

## **Good News in the Midst of the Storm.. Acts 27:22**

I've heard it said and I believe it, that you are either going into a storm, in a storm now, or coming out of a storm. That's because this life is full of storms. Some storms we bring on ourselves, other storms, other people bring them, then of course some storms may be either brought to us or allowed by the Lord for some good purpose.

Seems lately so many of our church family have had issues that cause me to think, "Why in the world does that person or that family have so many problems, so much suffering, experience so much pain compared to other persons or families?"

I've visited folks in the hospital where it was perhaps their last hours.

I walked down the hallways of the hospital and watched as some gasp for air or take only a few steps and can't go any further. I see others in ICU or CCU as their family stands nearby praying for healing and miracles and I whisper a prayer for them. I hear loved ones make promise to God, "Oh Lord, if only you will spare my husband or wife or son or daughter, I'll do this or that." I meet with people in the church office and listen to them tell me about their splintering family or broken marriage and my heart feels weighted down so I go to God's word and knowing it is the Living Word, I am encouraged to see this promise as found in the text today. **Acts 27:22**

**And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.**

When you are in the midst of a personal storm, I am sure being of good cheer is not one of the things that immediately comes to your mind.

When I read this TEXT, I put down my Bible and shook my head in wonder... blown away by the living word of God.

I was feeling beat down by the.... STORMS OF LIFE in other peoples lives! And what does God send to me? **A promise for those going through the storm! Praise God.... He is alive and He is good!**

Let me give you some background on this passage. Paul was arrested on trumped up charges of desecrating the temple by bringing in gentiles. Much like the case of Jesus, Paul was passed from one Roman official to another in order to render a judgment. In this verse, Paul is in route to stand trial before Caesar.

He is being transported by sea. The journey becomes very difficult due to some really bad weather brought about by contrary winds and the arrival of winter. In an ill-advised move, the centurion in charge of Paul and the other prisoners decides to go all the way anyway. The ill-fated trip is beset by a winter storm and all looks lost. The crew throws everything overboard in an attempt to lighten the ship and make better headway. They have no food for 11 days... the storm blocks the sun, moon and stars making navigation impossible, and all hope is lost. Then Paul, by the word of God, tells them all that His God has promised that he will protect them, not one life will be lost, but the boat will be destroyed. It all comes true just as Paul had said.

From Paul's experience in the storm.... I want us to learn some lessons.

### **1. GOD SENDS SOME STORMS AND ALLOWS OTHER STORMS IN OUR LIFE.**

I wish that were not true. I wish all of life could be smooth sailing and trouble free... especially after one gets saved, but IT JUST AIN'T SO!

Life is full of troubles like; Medical storms like sickness, disease, accidents, birth defects. Then there are relational storms like divorce, abuse. There are also financial storms like unemployment, and even bankruptcy. Then there are emotional storms like depression, or loneliness.

Paul **did not say...** Relax, God will take away the storm, calm the seas, and cause the winds to be with us.

He said, "Fellows, I've got good news and bad news, which do you want first?" They obviously said, "**Give us the bad news first.**" So Paul said, there is going to be a terrible storm. In fact, it is going to get worse."

Did God send the storm or did he allow it? Is there a difference when it is happening to you? Not really. When you are standing up to your ears in the stormy waters and about to drown it doesn't matter where the storm comes from.

But NOTICE: Some storms He allows are the result of sin. **He does not cause sin so he does not cause those storms.**

For example: You choose to drink and drive... you have a wreck and your child is nearly killed. As you stand in the ER, did God send the storm or allow it? He allowed you to make your own decision... you caused the storm!

At other times God steps into the situation and **CAUSES** a storm to come into your life. He allows the pain and suffering.

