

Acts Chapter 27-28

If you have read it beforehand it makes you feel like it is Robinson Crusoe meets Moby Dick because it talks about a treacherous sailing from where he was in Acts 26 and then he is on his way to Crete and then from Crete he is supposed to go to Rome through the safe side but the Lord you will see later in so much of his sovereign control had other plans in mind for him.

Luke actually wants us to think about an application, can we give God the glory in the midst of our grieves?

So this is the adventure that Paul is set to go through. This is his last journey. He was trialed in Cydonia and then he was told to go to all the way to Italy. This is not an easy trip. If we use the modern roads it will take us 658 hours in public transportation to go from Jerusalem all the way to Italy. The old fashioned way was to go through Pax Romana which is along the shores. Now the sad thing is that if you think that is difficult Paul was supposed to go through the easy way. There is a passage here in chapter 27 in verse 12 and 13, they were supposed to just go from Fairhaven's to a town called Phoenix which is on the north side of Crete area that so that way they can find shelter from the northeastern winds of the Adriatic typhoon and be able to just stay there for the winter and then stay there until be able to take the safe passage through Corinth and from Corinth then to Italy, but they got lost in the seas for two weeks.

There were so much troubles that Paul gone through and yet we still see something very interesting about Paul and we can then see the work of Christ in Paul's life and therefore the potential of Christ work in our lives as well.

In Luke chapter 1 verse 3 he has a commitment to say that I will give a full account to you most excellent Theophilus and he gave the Gospel of Luke to Theophilus and in the same writing style we see also in the book of Acts. Paul also acknowledges Luke in the letters of Colossians and the letter of Philemon and these are important because these are the letters that Paul wrote in prison while he was in Rome and because we knew that Luke journeyed with him throughout all of this we then know that this is a trustworthy record. We also know that Luke not only wrote about this record he actually participated in this part of the journey because of what we have here is called first person plural participle.

Acts 27:9 Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast was already over, Paul advised them,

He used this common phrase for people to know because the common Greek people will not know Day of Atonement but they will know the Fast because suddenly a whole minority group would fast together before the Day of Atonement, so he will write the Fast and that will actually also mean a second thing when it comes to travelling, after the Fast no one should be sailing because it will be winter time, the typhoons will be great, the waves will be very wild and they should not be sailing but somehow or another by almost we would say by God's

divine appointment the very well-seasoned soldier decided to go back onto the sea and sail a bit further and find a better place for shelter, but later he found out that it was a big mistake.

When we look at the map and we think of the idea that there were no motor boats, no steam ships, all it was done by waves of the sea and winds of the air or trying to get yourself all the way from one end in Middle east to all the way into Mediterranean Europe, the trip itself would have been long and dangerous even in Spring. Luke has given us great details in the Book of Acts, which are very-very difficult to make up.

This is something that although we would think that it is such an extraordinary trip, there is no way anyone could have gone through all that hassle and nonsense and to be able to survive and yet Paul did and in all that he still was able to give God glory.

Even in the last lap for Paul it wasn't easy for him. There is a whole list of grieves or troubles or situations that he has been through, I think if we even go through one of these we will rather quit.

He must go to Rome.

This is an interesting verse because if we look at chapter 26:32

32And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

He did not need to go through this whole trip, all he had to do is say, look I am sorry I caused a fuss, I am speaking the truth, nothing political, nothing insinuating against Rome or Israel. I am just teaching theology, that is all there is to it. I am sorry, he could have just said that and then carried on his ministry in the Middle East, but he said I am a citizen of Rome and I demand if you want to hit me or punish me any further bring me to Caesar and because he said that then he went through this journey.

