

93. Paul Saw God Deliver Them from the Storm

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to provide godly leadership to others. We saw that in order to provide godly leadership, we must pray and meditate on the Word of God so that we know what to do when the opportunity comes. Then, when the Lord opens a door of opportunity, we are equipped to lead people by our example. Because Paul was praying and meditating on the Word of God, he was able to exercise godly leadership and preserve the lives of the two hundred and seventy-six people who were on the ship. Today, we will see how God worked to get all of the people on that ship safely to land.

We concluded our last topic by seeing that Paul encouraged the people to eat some food so that they would have the strength needed to get them to the shore. Acts 27:38 says, “So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.” The word that is translated “enough” means *to eat until a person is satisfied or full*. Here, we see that the example provided by Paul so encouraged the people that they ate until they were satisfied. That meant they would have the strength they needed that day to reach land.

We also see that they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea, so that the ship would float much higher as it neared the land. The transportation of this wheat from Egypt to Rome was the way that the owner of the ship made his living. To him, the wheat had great value. However, at this point everyone on the ship realized that it was more important to lighten the ship in order to make it possible for the ship to get closer to the land. As a result, the people on the ship quickly unloaded the entire cargo of wheat from the ship.

Acts 27:39-40 says, “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. 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.” For fourteen days, the people on the ship had not been able to see the sun or the stars. As a result, they had no idea where the ship had gone during that time. When the full light of day came, none of those on the ship recognized the land that they were approaching.

However, they noticed that there was a bay with a beach. The sailors decided they would try to sail the ship into the bay and then run the ship into the sand on the beach. The word translated “bay” is usually translated “bosom” and applied to the form of the upper part of a loose garment that a person wore. This word when translated “bosom”, speaks of the hollow form of the loose upper part of a garment in each of the five other places that the word is used in the New Testament. However, when it talked about water, it came to apply to a bay of the sea.

Then, they cut off the ropes that held the anchors and left the anchors in the sea. They also loosened the rudder ropes. Large ships in that day had two rudders. Because of the terrible storm, these rudder ropes had been used to lift the rudders out of the water, because the rudders could not be used in the storm. When the ropes were loosened, the rudders were allowed to fall back into their normal place so that the sailors could use the rudders to steer the ship as they tried to aim the ship into the bay. The sailors also hoisted the main sail of the ship so that the wind would carry them

toward the shore.

However, the ship ran into a problem as it was sailing toward the bay. Acts 27:41 says, “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.” Many times, there will be a sandbar or a reef that forms in the place where the water comes into the bay, because of the fact that the water is coming from two different directions. At least part of the time, the sandbar will be below the surface of the water. Because of the storm, the sailors had no way to see if there was a sandbar between them and the bay.

As a result, when the ship hit the sandbar, the front of the ship became stuck in the sand. There was no way to get the ship loose from the sandbar. The ship was stuck and remained immovable. This meant that the ship was at the mercy of the storm. The waves were coming from two different directions and were beating on the back part of the ship. As the waves continued to beat against the back of the ship, the back part of the ship began to break into pieces. This meant that the centurion and the soldiers had to decide what to do with the men that were prisoners.

Acts 27:42-44 says, “And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. 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, and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.”

The soldiers decided the best thing to do was to kill all of the prisoners to prevent them from swimming away from the ship and escaping. The soldiers knew the consequences if prisoners escaped. Acts 12:18-19 says, “Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed *there*.” In this passage, we see that Peter had escaped and so the soldiers who were guarding him were put to death. That was the penalty for allowing a prisoner to escape. To protect themselves from possibly being put to death, the soldiers decided that the safest thing to do was kill all of the prisoners that were on the ship.

However, the Roman centurion that was in charge of the soldiers had a much different idea. The Roman centurion wanted to save the life of Paul. The Roman centurion, Julius, had become a friend of Paul and trusted him. Acts 27:3 says, “And the next *day* we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and *gave* him liberty to go to his friends and receive care.” The centurion had even allowed Paul to leave the ship and go and visit his friends when the ship was at Sidon.

The centurion had also learned to depend on Paul for leadership during the storm, because Julius saw that the Lord was giving wisdom to Paul. In Acts 27:30-32, we read, “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, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, ‘Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.’ Then, the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.” The fact that the centurion depended on Paul for leadership during the storm meant that

the sailors stayed on the ship and were able to bring the ship closer to the shore.

The centurion had also seen how Paul had depended on the Lord and had led by example. The centurion had probably been controlled by fear along with the rest of the people on the ship when Paul shared the message that God had sent His angel that said that God would show His grace and spare the lives of all those who were on the ship with Paul. The centurion saw that Paul showed his faith in the promises of God by taking food, thanking the Lord for it and encouraging all of those on the ship to do the same so that they would have the strength to make it to the shore. The centurion realized that the only reason his own life was being spared was due to the fact Paul had shown real leadership, because of his faith in the Lord. As a result, the centurion had a great desire to protect the life of Paul and so he was willing to risk his life by ordering the soldiers to not kill the prisoners, but rather let them get to shore any way that they could.

The centurion then commanded the prisoners who could swim to jump overboard first and swim to the land. The centurion felt that because of the example of Paul, none of the other prisoners would attempt to escape once they reached land. He also told those who did not know how to swim how they could make it to the shore. He told them to find boards or pieces of the ship that were breaking off and to hold on to those pieces of wood and let the waves carry them to the shore.

Everyone on the ship saw that God was true to His promise to Paul, because when they got to land, they found that every person had escaped and reached land safely. Here, we see a real lesson about the importance of obedience to God. When we are obedient to Him, God will work through whatever circumstances we face to bring glory to His name. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” It should be our desire in all that we do to bring glory to the name of God. That will happen as we submit our lives to Him and trust the promises that He gives us in the Word of God.

We also want to show our physical and spiritual children how to bring glory to God by trusting Him to work through their lives as they are obedient to Him. As Romans 15:5-6 says, “Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We want to provide our children with an example of how to glorify God so that they can also glorify Him. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to bring glory to God.