In one sense it doesn't matter whether he sent or allowed it... as for God they both have the same design.... **He is going to use it for good.** Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

As long as we have free will and can choose to do wrong... there will be storms in life.... **IN THIS WORLD!**

When we get to heaven there will be no storms. Why? God won't need to send them and we won't make the bad decisions that bring them. He won't have to work it for good. **THERE WON'T BE ANY.**

## **2. SOMETIMES GOD ALLOWS THE STORM TO BRING BACK THE WAYWARD.**

**Remember the storey of Jonah? His disobedience brought about that storm.**

If there were no storms, we would all go deeper and deeper into sin, farther and farther from God.

If you could sin and everything was OK, no consequences, no punishment, no repercussions, then you would sin even more.

**The storms get our attention and cause us to realize there is a problem.**

The storms cause us to ask **WHY?**

The storms make us aware of where we are and where we should be.

Some storms cause us to long for help, safety, home.

Some storms are designed to cause us to repent and come back in line with God's will for our lives, God's plan for our lives.

## **3. GOD ALLOWS THE STORM TO CREATE OR STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH IN HIM.**

Faith is natural. Faith in self is natural..... faith in God is un-natural

Our natural tendency is to believe in what we can see, prove, re-create in a lab, touch, etc.

Left to ourselves, we come to put our trust in self, in our goodness, in our ability.

Kind of like the Tower of Babel in the Old Testament.

It takes something **SUPERNATURAL....** something **SPIRITUAL** to cause us to put our faith in what we cannot see, touch, prove, recreate in a lab.

**In the storms, God wants us to see Him, to see his power, see his love, see his wisdom.**

In order to do that, He has to do something that would cause us to not be able to put faith in self, in theories, in science.

We have to come to the end of self. **THERE WE FIND HIM.**

The storms bring us to the end of self, end of whatever we have faith in... and come to trust Him.

#### **4. GOD IS MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY STORM.**

Paul said, **“My God has said that he will keep all of us safe and alive, but will allow the boat to be destroyed.”** God is saying **“I CAN” & “I WILL DELIVER YOU.”**

They have already come to the conclusion that they could not save themselves. They had abandoned all hope.... in self, in navigation, in science (boat building, navigation).

Now God was asserting that He was more powerful than the sea, the wind, the elements, nature... and that He would overcome those things to keep them safe, but would allow the boat to be destroyed as a sign.

God says the same thing to you. **HE IS MORE POWERFUL THAN YOUR STORM.**

Whether it is self-created or God sent... **GOD IS GREATER AND IS ABLE TO OVERCOME IT AND CAN DO WHATEVER HE WANTS TO WITH IT.**

**GOD IS GREATER THAN CANCER, DIVORCE, DEATH, ANGER, FEAR or any other storm in this life. Learn this:**

#### **5. WE CAN ONLY LOSE THE STUFF.**

God said they would lose the boat. God says we will only lose the stuff, the temporary, the stuff of this world. **YOU CAN'T LOSE THE ETERNAL.... ETERNAL LIFE.**

Imagine being the owner of the boat Paul was in. Everyone else would be excited to hear that only the boat would be lost. **BUT IT WAS HIS BOAT!**

God says you may lose the car.... but not your life.

You may lose the job.... but not your life.

You may lose the body.. but not your life.

I know... **YOU LOVE THE CAR... JOB... BODY**

**But the storm has a way of separating the important from the un-important.**

The sailors would have considered the food important, or the tackle, or the anchors.

But in the storm they were all expendable. The thing that mattered was their LIFE!

In our storms we need to learn the same lesson.

**STUFF IS EXPENDABLE!**

Let me tell you it is hard to stand at the graveside of a dead loved one and tell the family it is only a body, just stuff, just a shell.

**THEY LOVED THAT BODY!!!!**

But the truth that God wants us to learn is that we can only lose the un-important, the temporal.

**The eternal cannot be lost. It has been guaranteed.**

I once saw a plaque in a home that said, "**Good looks don't last, good cooking do.**"

I want to say... that stuff does not last, the worldly does not last, **THE ETERNAL DOES LAST.... And cannot be lost.**

Do you have the security that you are a child of God? You can before you leave here this day. Place your faith in Him today to forgive you of your sins, place your name in the lambs book of life. Will You?