

Acts 28.1-16 “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you”

Ch 27 Dr. Luke vivid Story Several Weeks at Sea – 276 People, incl Paul

Paul prisoner of Rome – Heading for Trial before Caesar

Stormy Voyage ends w Ship in Pieces v. 44 “all brought safely to land”

DARK and STORMY Night has ENDED > Ch 28 – NEW DAY of LIFE!

1. Daylight on the Calm Sea

a. Arrived Alive

v. 1 After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta

READ God's PROMISES, NOT God's PROVIDENCE

Paul Trusted God in All Circumstances thru Shipwreck & Snakebite

Christians must INTERPRET Scripture NOT CIRCUMSTANCES

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you... For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. Isaiah 43:2-3

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law. Deuteronomy 29.29

Why Questions // Secret Things > Trust Father in Heaven Knows Best

NOT All Christians are ALWAYS SAVED from STORMS > Some DIE

God's Promises TRUE in DEATH and LIFE > God is ETERNAL

If God has work for us to do, then God will keep us alive to do it. And if you have finished the work that God has given you to do, why should you want to linger around here any longer?

James Boice

ONLY Guarantee > GOD is with US > In LIFE and in DEATH

How BIG is your GOD? How BIG your FAITH in HIM & His Purposes

God of the BIBLE has ALL - Wisdom – Love – Power – Justice

GOD is God of ALL Circumstances > TRUST Him for Details of LIFE

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Romans 8.32

b. Blessed by Barbarians v. 2 The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold.

Gk 'Native People' = BARBARIANS/ Anyone NOT Greek was Barbarian

STRANGE Way they SPOKE – “BAR / BAR”

Luke's Emp Favorable Conditions: Exceeding Kindness / Hospitality

v. 7 the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days

ALL 276 People into Gov's Home?? PROBABLY NOT: Paul & M Team

In almost every city that Paul visited, Luke mentions the person who was the magistrate in charge...not only does he...get their names right, he even gets their titles right James Boice

v. 10 They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed.

v. 12 Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days.

Now WIND was IN THEIR FAVOR – Sea Voyage was PLEASANT

v. 13 from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium – Southernmost Tip of ITALY - And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli

v. 14 we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for 7 days

Amazing Opportunity given Paul was Prisoner bound for Rome!

v. 15 brothers heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius – 43 Miles - and Three Taverns – 20 Miles from Rome - to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

v. 16 And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him.

DID you EXPECT Any LESS? God SAID Paul would get to ROME!

Over 2 yrs JUDEAN Prison, 6 Different Ships, 1 SHIPWRECK! – Rome!

2. Darkness over the Cause of Suffering

MALTESE Islanders > Try and INTERPRET CIRCUMSTANCES...

v. 4 When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.

REMOTE Islanders Ask SEARCHING Questions: Life/Death/Judgment

Xians Today: Bad Happens 'he is a secret sinner...skipping devotions??'
 CanNOT Always draw CLEAR Line between Circumstances & CAUSES

a. Common Suffering – NATURAL Course of Life on Planet Earth

Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward. Job 5.7

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. 1 Corinth 10.13

Result of Living in FALLEN World / Troubles facing ALL HUMANITY

vs. 8,9 It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured.

...Maltese Fever, a recurring illness...common on island...like malaria... an acute phase when the afflicted would be desperately ill R.C. Sproul

Uncle got Cancer: Healthy Man – Clean Living – Fit, Healthy, Ran Daily

Adopted Rigorous Diet: Eat Healthy to Beat Cancer, Lived Fruit & Veg

Lived More Yrs WELL, Served God FAITHFULLY – Now DEAD!

1 Thing can be CERTAIN About > Eventually > EVERYONE Dies!

b. Corrective Suffering – God gets us BACK on the RIGHT PATH!

"...the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

Hebrews 12.5-8

Call to Self-Examination – How is your Life w God? Faithful? Fruitful?

Nobody Perfect, LYING if Think you ARE – Moving Forward? Progress?

NO Proof you are FOLLOWING Jesus, Maybe You're NOT!

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test? 2 Corinthians 13.5

c. Constructive Suffering Character Developing – Making us Stronger

we rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us Romans 5.3-5

Modern False Teaching: Holy Spirit = Wealth, Comfort, Painless JOY

Suffering Not just for SINNERS, Suffering makes us BETTER SAINTS

Link between PAIN of SUFFERING and PRESENCE of HOLY SPIRIT

Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God...yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Acts 7.54-58

John WESLEY – was M. BEFORE was a REAL Christian!

On Mission to America, SHIP across ATLANTIC, Terrible Storm!

English IMMIGRANTS SCREAMING in Panic, Fear –

“I found to my horror I was afraid, mortally afraid of dying” John Wesley

Also on Board Ship – German, MORAVIAN Christians > Very CALM

Men, Women, Children SINGING HYMNS thru Terrible STORM

Wesley asked w Great Surprise: R U NOT AFRAID? Women? Kids?