So he could have gone now this mess by yet in the end he did. I personally think that God actually ordained him to do that because there is much work that is needed to be done in Rome. It was also a long journey. The average time that they think it would take for Paul to go from Jerusalem all the way to Rome will have been more than a year. It is recorded in the text also that they went at the fast that would in late autumn early winter in September. By the time they go through that they said that there was a part there where it says

Now there was a ship from Alexandria with twin gods on it. They had spent the winter in Malta as well. So that means they had to go through all winter which is until March or April and if they have left Malta in April to go to the first port in Rome that they recorded it will take about another two to three months because they have to stop. They had to go from place to place. The Alexandria ship was also a business ship, so they have to go to different ports before going to their final destination which is in Rome. So, all that would have taken them a year.

No one listen to Paul or his advice. Paul warned the Roman soldiers about the journey that he is having a feeling that we might not make it, but no one listened to him. Julius finally decided to say, we will try and go forward. They got stuck in a storm for two weeks. He was sanded and stuck in an unknown land for three months.

When on the shore Paul gets bitten by a viper. Such bad luck the world will think about Paul that even the prisoners and the ship people there said, justice really wants to get him because even though he survived the storm, a viper went and get at him. Finally, he went through all that to be house arrested for two years. All this could have been avoided if he simply said, 'I am sorry', but because he was fervent in his faith, because he was true to what he believes. He said no. This was not the worst part of the Paul's life. There is a passage in 2-Corinthians where Paul was sharing about the struggles that he had gone through while sharing the gospel. 2-Corinthians was written in year 59 AD that means that he already gone through a lot of other problems even before ship wrecked in the Book of Acts.

11:24 Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. **25** Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; **26** on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; **27** in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. **28** And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

Paul's life is horrible. The text here that Luke wants to emphasize is this; Paul's life in proclaiming the gospel and proclaiming this king of kings is horrible and each and every one of us going through a walk of life now we have also had horrible chapters in our lives.

We go through things like this in our lives and we actually feel helpless, hopeless, without knowledge, without knowing who to go to for help. Paul knows exactly how we feel, in fact even more and yet through the narration of Luke he has this encouragement, 'behind every grief and behind every grievance that he has experienced God shall receive glory.' Behind every grievance that we have gone through God will receive glory. Behind every grief there is an opportunity for God to be glorified and this is what we can see in the text.

We look at how God is in sovereign control behind every circumstance. Paul has to go to Rome, no one listened to him and yet he was able to finally encourage the sailors in the Lord. They were on the ship for several days and finally Paul stood up and said, *I told you so but now let me just encourage you. Because I am impressed upon by the Lord that He is actually sending me to Rome to go and see Caesar and therefore He will not let this ship sink. He will not let us all die because He has a job for me to go to Rome and because of that we will survive this.*

That is great encouragement and it is encouragement in the Lord and the Lord actually delivered them through. He gave witness to the sailors and prisoners. There were 276 passengers and sailors on that ship who he would never had been able to show the power of

Christ if he did not go on this trip and every one of them was so mesmerized of what happened to him that they thought he was a god. What happened to these 276 people on the board we are not really sure but we can say for sure that they were very much impressed by the God of all and that is what our lives are for.

Because of his faithfulness to God and because he found favor in the centurion, the centurion spared the prisoners including him because the centurions wanted to save him.

In Acts 27:43

43 But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, 44 and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.

Because they were about to be ship wrecked and they were going to go into land the standard operating procedure for the soldiers is that before they go onto land they kill all the prisoners. Because if they go onto land they might run away and they will escape. Because Paul found favor in the eyes of centurion, he didn't just spared Paul he spared all of the soldiers and that is grace not just for Paul but grace for all those prisoners who don't deserve it.

We can be agents of his grace too. Paul got bitten by the viper but the viper's bite didn't kill him. He didn't just survived the bite but when he found out that a quite a number of people were sick in the island of Malta he actually healed many of them. So even in the midst of all of this trouble God still used Paul to be able to speak into the island of Malta and heal people there so that one day we will have a legacy.

Paul may be in prison and in house arrest for two years but he preached the gospel to both Jews and gentiles in Rome, something that he will not have been able to do. If he had kept his mouth shut he will only just remain in Jerusalem but because of this he was given the opportunity to speak at the epicenter of Pax Romana, the central government. It is like being held captive and no choice but to live and work among the ministers of our government and you have license to go ahead and share the gospel.

