

TURN IN YOUR BIBLES: ACTS 27:13

REVIEW NOTES FROM LAST WEEK:

Paul is a prisoner. He is being escorted from Israel to Rome to stand trial before Caesar. Two other Christians are with Paul at this time – Luke (the author of Acts) and Aristarchus (a Christian from Thessalonica). See V. 1-2

They are sailing at one of the worst times of the year. Fall is coming and a trip that was supposed to take around 5 weeks will take them 7 months.

Last week, we saw that they were at a crossroads in their travels:

They were at a place called Fair Havens on the Island of Crete, but with winter approaching sailing was becoming dangerous.

- And they had a decision to make. Do they stay and winter in Fair Havens or do they go up the coast a bit to a better harbor?

Now, Paul was a tent maker by trade (Acts 18:3), not a sailor.

He was proficient at navigating the scriptures (Phil. 3:4-6), not the depths of the sea.

Now, he may not have been a sailor; HOWEVER, he was an expert in shipwrecks.

- **2 Corinthians 11:25 (SLIDE) - ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;¹**

Paul's advice was to hunker down in Fair Havens, but the commanding officer chose to sail up the coast to Phoenix (about 40 miles).

As we will see today, they will miss their mark by over 500 miles.

- They will end up in Malta (**SLIDE - MAP**) (see Acts 28:1) – 550+ miles away from the Island of Crete.

So, the decision was made to sail to Phoenix and that is where we pick up our study today:

READ V. 13-20

¹³ When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. ¹⁴ But not long after, a tempestuous head

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (2 Co 11:25). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

wind arose, called Euroclydon. ¹⁵ So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive. ¹⁶ And running under *the shelter* of an island called Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty. ¹⁷ When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis *Sands*, they struck sail and so were driven. ¹⁸ And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship. ¹⁹ On the third *day* we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands. ²⁰ Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us*, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.²

PRAY

INTRO:

POWERING UP WITH DAD

A father watched through the kitchen window as his small son attempted to lift a large stone out of his sandbox. The boy couldn't get enough leverage to lift the rock over the side. Finally, he gave up and sat on the edge of the sandbox with his head in his hands.

"What's wrong, Son? Can't you lift that rock out?" the dad asked.

"No, sir," the boy said, "I can't do it."

"Have you used all the strength that's available to you?" the father asked.

"Yes, sir," the boy replied.

"No, you haven't," the father said. "You haven't asked me to help you."

—Bob Russell, Louisville, Kentucky³

There are things that happen to us in life that remind us how incredibly weak we are and how desperately we need God.

- Even as Christians, we can go about our business in the sandbox of life only to come across a boulder too heavy for us to move.
 - We can even lose hope of having that boulder moved to the point that we find ourselves sitting on the edge of the sandbox with our head in our hands having lost the will to try any longer.
 - But it is also a great reminder of how much we need the Lord.

APPLICATION

You may be in a similar place today; where you have lost all hope and you are faced with despair.

- If that is the case, then I'm so glad you are listening to this message.
- I pray that as we look at how God provided for these people in the book of Acts that it will encourage and bring hope to your heart today.
 - Today we are going to read about 276 people who lost hope (some of them Christians) and we are going to see how God got them through it.

² [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Ac 27:13–20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ Larson, C. B., & Ten Elshof, P. (2008). [1001 illustrations that connect](#) (p. 298). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

OUTLINE:

V. 13-20: All hope lost

V. 21-26: Hope rekindled by reminder of God's promise

V. 27-32: Cutting loose man's attempt for safety

V. 33-38: Paul encourages the men

V. 39-44: Safety made a reality (God fulfills His promise)

MAIN THEME OR CENTRAL POINT OF EMPHASIS:

God is faithful, even when we are faithless

V. 13-20: All hope lost

V. 13-14 – ¹³ When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. ¹⁴ But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon.

V. 14 – “Euroclydon”

When people start giving the weather a name, you know it's bad.

V. 15-16 - ¹⁵ So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive. ¹⁶ And running under *the shelter of* an island called Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty.

- Clauda is an island right below Crete.
 - That's how hard this wind was blowing – it forced them straight down.
- Meanwhile they secured the “**skiff**” – a lifeboat that would have been towed behind the main vessel.

V. 17 – ¹⁷ When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis *Sands*, they struck sail and so were driven.

We start to get the drift that this is no ordinary storm.

- It's the storm of all storms.

