It was a form of escapism that was built upon selfishness. I’ve seen it happen many times. A man who turns to alcohol; that’s a form of escapism that’s built on selfishness. You say, “Well, I’ll drown my problems.” No, they can swim, dear friend. You’re the one who is going to drown. The man who gets a divorce, the woman who gets a divorce, that’s escapism built on selfishness! You made the storm and now you’re trying to get a lifeboat to get out of it. The kid who runs away from home. The ultimate act of selfishness and cowardice is suicide. If you’re thinking about suicide, let me tell you something, friend; suicide is no way out of the storm. You listen to me, it never! Never! Never solves a problem. It is the ultimate in selfishness and cowardice.

But these people, here they are, the wind is driving them along, they’re working, they’re throwing everything overboard; they can’t see which way to go. Do you know people like that? Folks, the world is full of them. And it was a storm that they’d been warned about to begin with, not to get into it. Now that’s how the godless sometimes go through storms.

But what about the godly? Let’s see the old apostle Paul here. This is a blessing to you. Look if you will in Acts 27 verse 22. Here’s the apostle Paul, he calls everybody, all hands on deck. And the apostle Paul says, “I’ve got an announcement to make.” “And now I exhort you to be of good cheer.” Can you imagine a man saying that in the midst of these problems? Now today, there’re some of us, they think we’re just Pollyanna. They think we don’t know what we’re talking about when we give a good message in the midst of the days that we’re in. There’re three classes in America: those who are afraid, those who don’t know enough to be afraid, and those who know their Bibles.



Here's the apostle Paul. He says, look at Acts 27 verses 22 and 23, "Be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship." That is, the ship is going to be lost. For he says, "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve." So the angel of God here was the Lord Jesus, because he belonged to Jesus. And the Lord Jesus got on board that ship with the apostle Paul. And He says, "Don't be afraid Paul." And then again in Acts 27 verse 25 he gives that message that he often gives when we're in the midst of a storm, "Be of good cheer."

"Paul! Who puts that smile on your face in the midst of the storm?" Paul says, "The same one that gave me songs in the night when I was in a dungeon at Philippi. His name is Jesus." I see the apostle Paul walking on the deck of that ship, quoting the Word of God, Psalm 107 verses 23 and following to verse 30, "They that go down to the sea in ships, they that do business in great waters these see the wonders of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep. For He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the winds thereof. They mount up to the Heaven, they go down again into the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet for He bringeth them unto their desired haven." Difference in the reaction of those who know the Lord and those who don't know the Lord when they get in a storm. Maybe if you're in a storm right now you might want to read this Psalm. It'd be a great blessing to you, Psalm 107.

Now let's go to the last thing very quickly. We've talked about the reasons and the reactions to the storm. What was **the result of the storm?** Well, look again if you will in Acts 27 verses 23 and 24, "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, 'Fear not Paul.'" Now folks, underscore this right now. "'For thou must be brought before Caesar.'" Now, who was Caesar? He's the Roman Emperor. Where did he live? In Rome. Where was the ship headed? Toward Rome, toward Italy. And God says, "Paul, that's where you are going." Now listen to me, folks, God had a plan. And God's plan was to get Paul to Rome. In Acts chapter 23 verse 11, God had said to Paul, "Thou must bear witness also at Rome." No ifs, ands, and buts about it. God had predetermined that. In Acts 28 verse 14, after this twenty-seventh chapter, it says, "And so we went toward Rome."

Now, listen to your pastor. I don't know a better illustration in the Word of God than this that shows divine sovereignty and human responsibility at the same time. Was it God's plan that that ship set sail? No! God had told Paul with spiritual radar, "Don't sail!" That was not the plan of a loving God. But did that stop God's ultimate plan? Absolutely not. What was on that ship? Well, Paul was on that ship. I'll tell you what else was on that ship: Ephesians, and Philippians and Colossians was on that ship. I'll tell you what else was on that ship: the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts was on that ship. I'll tell you what else was on that ship: the sovereign will of Almighty God! And every bad decision they made could not overrule the will of God. Isn't that amazing?

Where God does not rule, God overrules. Do you ever get on one of these great big airplanes going overseas, say a 747? You can sleep, or get a drink of water, eat or not eat, have a coke or a coffee, whatever you want. But friend, while you're making all those little decisions, that airplane is just headed to a certain airport. I mean, there's a pilot that is carrying that ship. There's a predetermined plan that is taking that ship to that airport, and on board you say, "Well, I'm making this decision and that decision." But at the same time there's another power that's just bringing it on. And you listen. We serve a mighty



God. What a Mighty God we Serve! Christians may fail, they may flounder, they may sin, but if they belong to Jesus Christ, there's a sovereign power that says, "One day My child will be just like My Son, the Lord Jesus, and all Hell can't stop it." We are predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son.

The old church, the wonderful church, the church founded by the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes the church makes so many bad decisions, so many times we fail, so many times we do things we ought not to do as a church, and I'm talking about the church in general. But you know what Jesus said? Jesus said in Matthew 16 verse 18, "Upon this rock I'll build My church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it." God is building for Himself a bride, and all Hell can't stop it! And all of the rulers of this world, and all of these people who are against our Lord and His Christ. Read Psalm 2. They make their rules, their laws against our Lord, they don't want Him, they don't want His commandments, they don't want His Word, they don't want His morality, and they say, "Let us break His bonds asunder and cast them from us!" Psalm 2:3. And yet God says in Psalm 2:6, "Yet have I set My Son upon My holy hill of Zion," and, "Jesus will reign where the sun doth His successive journeys run. His kingdom spread from shore to shore till moon shall wax and wane no more."

Folks, you listen to me! We are on the winning side. He cannot fail! He must prevail. There was a storm, but Paul said, "So we went to Rome." Paul said, "Be of good cheer, I believe God." Acts 27 verse 11 says, "The centurion believed the owner of the ship." Do you know what all life comes down to? Just who do you believe? Just who do you believe? Paul said, "I believe God." Don't make a mistake of believing the wrong person because if you do, you may be engineering a storm that you'll not like at all.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Why don't you say in your heart right now, "I believe God. In the midst of the storm I believe God, before the storm, after the storm I believe God. I'm taking my stand on the Word of God." And if you've never been saved, listen now, not to the words of some college professor, or some business expert. Listen to the words of God. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Say it, "I believe God." Pray, "Come into my heart, Lord Jesus, come now. Forgive my sins, save me. Thank You for dying for my sin. I believe You're the Son of God, I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now, today, I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Help me never to be ashamed of You because You died for me. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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