

Trust
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Acts 27:27–44

Opening: “Safe and sound” - Humanly speaking, none of us desires to JUST be safe and sound, we want to live on “Easy Street.” What we would really like is that “Easy Button” from Staples! Remember what it said when you pushed the big, red button?

Life isn’t lived on “Easy Street” and it doesn’t come with an “Easy Button.” Life comes with storms and sometimes it even comes with shipwrecks. We wish for the “Easy Button” but in the middle of a storm, “safe and sound” sounds pretty good.

Today’s text is about the Apostle Paul in a literal storm and shipwreck. If you’ve ever been on a cruise you experienced the lifeboat drill. During that drill what do they hang around your neck?

The point: Following Christ doesn’t mean living on “Easy Street.” Christ-followers live at the corner of “TRUST and OBEY.” In the middle of a storm our address changes to “TRUST and ENDURE.” Storms will come but “take courage” we have been given a life preserver and His name is Jesus.

In Acts 27, Paul, a prisoner, was headed to Rome on a grain ship with 276 others. Initially, the voyage went smoothly but then they encountered a fierce storm called the Northeaster. They made it to Crete and Paul warned them not to sail further but his warnings went unheeded. For fourteen days, they battled the storm, losing hope as navigation became impossible which forced the crew to lighten the ship by throwing cargo overboard. At this point, Paul stepped forward to encourage the crew. He said, *“The God I serve sent an angel last night with good news and bad news. The bad news: The ship will be destroyed. The good news: All of us will survive, safe and sound, shipwrecked on an island.”* In other words, it will get worse before it gets better but *“I believe God in his goodness has granted safety to us all.”*

- Let’s look for some lessons in this text that apply to our own storms in life.

(NLT) —30 Then the sailors tried to abandon the ship; they lowered the lifeboat as though they were going to put out anchors from the front of the ship. **31** But Paul said to the commanding officer and the soldiers, “You will all die unless the sailors stay aboard.” **32** So the soldiers cut the ropes to the lifeboat and let it drift away.

- God gave Paul the influence he would need with Roman officers and soldiers.
- Verse three tells us the Roman Centurion Julius was “very kind to Paul.”
- Though Paul was a prisoner, God gave him favor with his guards. God did the same thing giving Paul and Silas favor with the jailer in the earthquake in Acts 16.
- **Lesson #1:** In a storm God will give us favor with people who can help.

- Verse 30: The sailors tried to abandon ship leaving the passengers to perish. God's plan to get everyone to safety would require those experienced sailors.
- **Lesson #2:** In a storm, trust God's plan and don't abandon ship.
- In tough times we may have "escape fantasies." *"Stop the World and Let Me Off!"* Christ-followers take our orders from Him on when to stay and when to go. When we feel like running is when we must TRUST HIM, SEEK HIM, and ENDURE.

33 Just as day was dawning, Paul urged everyone to eat. "You have been so worried that you haven't touched food for two weeks," he said. **34** "Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair of your heads will perish." **35** Then he took some bread, gave thanks to God before them all, and broke off a piece and ate it.

- In a storm we worry, we stop eating, we stop exercising, we have trouble sleeping. Paul said, *"God's not going to let you die; eat something!"*
- **Lesson #3** – In a storm we must take care of ourselves physically and emotionally. When the Prophet Elijah was running for his life God put him to sleep under a "broom tree" and supernaturally provided water and bread to rest up for his journey. In a crisis, self-care is not selfish; it is essential to keep going.
- We can say with King David in **Psalm 4:8 (NLT)** — **8** In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe.
- In verse 35, Paul paused for the blessing. In verse 29 they prayed for daylight.
- **Lesson #4** – In a storm keep thanking and praising God for how he is providing.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (ESV)** **16** Rejoice always, **17** pray without ceasing, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

36 Then everyone was encouraged and began to eat—**37** all 276 of us who were on board. **38** After eating, the crew lightened the ship further by throwing the cargo of wheat overboard.

- **Lesson #5** – In a storm sometimes, we must throw some things over the side.
- Storms and shipwrecks may reveal we are clinging to things that may hinder God's plan. (i.e., doubts, distractions, grudges, unforgiveness, self-reliance) Disposable "cargo" in an individual matter. Ask God, *"What do I need to release?"*

39 When morning dawned, they didn't recognize the coastline, but they saw a bay with a beach and wondered if they could get to shore by running the ship aground. **40** So they cut off the anchors and left them in the sea. Then they lowered the rudders, raised the foresail, and headed toward shore.

