



One More Series Part 1

August 6, 2023

The Book of Acts 28:1-10, “After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. 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. 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. 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.” ⁵ He, however, shook off the creature into the fire

and suffered no harm. ⁶ 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. ⁷ Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. ⁸ 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. ¹⁰ They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed.” May the Lord add His Blessing to the Reading and the Hearing of His Word today, In Jesus Name! Amen!

Before we get into the message for today, please allow me to tell you all a story... The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming. Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little fire from the wreckage of the ship to protect him from the onset of hypothermia and sterilize what little water he had.

But then one day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little fire made of the debris from the wreckage had spread into his little hut and then into the trees and the smoke began rolling up towards the heavens. The worst had happened; everything was lost. He was stunned with grief and anger and he declared with his fists raised towards Heaven, “God, how could you do this to me! Now I shall surely die here!”

Early the next day, however, he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island and it had come to rescue him. “How did you know I was here?” asked the weary man of his rescuers. One of the men turns and point towards the billows of smoke and said, “We saw your smoke signal.”

Listen friend, it is easy to get discouraged when it seems that everything is going badly. When we suffer the shipwrecks of life... Some shipwrecks come in the form of job loss, a diagnosis of illness, a failed marriage or perhaps the tragic loss of a loved one. But we shouldn't lose heart, because God is at work in our lives, even in the midst of the shipwrecks of life. Remember, when your ship finds itself being battered by the storms of life, that you can always take the wreckage and build a fire. It may come in the form of a smoke signal that brings deliverance and safety. Don't miss the opportunities that shipwrecks can afford to us.

Listen friend, we have all suffered shipwreck in life. Shipwrecks are a part of life so why fear something that is just as inevitable as death? The Bible says that it will rain on the just and the unjust alike. Furthermore, it says that those that live Godly will suffer persecution; I would parenthetically insert here that persecution can come from either the wicked spirits or wicked men. Remember, we can choose for our shipwreck experiences to become either an anchor of hope or an anchor of despair.

Allow me to pose this question to you this morning...

- What if God can use our shipwrecked lives not just for our own benefit but for the benefit of reaching one more?
- What if God has a much bigger plan for the storms of life not just for our own benefit but for the benefit of reaching one more?
- What if God can turn our shipwrecks into opportunities to reach one more?

Friends, what some would have looked at as a doomed event for Paul was actually God's plan for a tiny, insignificant island to reach one more.

1. The Shipwrecks of Life Reveal the Heart of Those Onboard the Ship!

- a. Note the Book of Acts 28:1-2, “After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. 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.”
- b. The shipwrecks of life have a way of revealing the heart of those around you.
- c. Romans 8:28 teaches us that Christ intends to work all things (the good, bad and ugly) for our good; but that is not applicable to each individual person that’s around you. Live long enough and you will realize that not everyone onboard your ship has your best interest at heart.
- d. The Shipwrecks of life, the difficulties that come, will unveil who is truly for you and against you. It is these difficult seasons that help us to identify those who will help us gather the broken of our lives and help us to put them back together.
- e. And with this in mind, this defines for us one sure way that a shipwreck can become a work of His forgiveness because it reveals the heart of those around us.

- f. But Shipwrecks not only reveal the heart of those around us but it also reveals the serpents on board our vessels...

2. The Shipwrecks of Life Reveal the Serpents Onboard the Ship!

- a. The Book of Acts 28:3, “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.”
- b. The interesting truth about this text is that the Island of Malta has no venomous snakes whatsoever. Never in the history of its existence has it ever had an indigenous venomous snake. Thus the immediate question is where did the snake come from?
- c. The only plausible answer would be that the viper had to have been onboard the ship before it wrecked and this venomous serpent roamed the wreckage, just as the Apostle Paul did, to shore.
- d. The snake was hiding amongst the debris that was being gathered to build the fire that would ultimately save their lives by staving off hypothermia and it was the heat of the flame that unveiled the presence of this deadly viper.
- e. Now how does a serpent play into this narrative spiritually to us? Well its rather simple you see...