This storm was so bad that they are worried about the hull of the ship breaking apart.

- They end up taking large ropes and looping them under the entire ship to help hold it together. This is called “**undergirding the ship**” (called “frapping”)
- They were worried about running aground. (It is said that this type of ship needed a 35-foot depth of water to travel safely)
- They were also worried about losing their sail, so they took it down.

V. 18 – ¹⁸ And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship.

Now things are so bad they start throwing stuff overboard to try and lighten the ship a little bit.

- Listen, you have got to be pretty desperate in order to start throwing stuff overboard.

V. 19 – ¹⁹ On the third *day* we threw the ship’s tackle overboard with our own hands.

- Now their really desperate! They are throwing the **ship’s tackle** overboard!

V. 20 – ²⁰ Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us*, **all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.**

“neither sun nor stars appeared for many days”

- The problem is that the sun and stars is what sailors use to navigate. So, they had no way of knowing where they were or where they were headed.

This storm seems to be relentless. So much so that Luke describes it as:

“all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.”

They have come to the end of their own ability.

- This included Luke.
- This included the apostle Paul!
 - Good Christian men.
 - Godly men.
 - Spiritually mature men.
 - BUT THEY LOST HOPE.

Q: But didn’t God say in **Acts 23:11 (SLIDE)**:

“Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”⁴?

A: Yes.

- But the promise was drowned out by the noise of the storm.
- The result was that they fell into despair.

They have done everything in their power to save themselves:

- They have girded the ship, taken down the sail, lightened the ship by throwing equipment overboard.
- They have done everything they can to reach safety and to wait out the storm, but they are left empty as they succumb to the idea that they are not going to make it out alive.
 - **“all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.”**

APPLICATION

There are storms we go through in life and then there are STORMS that we go through in life.

- Storms that feel relentless.
- Situations that sap every ounce of strength that we possess.
- There are trials we go through where we allow ourselves to drink from the cup of despair.

Elijah came to a place of despair in his life when he prayed:

⁴ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Ac 23:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

1 Kings 19:4 (SLIDE)- ⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I *am* no better than my fathers!"⁵

After Job had suffered such loss and tragedy he prayed:

Job 6:8-9 (SLIDE):

- ⁸ "Oh, that I might have my request,
That God would grant *me* the thing that I long for!
⁹ That it would please God to crush me,
That He would loose His hand and cut me off!"⁶

In my own life, there was a time when I had lost all hope of living. I thought I was going to die. So, I wrote out this promise from God from memory:

John 3:16 (SLIDE) - ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.⁷

- I wanted to make sure that if I was going to die, that I would be forgiven of my sin and live forever with God after my physical death.
- And you can have that same assurance of salvation if you make the choice to believe in Jesus today too.

One of my personal Christian heroes of all time is the preacher from the 1800's by the name of Charles Spurgeon who suffered great bouts of depression during his life. He said:
"Although my joy is greater than most men, my depression is such as few can have an idea of. This week has been in some respects the crowning week of my life, but it closed with a horror of great darkness, of which I will say no more than this: I bless God that at my worst, underneath me I found the everlasting arms."⁸

-C.H. Spurgeon (SLIDE)

If you are hurting, I want you to know that your suffering has not gone unnoticed by God:

Psalms 22:24 (NLT) (SLIDE)

- ²⁴ For he has not ignored or belittled the suffering of the needy.
He has not turned his back on them,
but has listened to their cries for help. ⁹

V. 21-26: Hope rekindled by reminder of God's promise

²¹ But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. ²² And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. ²³ For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, ²⁴ saying, **'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with**

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Ki 19:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Job 6:8-9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 3:16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ Spurgeon, C.H. (1834-1892). *Spurgeon at his best*.

⁹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ps 22:24). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

you.' ²⁵ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. ²⁶ However, we must run aground on a certain island."

Q: How was hope rekindled in the hearts of the hopeless aboard that ship?

A: The servant of God was reminded of the promise of God.

Q: What was this angel reminding Paul of?

A: Of the promise from God in Acts 23:11 – Paul, don't fear. You're going to Rome.

- Which he hasn't done yet.

POINT – When in despair REMEMBER THE PROMISES OF GOD

And now, here in Acts 27:24 - this angel reminds Paul - **'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'**

POINT – When others despair SHARE THE PROMISES OF GOD

As the fire of hope is rekindled in the servant of God the servant brings that hope to the others in despair and says:

²⁵ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.