Moravian Courage & Confidence in X – Led toward Wesley’s Conversion

d. Christ-Glorifying Suffering – Stephen is GREAT EXAMPLE

Jesus & disciples saw man blind from birth, they asked "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" J: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned but this happened so the work of God might be displayed in his life John 9.1-5

Even Disciples Link BLINDNESS with BADNESS – WHO SINNED?

Rabbi’s > God Punished Children for SIN Committed in Mother’s Womb

Some of those LITTLE KICKERS Acting OUT their SINFULNESS

Baby Born Blind, Grew Child to Manhood Stumbling in Blindness

On That Day – Jesus Christ could HEAL him for Glory of God? YES!

The apostles were flogged & ordered by the Sanhedrin not to speak in the name of Jesus...The apostles left rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

Acts 5.40-41

In KZ: Olya from Kyrgyzstan Late 20’s / Masters from Columbia U, NY

Became Follower JESUS > Parents ANGRY she FORSOOK ISLAM

BRAIN Tumor Cancer / BAD / Surgeries / CHEMO / RECURRENCE

After Several Sad Years: Olya's parents have become Christians. She had been praying for years for their salvation. She thought that they would surrender their lives as a result of God sparing her life as well as the love and the support that the family of God had shown her. But they seemed really resistant. A few weeks ago, her parents and her invited an older Christian man to tea. He had an opportunity to share his faith with them. At the end of the conversation they prayed to receive Christ. You can imagine Olya's joy.

Often Story KZ – 1 Member saved from Islam – Hard! God saved Family
 Xtian Endured Hostility, Hurt, Accusation > Love, Kindness, Forgiveness
 Bible has ETERNAL Focus – NOT on BRIEF Span of this Life on Earth

e. Cosmic Suffering – Classic Story of UNEXPLAINED Suffering: JOB

ONE Terrible Day – Loses Cattle / Servants / Sons / Daughters

Job: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, & naked I will depart. Lord gave & the Lord has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" 1.20-21

In Job's case God was demonstrating before Satan & all the fallen & unfallen angels that a man will worship & serve God for who God is & not merely because God takes care of him and prospers him. James Boice

3 Friends – Make him MORE MISERABLE – MISTAKEN Theories

God: "Enough of your COMPLAINTS – Let ME Question YOU?"

POP Biology Quiz – Basics of Creation – Job SWALLows his PENCIL!

Then Job replied to the LORD: "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted... My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42.1-6

COSMIC Suffering of JOB – NEVER EXPLAINED

God NEVER gives a REASON – He does not HAVE TO! He is God!

God gets Bigger, Bigger – PROBLEMS of Job grow Smaller, Smaller

Cosmic Suffering – Determines Eternal Destiny of Human Race > JESUS

"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again"...when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." John 12.27-33

Cosmic Dimension on Malta – WHO is God? Maybe PAUL is God?

vs. 5,6 He shook off the creature into the fire & suffered no harm. They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

1 who Overcomes Suffering & DEADLY-Snake Bite is DIVINE!

Paul Picture of Jesus Power of Life, MORTAL Man – Soon DIE in Rome

3. Delight in Christian Service

a. Tranquility in Turmoil Paul & Team getting Much Needed Island R&R

Voyage 2 Rome: Riot, Beaten, Arrested, Prison, Voyage, Ship-Wreck

Hardly Notice Element of Human Suffering – Pain, Difficulty, Misery

NOT Emphasized by PAUL or LUKE > Story of GOSPEL-ADVANCE

the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." Acts 23.11

we finally gave up all hope of being saved... an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' " Acts 27.20-22

I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4.11-13

Hopeful phrase "I have LEARNED" NOT Natural, even for APOSTLE

Naturally Selfish – Discontent / Jesus IN US brings CONTENTMENT

b. Steadiness in Uncertainty – Everyone Else Lost Heads, Not Paul

Paul Knew CALLING – Circumstances did NOT Change his CALLING

"the God to whom I belong and whom I worship" Acts 27.23

LUKE Never Explicitly Says that Paul PREACHED Gospel of Christ here

NO Evidence Paul could KEEP QUIET about JESUS...ANYWHERE!

Paul believed Good News of Jesus was Presentation in WORD and DEED

c. Service in Suffering

NOVEMBER – COOL, AUTUMN Temperatures on MALTA

PAUL was HERO of VOYAGE > Saved All > SERVANT of ALL

v. 2,3 The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. 3 When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. 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...

It is only the little man who refuses the little task. William Barclay

vs. 8,9 It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. 9 And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured

Paul brot Healing Power of Jesus to the Island > Testimony of Jesus

Holy Spirit is God the Evangelist - Best of All Evangelists

Brot Every Single Xtian to Jesus since Day of Pentecost – Still Working!!

We all live with suffering. We all experience the disappearance of what we've loved and hoped for. You may feel this fruitlessness and the failure right now. But suffering is more than something to "get through." God is doing a million things in your suffering, working out countless details we can never imagine. We don't know most of what he's doing, but we do know that if we belong to him, suffering is a gift. Caleb Davis

Congregational Prayer – Psalm 34

The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous
and his ears toward their cry.

The face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears
and delivers them out of all their troubles

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

He keeps all his bones: not one of them is broken.

Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned. (Psalm 34:15-22)