

Acts 28:1-10 The Providence of God

Intro: Paddle board story/ no leash / disaster

A) That was very entertaining!!!

B) Sometimes the storms we go through are the result of our own foolish decisions

C) Other times it is the result of someone else's foolishness - but we still have to deal with it.

1) We still have to live through it

D) Remember in our study last week - we saw that Paul advised the Centurion Julius v.9 Paul advised them, ¹⁰ saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives." ¹¹ Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul.

E) Paul is in this storm because no one listened to him

The result of not heeding Paul's advice is the ship and crew encounter a HUGE STORM

A) Eventually end up ship wrecked on an Island called Malta

B) A place they had no intention of going to

1) But a place where Paul would end up being used in a big way - glorious ramifications for centuries to come

In our time today I want us to briefly look back at Ch.27

A) To see some common ways that people try to respond to storms

B) We will see 4 responses to the same storm - the first three are connected - **they feed off of one another**

1) They can lead us into a very bad place

C) But then we will see that there is a the right way to respond to the storms of life.

Then In the 2nd part of our study -in Ch.28:1-10 we are going to see the opportunity for ministry

A) That came from the storm

B) I have titled this study - The Providence of God

1) In it we will see how God can use what seemingly seems like a disaster for his glory.

Context - Paul's counsel is ignored - set sail

¹³ When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. ¹⁴ But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon. We know this is going to get worse - blows them 500 miles off course

In V.15 we see the first response to the storm

¹⁵ So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive. ¹⁶ And running under *the shelter* of an island called Claustra, we secured the skiff with difficulty. ¹⁷ When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis Sands, they struck sail and so were driven. ¹⁸ And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship. ¹⁹ On the third *day* we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands.

Here we see the first response that some people have in the midst of the storm -

A) We are going to fight - we are not going to let this storm break us

B) We are going to rise above this! - Sometimes that is the right approach,

I don't know if it is the athlete in me - but this is often my approach in these type of situations.

A) Put my head down and work hard.

B) Fight through it - no way this is going to beat me

C) That can be a good approach - especially if we are staying close to the Lord and relying on the Lord

Sometimes when we are in the midst of the storm and we are trying to fight our way through it

A) By the grace of God - we make it out the other side

B) When we make it out the other side there is a lot that we can look back on and learn from

B)But at the same time those storms can take a toll on us and leave us **exhausted and depleted**

C)Heavy storms can even leave us gun shy numb or even jaded

1)Never getting on a boat again - (that situation)

Sometimes when you fought your way thru that type of storm/ even though you make it out

A)It takes time to recover - you need time to heal

B)But for the person who is trying to fight their way through the storm

C)They are taking matters into their own hands - nothing is working - storm keeps coming

D)That leads to the 2nd response we see in our story V.20

²⁰ Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up. They lose all hope

A)They reach a breaking point where they just completely give up. -

B)These guys tried everything they knew how to do to make this situation right - nothing worked

1)Result they lost all hope.

2)They give up the fight.

Often times when someone gets to this point where they have given up all hope

A)The storm ends up defining them

B)Everything in life is now just so hard - and everything points back to that event - that storm

C)The thing that they just couldn't fight through any longer -

1)That is what defines them now - that has left them broken and bitter

D)All the problems they currently have in their life - are traced back to that moment

1)They are not a survivor- they are a casualty of a shipwreck.

That often leads to the 3rd response that we see in V. 27

²⁷ Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. ²⁸ And they took soundings and found *it* to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms. ²⁹ Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. ³⁰ And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, ³¹ Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." ³² Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

Often times the 3rd response that we see is so common today - Escape

A)Sometimes it means - Like these sailors were planning to do

B)they just jump ship - I am out of here.

C)Put far too common this is what we see today when people have lost all hope -

1)they try to escape into drugs or alcohol

D)They start smoking pot to put their mind at ease - or they start drinking to help them sleep

E)Or they escape into video game playing - Gaming - Porn

1)Or Binge watching Netflix

Anything they can to get their minds off of their problems and the storm they are in

A)That makes for a horrible existence.

B)As a Pastor for the past 38 yrs -I have watched that scenario play out in countless lives

1)Storm hits and they try to fight through for a while

C)Then they reach a breaking point - they lose all hope of anything every changing

D)Then they start looking for ways to deal with the struggle by escaping

With that in mind - Let's see what should always be our first response in the midst of the storm.

A)Not just our first response but our continual response.

B)What does Paul do? Remember he is in this storm because no one listened to his advice back in

C)Paul is not mad he is not bitter - Not pointing fingers - What Does Paul do? He seeks the Lord
²¹ But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. ²² And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. ²³ For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, ²⁴ saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’
²⁵ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. ²⁶ However, we must run aground on a certain island.