- There's still danger ahead, but we are going to be saved from this tempest tossed ocean of darkness.

"There are times when one dedicated believer can change the whole atmosphere of a situation simply by trusting God and making that faith visible."¹⁰

Warren Wiersbe (SLIDE)

There are times when you will not be the only one facing great difficulty.

- There will be times when it seems like everyone around you is in the same storm you are in.
- At times there can be such a spirit of despair, but when God reminds you of His promises that rekindle hope in your heart, SHARE IT! Cast those hot coals on the cold tinder in other men's hearts by reminding them of how great our God is!

V. 27-32: Cutting loose man's attempt for safety man's attempt to save himself

²⁷ Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land.

²⁸ And they took soundings and found *it* to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms. ²⁹ Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. ³⁰ 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, ³¹ Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." ³² Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

¹⁰ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 509). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

It's amazing the things we try to do to try and save our own skin.

This reminds me of how utterly helpless we are in certain situations. When things are totally out of our control, we do everything we can to find solutions rather than simply wait on the Lord for the right answer.

- These sailors were going to abandon ship and everyone else on it in order to save their own necks.

Sometimes we need to cut the ropes of our skiff and let it fall off.

- Regarding your hope for eternal salvation from hell, the only rope of hope you have is being tethered to Jesus. All other attempts will fall short.

Q: What ropes need to be cut in your life? What are those decisions you are making that are based on your feelings rather than on God's Word?

V. 33-38: Paul encourages the men

³³ And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. ³⁴ Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you." ³⁵ And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. ³⁶ Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves. ³⁷ And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship. ³⁸ So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.

These people were sick in the storm, they hadn't eaten anything. They were malnourished and Paul encouraged them to eat so they could regain their strength to help them survive.

- They would soon swim to shore and would need all their energy to get there.

POINT - when in despair FEED YOUR SOUL

APPLICATION

When you are going through trials and suffering in life, you also need nourishment to give you strength and that comes from the Word of God.

- Some of us tend to pull away from God, His Word, and His people during trials when, in reality, we need the opposite.

Deut. 8:3 (SLIDE) - ...man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.¹¹

Psalms 119:105 - (SLIDE)

¹⁰⁵ Your word *is* a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.¹²

V. 39-44: Safety made a reality (God fulfills His promise)

¹¹ [New American Standard Bible: 1995 update](#). (1995). (Dt 8:3). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

¹² [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Ps 119:105). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³⁹ 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. ⁴⁰ 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. ⁴¹ 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.

⁴² And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. ⁴³ 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, ⁴⁴ and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

This chapter ends with something like a sigh of relief as we read **“that they all escaped safely to land.”**

Their promised safety was made a reality.

POINT – when in despair GOD WILL STILL KEEP HIS PROMISES

It was only after Paul had been through this horrible ordeal that he would later write to the young and discouraged pastor, Timothy, the final letter before his death and say:

2 Timothy 1:11-13 (SLIDE)

¹¹ This is a faithful saying:

For if we died with *Him*,
We shall also live with *Him*.

¹² If we endure,
We shall also reign with *Him*.

If we deny *Him*,
He also will deny us.

¹³ If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself.¹³

Even though we may lose sight of God's promises at times, God is still faithful to keep them.

Some of you are still waiting for God to deliver you safely to the shore. In a way we are all waiting to be delivered safely to God's celestial shore while, in the meantime, we are in the storm called life.

- But maybe you have been praying about something:
 - a trial,
 - a physical ailment,
 - a prodigal to come home,
 - suffering that seems to overwhelm you constantly, etc.

¹³ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (2 Ti 2:11-13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Let me encourage you with this poem as you wait on Lord **(CALL UP THE WORSHIP TEAM):**

Wait

by Russell Kelfer

(SLIDE)

Desperately, helplessly, longingly, I cried;
Quietly, patiently, lovingly, God replied.
I pled and I wept for a clue to my fate . . .
And the Master so gently said, "Wait."

"Wait? you say wait?" my indignant reply.
"Lord, I need answers, I need to know why!
Is your hand shortened? Or have you not heard?
By faith I have asked, and I'm claiming your Word.

(SLIDE)

"My future and all to which I relate
Hangs in the balance, and you tell me to wait?
I'm needing a 'yes', a go-ahead sign,
Or even a 'no' to which I can resign.

"You promised, dear Lord, that if we believe,
We need but to ask, and we shall receive.
And Lord I've been asking, and this is my cry:
I'm weary of asking! I need a reply."