So with that reckless abandonment and in seeing and understanding that through by his weakness I can be able to give God glory he also then have the opportunity to speak into Rome which then became a very important city for Christianity throughout church history and when he had the time to spare I cannot imagine how much time he has to spare but yet he was able to write some of the most moving and important letters to churches which we know see in our New Testament that is the Book of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Because he was able to encourage these churches in the two years that he was in prison he now even until the day today for discipleship. Paul could not have seen this in his days but Christ saw it from the very beginning and that is why Paul had to be in Rome and all of this grief that he could have had he give God the glory and used every opportunity in every circumstance that he had to be able to proclaim the gospel of Christ and to give him glory and in that he found peace. It is no wonder that after his rant of all the dangers and struggles and troubles that he had gone through in 2-Corinthians that he then ends with this statement

For the sake of Christ then I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities, for when I am weak then I am strong. He was strengthened in his faith by the grace of our Lord Jesus and this is an encouragement for us even until today.

Two Applications Questions:

1. What areas in our lives especially in our grievances could we give God glory and be strengthened by him?

How there are something that we are going through in our lives and we can actually uphold one another in prayer because at the end of the day we are continuing Book of Acts. We are the continuation of the work of the gospel of Jesus in our lives that has left from Paul even from us today. There are things that we can uphold one another in prayer and may be help one another in Christ, so that in our experiences together here we give him glory.

2. How does a Christian measure a successful life?

If we take a secular key performance index and put it into Paul I think Paul would have failed. Three times he got ship wrecked; a worldly view may be that Paul might stop traveling.

The way world major success is totally different. There were times in Paul's life where he was stone, rejected. He was attempted to be murdered in another city but thankfully he escaped through going down a basket. We would have looked at Paul and said, by secular standard he is not a good preacher, but by the standards of God, because of his faithfulness Paul would definitely be the one that Jesus would say to him, well done good and faithful servant and enter now into my kingdom for eternal rest.

Ravi Zacharias always shares this testimony about how when he was 17 years old he nearly committed suicide until a man gave him a Bible. He read from John's Gospel chapter 14 where it says, because I live you also shall live then he committed his life to Christ and now he is one of the greatest speakers, preachers and apologist in some of the most dangerous settings and situations in the world. He is now being invited to speak at dozens and dozens of universities including IVY League universities in America.

But a story that was seldom told is the story of the guy who gave him the Bible in the first place and this guy's name is Fred David. He was the director of Youth for Christ in India. A part of his job is still going from hospital to hospital giving out free bibles, sharing the gospel to people. He was beaten up; he was thrown out of villages and homes. There was actually a few times where people have said that I am going to kill you if you convert my daughter to become a Christian. The only success story that he can ever cling on to is actually this one little thing that he did in his life. He had some Gideon bibles to spare. There was a hospital

nearby. He walked up the stairs. He went through all the sick beds and he started giving up bibles for free and one of them happened to be Ravi Zacharias.

Before Fred David died he said to Ravi Zacharias, “Sometimes I wondered if the sole purpose of my coming into this world was to bring you that bible in your hospital room.” Ravi said, “Fred you did a lot more than that.” Because Fred also poured into Ravi’s life, gave him Bible study, prayed for him sharing his life even though Fred was actually still going through very difficult times as an evangelist in India. One successful story bursted into a movement which we now know today in Ravi Zacharias’s Ministry, means thousands of people come to know Christ through this ministry and none of this would have happened unless Fred opted to say, I will go to India, unless Fred decided to take those few extra steps to go into another hospital to give another Bible to another person who he didn’t know whether it will be effective to anyone or not but because he did by faith it helped Ravi and the world is a different place because of that simple action.

God can use us through simple actions to change this country. By one act of Christ in your life you might actually change the life of another who would then change life of another, who might change the life of hundreds of others and that is giving God glory in the midst of our grievances.