

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 11.07.2021

GOD REVEALS SECRETS: ACTS 27

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Since ancient times, writers have pictured life as a journey or a voyage. We sometimes use the "voyage" metaphor in everyday conversation: "Smooth sailing!" or "Don't make me shipwreck!" or "Sink or swim!" In this week's study, Luke details the events of Paul's voyage to Rome and the shipwreck he encountered. This account of Paul's journey gives one of the most interesting and factual accounts of a sea voyage and a shipwreck to be found anywhere in ancient literature. Ideally, the ship Paul was on would have sailed straight west across the Mediterranean to Italy. But the westerly winds forced them northward along the coast of Israel and Asia Minor, stopping at a port called Myra. There they switched to an Egyptian ship that was headed to Italy, probably a grain ship leased by the Roman government to move food and supplies around the Mediterranean in support of Roman armies. The details of this voyage show how one man's faith can make a difference for him and for others "in the storms of life." What an encouragement to our faith! Let's get into our study...

1. Describe a voyage you may have experienced. Was it "smooth sailing" or were you about to "shipwreck"?
2. Why do you think life is often related to the voyage of a ship?
3. What stood out to you during this week's study?

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 27:1-20

Paul and some other prisoners were to be delivered to Rome under the leadership of Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. The ship embarked from Caesarea and sailed to Sidon in one day. Then, from Sidon to Myra, the voyage became difficult because of the westerly winds. At Myra, Julius found a larger ship going to Italy, so he abandoned the slower coastal ship and put Paul and the others on board this large grain ship from Egypt that carried 276 passengers. The strong winds again hindered their progress so that "many days" were required to cover 130 miles from Myra to Cnidus. The pilot then steered south-southwest and managed to make it to Fair Havens. Julius had to then decide whether to winter at Fair Havens or set sail and try to reach the port of Phoenix on the southern coast of Crete, about 40 miles away. Paul admonished them to stay in Fair Havens because it was the start of the stormy season. However, the men in charge gave little value to Paul's warning, an attitude they lived to regret. It was not long before Paul was proved right, for the anticipated "soft wind" became a stormy wind. Because of the storm, they could not see the sun or the stars, so it was impossible to determine their position. The situation seemed hopeless, and it all happened because the men in charge did not listen to God's messenger.

1. Why do you think God allows storms to come into our lives? Consider who God is. He is our Savior who shows up at exactly the right time when all hope is lost.
2. Do you find, in the Christian voyage, it sometimes feels like we take two steps forward, then one step back? Why do you think this is?
3. Acts 27:10 sounds so much like a prophesy that we are prone to believe God gave Paul a premonition of danger. Does God give us premonitions or words of wisdom today? Provide some examples.

Visitation/Restoration in 2021

4. Julius listened to the “expert advice” of the pilot and captain of the ship. The decision to press on was essentially 3 to 1. From your experience, is the majority always right? Why or why not.
5. In the midst of a storm, the sun or the stars may not be visible, and it might feel impossible to determine your position. In the midst of a storm, how do you maintain bearing? (Heb. 12:2)

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 27:21-44

Paul began the voyage as a prisoner, and he ended up the captain. Paul “took over” the situation when it was obvious that nobody else knew what to do. A crisis shows what a person is made of, and it tends to bring out Godly leadership among Christians. Paul stood in the midst of them and gently rebuked them. He said “Men, you should have listened to me.” But then he encouraged them and said a messenger from the Lord had visited him and told him not to be afraid. Although the ship and cargo would be lost, all the passengers would be spared and cast onto an island. Soon they would discover that God had spared all of them only because of Paul and obedient to God.

6. The Lord gave Paul a special word of encouragement at the right time, and he shared it with those on the ship. Today, we have the promises of God’s Word to encourage us (Isa. 41:10, 43:1-5, Rom 15:4). Describe a time when God gave you a special word of encouragement at the right time.
7. How can a person sustain his or her faith in times of trouble? (Prov. 3:5-6)
8. How easy is it for you to set a good example during a crisis, as Paul did? Explain.
9. What had Paul been doing prior to the visit from the messenger? (Acts 27:24, James 5:13). What lessons can we take from this?
10. Read Psalm 34:19. When everything seems to be going wrong, the Lord will deliver. How does this encourage you?

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

In the last section, Luke says, “We were in all in the ship two hundred seventy-six souls” (Acts 27:37). Think of it! All this company of people and God had said they were all to be saved! But notice how they were delivered. They were saved with difficulty-through great trials-but they were saved. God’s word was fulfilled. All were saved, but they had to meet their own responsibility in the matter. There is a lesson here for every one of us. No word of God shall be void of power, but we are responsible to obey His Word and to manifest our faith by our works.

1. How can you imitate Paul’s attitude toward danger, stress, and hardship?
2. The Lord’s desire is that none should perish. He wants to be our Savior. Think of someone going through a storm right now. How might you be a testimony of encouragement?

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for never leaving us or forsaking us. Thank You for being our Savior. Thank You for the victory we have because of the work You did on the cross for us. Although we encounter the storms and afflictions of life, You deliver the righteous from all of them. Lord, please lead us in the path of righteousness as we anchor our faith in You.

“I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5)