(SLIDE)

Then quietly, softly, I learned of my fate,
As my Master replied again, "Wait."
So I slumped in my chair, defeated and taut,
And grumbled to God, "So, I'm waiting for what?"

He seemed then to kneel, and His eyes met with mine . . .
and He tenderly said, "I could give you a sign.
I could shake the heavens and darken the sun.
I could raise the dead and cause mountains to run.

(SLIDE)

"I could give all you seek and pleased you would be.
You'd have what you want, but you wouldn't know Me.
You'd not know the depth of my love for each saint.
You'd not know the power that I give to the faint.

"You'd not learn to see through clouds of despair;
You'd not learn to trust just by knowing I'm there.

You'd not know the joy of resting in Me
When darkness and silence are all you can see.

(SLIDE)

"You'd never experience the fullness of love
When the peace of My spirit descends like a dove.
You would know that I give, and I save, for a start,
But you'd not know the depth of the beat of My heart.

"The glow of my comfort late into the night,
The faith that I give when you walk without sight.
The depth that's beyond getting just what you ask
From an infinite God who makes what you have last.

(SLIDE)

"You'd never know, should your pain quickly flee,
What it means that My grace is sufficient for thee.
Yes, your dearest dreams overnight would come true,
But, oh, the loss, if you missed what I'm doing in you.

"So, be silent, my child, and in time you will see
That the greatest of gifts is to truly know me.
And though oft My answers seem terribly late,
My most precious answer of all is still . . . Wait."

(SLIDE- Blank)

You may not be able to see through the storm you are in right now, but God does and if you have put your faith and trust in Him – I'm here to tell you, it's going to be alright.

- And if you haven't put your faith and trust in Jesus to have that assurance, you can right now.

END BLESSING:

Psalms 37:3-7

- ³ Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
- ⁴ Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
- ⁵ Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring *it* to pass.
- ⁶ He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.
- ⁷ Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him...¹⁴

¹⁴ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Ps 37:3-7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

EXTRA NOTES:

The Centurion:

I think about the centurion.

- The position he is in is not an easy one.
- He had to make the final decision on whether or not to sail. (V. 11)
 - Like so many choices in leadership, he was faced with two choices; neither of which were great.
 - And no matter which choice he chose, someone would disagree with his decision.

V. 13-20:

It is quite certain that Paul was the most experienced traveller on board that ship. The Fast referred to is the Jewish Day of Atonement, and on that year it fell in the first half of October. **According to the navigational practice of the time, sailing was considered doubtful after September and impossible by November.** It must always be remembered that the ancient ships had neither sextant nor compass, and in cloudy and dark weather they had no means of finding their way. It was Paul's advice that they should spend the winter in Fair Havens, where they were. As we have seen, the ship was an Alexandrian corn ship. The owner would probably have been the contractor who was bringing the cargo of corn to Rome. The centurion, being the senior officer on board, had the last word. It is significant that Paul, the prisoner under arrest, was allowed his say when advice was being taken. But Fair Havens was not a very good harbour, nor was it near any sizable town where the winter days might be passed by the crew; so the centurion rejected Paul's advice and took the advice of the master and the contractor to sail further along the coast to Phoenice, where there was a larger harbour and a bigger town.

A very unexpected south wind made the plan seem easy; and then the terrible wind from the north-east struck. It was a gale, and the danger was that if they could not control the ship they would inevitably be blown on the Syrtis Sands off North Africa, which were the graveyard of many ships. By this time they had managed to get the dinghy, which had been towed behind, on board, in case it should either become waterlogged or be dashed to pieces against the ship. They began to throw out all spare gear to lighten the ship. With the stars and the sun shut out, they did not know where they were, and the terror of the Syrtis Sands gripped them so that they abandoned hope.¹⁵

- **William Barclay**

V. 20 -26

V. 33-38

¹⁵ Barclay, W. (2003). *The Acts of the Apostles* (3rd ed. fully rev. and updated., pp. 215–216). Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.

As we read the narrative, into the tempest there seems to come a strange calm. Paul, the man of God, has somehow made others sure that God is in charge of things. The most useful people in the world are those who, being calm themselves, bring to others the secret of confidence. Paul was like that; and every follower of Jesus ought to be steadfast when others are in turmoil.¹⁶

-William Barclay

¹⁶ Barclay, W. (2003). [*The Acts of the Apostles*](#) (3rd ed. fully rev. and updated., p. 219). Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.