- Their visibility was poor, but they had to do something so they "cut the anchors." Running the ship aground wasn't ideal, but it was the best plan available.
- **Lesson #6** – Though things may be unclear, sometimes we just have to trust God and "cut the anchors" rather than remain paralyzed with fear.

41 But they hit a shoal and ran the ship aground too soon. The bow of the ship stuck fast, while the stern was repeatedly smashed by the force of the waves and began to

break apart. **42** The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners to make sure they didn't swim ashore and escape. **43** But the commanding officer wanted to spare Paul, so he didn't let them carry out their plan.

- The ship got smashed and broke apart. Not good. But (in verse 44), the pieces of smashed ship became life rafts for the non-swimmers. A silver lining!
- **Lesson #7** – When the storm ruins your “ship” it's natural to grieve that, but life goes on. It's tragic that you lost the ship but you didn't lose your life!
- When Thomas Edison's laboratory was destroyed by fire the great inventor said to his son, *'Go get your mother and all her friends. They'll never see a fire like this again.'* When [his son] objected, Edison said, *'It's all right. We've just got rid of a lot of rubbish...Although I am over 67 years old, I'll start all over again tomorrow.'* He did just that. Sometimes God uses crisis for a new beginning.
- The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners lest they escape. The Captain wanted to spare Paul all were spared. Again, a display of God's favor and sovereignty.
- In verse 24 the angel said to Paul: *'Don't be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What's more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.'*ⁱ It was God's will and mercy that spared them all.
- **Lesson #8** – In a storm, trust the promises of God in scripture and pray that His will would be done, no matter what His will is.

43b Then he ordered all who could swim to jump overboard first and make for land. **44** The others held onto planks or debris from the broken ship. So everyone escaped safely to shore.

- **Lesson #9** – You may smell like seawater, but at least you survived! Whether we have to swim or paddle, in a storm we must do our part to get to shore.
- Chuck Swindoll writes that after the storm: *“You might have to go through therapy, redirect your life, admit wrong, or confess your part in the problem. You have to engage in the reality of the process...and if you reject it, you will drift way at your own peril.”*ⁱⁱ Reality requires us to do whatever is needed to move ahead.
- For followers of Christ there is no “Easy Button” we push and hear, “That was easy!” Our button would say, *“That sure built my trust in God!”*
- What does scripture say about how we should deal with storms? There are many verses; here are a few:

John 16:33 (ESV) — **33** I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

James 1:12 (ESV) — **12** Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Romans 5:3–5 (ESV) — **3** Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **4** and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, **5** and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Romans 8:28 (ESV) — 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

- Now, the last lesson on going through storms. It is the most important lesson.
- I don't do rollercoasters; but my son-in-law is determined to teach my grandson to ride them. Help a granddad out. What do you think? Child abuse? (kidding)
- Why would a loving father make his son go through this thrill ride trauma?
- How is that a parallel to living through storms as a child of God?
- **Lesson #10** - Sometimes God calms the storm; sometimes He takes us through the storm for our good and His glory. Every time He keeps promises like these:

Isaiah 43:2 (ESV) — 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

Deuteronomy 31:6 (ESV) — 6 Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”

So, What's the Takeaway?

- This lesson made me think of the lyrics of a Southern Gospel song written by Gerald Crabb. Listen to these words:

*“He never promised that the cross would not get heavy
And the hill would not be hard to climb
He never offered our victories without fighting
But He said help would always come in time*

*Just remember when you're standing in the valley of decision
And the adversary says 'give in'
Just hold on, our Lord will show up
And He will take you through the fire again”ⁱⁱⁱ*

- Life comes with storms. Sometimes it comes with shipwrecks. Followers of Christ never go through them alone; God is guiding us every step of the way.
- The Christian life doesn't come with an “Easy Button” it comes with a LIFE PRESERVER and His name is Jesus. He gave His life so we can have eternal life and He will be with us through those storms of life.

ⁱ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Ac 27:24). Tyndale House Publishers.

ⁱⁱ Swindoll Study Bible – Pg. 1368

ⁱⁱⁱ Gerald Crabb. © 1999 Lehsem Songs