What is Paul doing in the midst of the storm? He is praying - he is seeking the Lord

A)God sends an Angel to give him a word of comfort.

B)You are going to make it to Rome - but the ship is going to be lost

C)We saw in our message last week that Paul was pointing to 3 strong Anchors we can cling to

#1 The Strong anchor of God’s presence

A)God shows up in the midst of our storms

B)That storm from 2008-2011 - God’s presence in my Devotions so strong - carried me

C)#2 The Strong Anchor of God’s promises - Rome

1)God calls us to be Promise Believers - Cling to the promise - He will see us through - complete the work..

And then we have #3 The Strong Anchor of God’s past faithful performance.

A)Paul could look back to the 3 other times that he had been shipwrecked - God preserved him

B)We all have the testimony of God’s past performance in our lives

1)As well as the testimony from the pages of Scripture

C)God’s past track record is 100% - He is trust - worthy -

There are two phrases I love to read in the gospels

A)And it came to pass - Storms always pass

B)The storm you are in is going to pass - the question is what are you going to look like on the other side

C)See that is the other phrase I love to read - And when they came to the other side.

D)Paul is going to make it out of this storm - let’s see what happens

1)And what God does - when it came to pass and when they make it out.

³⁹ When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. ⁴⁰ And they let go the anchors and left *them* in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. ⁴¹ But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

⁴² And the soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. ⁴³ But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump *overboard* first and get to land, ⁴⁴ and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land. - Solid ground

E)They end up on this island called Malta

Here we are going to see how the storm leads to an opportunity. Ch.28

Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. ² And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold.

A)Don't think little camp fire this is a massive bound fire - 276 men

B)What is Paul doing ? Notice he is serving 3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire

Paul is not like: I am an important apostle - Luke you get some sticks for the fire.

A)He is not copping an attitude - I am THE hero -

B)I am responsible for all of our lives being saved - Julius - have some of your men get sticks

C)Or those sailors who tired to bail - make them..... sticks

D)NOPE Paul is being a servant -

1)he is taking advantage of the opportunity to model Christ-

E)Storms lead to opportunities to model Christ to others

Notice what happens next

, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4 So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live."

The natives know what kind of Viper this is: Bites you - you swell up and die rather quickly.

A)So the natives are like - this is fate - the gods are getting this man

5 But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. 6 However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

B)When nothing happens to Paul -they change their opinion - this guy is a god!

C)Note this: Your storm will lead you into other ministry opportunities

1)But those other ministry opportunities will come with their own set of difficulties

D)The question is Are you willing to endure those difficulties in order to get to continue the ministry.

In almost every ministry I have ever been a part of there have been difficulties - never smooth sailing

A)What do you do when difficulties arise?

B)What does Paul do here when the serpent bites him? He shakes it off

C)One other place in scripture where we see this term shake it off is used

It happens when Jesus sends his disciples out to minister -

A)he says when you come to a town that doesn't want to hear your message

B)Shake the dust of that city off of your feet. - Go to the next town

C)What do you do when you encounter difficulty in serving Jesus - you shake it off and KEEP GOING

Ok let's see how this plays out

7 In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. 8 And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. 9 So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also **came and were healed.** 10 They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.

And V.11 tell us they stayed there 3 months - Paul is ministering during this time.

A)Now the narrative doesn't tell us this - but history tells us that Publius got saved

B)And became the pastor of the church on Malta

C)It became a thriving church.

You can visit the Island of Malta today and go to the Catacombs -

A)The burial sites of believers during the 2nd and 3rd century

B)These Catacombs give record of 1,000's upon 1,000's of believers in Jesus on the Island of Malta.

Why? Because a storm drove Paul to a place where he never otherwise would have been.

A)In the storm Paul sought the Lord - Paul trusted the Lord - Paul remained anchored in the Lord

B)The result God used Paul - and a work was birthed that impacted that Island and beyond for centuries.

C)Listen our God can totally bring beauty from the Ashes

Pray.

As we move toward communion today.

A)Let's remember Jesus - who bore the greatest storm for all of us.

B)Cross - to rescue us from sin and shame

C)Took our punishment

Unworthy manner -

Give your life to Jesus today!

Prayer today:

In the storm- **Fighting hard in your own strength - surrender to His will - devos**

In the storm -

****Lost all Hope** - Hope in God again today. Trust Him**

In the storm - **You have checked out - escaping into sinful behavior get prayer today.**

Look for opportunities to serve.