- f. Isn't it interesting that when we began to gather the pieces of our broken lives after a shipwreck experience and turn our lives over to Christ that serpents begin to manifest?
- g. We, just as Paul did, begin to gather the broken pieces of our lives and begin to pile it upon the fires of the Holy Spirit believing that God can truly cause all things to work for our good, including our shipwreck seasons.
- h. But then the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life seek to sink their fangs into our lives to inject us once again with the poison to sin.
- i. Friends, shipwrecks become a work of salvation when the serpents are revealed and consumed by the fires of the Holy Spirit.
- j. But shipwrecks not only reveal the serpents hidden onboard our vessels but shipwrecks also reveal the needs which God intends for us to fulfill...

3. The Shipwrecks of Life Reveal the Needs that Christ Intends for Us to

Fill!

- a. The Book of Acts 28:8-9, “⁸ 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.”
- b. You see, God never shipwrecks our lives for our personal benefit alone, but rather his decision to shipwreck your life is so that He can turn you into a work of His reaching for one more! To heal! To Deliver! To Set Free! To be a voice of restoration!
- c. Take for example the text found within Acts 28:1-10! The island of Malta needed a what was onboard the ship so God allowed it to wreck to reach this Island with the Gospel of Jesus Christ!
- d. This tiny island needed a manifestation of the kingdom of God so God shipwrecked Paul so that Paul’s shipwreck could become a work of His salvation to Malta. God’s salvation to this island was to meet the needs of those upon the island was a shipwreck.

- e. Build this in your mind's eye...Paul is stranded upon this island, among men whom he doesn't know, bitten by a deadly serpent, called a God by the campfire club, finds honor in the sight of Publius (The Lead Citizen) and ultimately finds a need in the life of an old man who is terribly ill with fever and dysentery.
- f. Make this personal to us all... We've all gone through trials, tribulations, sickness, infirmity, failures, hard times, broken relationships, lost jobs, tough marriage situations, rebellious children, hateful parents, malicious coworkers, and church hurt!
- g. And you went through all that because God needed to shipwreck you to meet the needs of others because others need to know that they can make it through their own shipwrecks. People need your testimony more than you need it for yourself. Folks need to know that they can make it. And the world is dying waiting for us to see the value in God turning our shipwrecks into a work of His salvation s.
- h. But notice in the text that when one need is met, it leads to more needs being revealed. Dozens more had needs and they were all healed! Your shipwrecks in life are not about you but rather God working through you to reach someone who is going through a season of pain that you know all too well...

- i. If shipwrecks in life reveal the heart of those around you, the serpents on board your vessel, and the needs of those God intends to meet then how does God cause a shipwreck to become a work of His Grace?
- j. Shipwrecks create opportunity when we allow ourselves to be stalled so that others can be reached. Could it be that God allows shipwrecks to happen because He needs us to slow down and see the needs of those around us.
- k. Paul didn't know about Publius' Father until after his shipwreck. The Shipwreck revealed the need...

Just as Paul's shipwreck became a work salvation to the inhabitants of the tiny island of Malta, the work of His plan to our shipwrecked faith may look a little different but the principle is the same. Sometimes we need His intervention in the midst of our shipwreck so that we can survive our shipwreck.

1. The shipwrecks of my life and leadership have revealed the heart of those around me (Friends, family, relationships)
2. The shipwrecks of my life and leadership have revealed the serpents onboard my life (Areas of weakness)

3. My shipwrecks have revealed the needs of the hurting around me.

- I would have, what I have coined as, “God Encounters” where I would meet an individual or couple that was hurting just as bad or worse than I was and would be able to attest to the pain and the frustration they were feeling. And encourage them through their shipwreck season.
- Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 “But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfect in weakness.”
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”
- His strength is made perfect in our weakness because when God becomes all you have then he becomes all you need... (You need to tweet that)

Because God gave me revelation in the midst of my shipwreck, now my shipwreck has become a testimony of God’s faithfulness to others. God didn’t allow my life to be shipwrecked because He was worried about me; but rather on the contrary, my life was shipwrecked so that others could be reached through me.

Though God's plan for the island of Malta was a shipwreck involving the Apostle Paul and though God's a work of His salvation to my shipwrecked faith was the tough seasons of my life; there is one point of Grace that we must not fail to mention.

- God's Salvation to a shipwrecked humanity was His son...
- God's work of Salvation for a shipwrecked humanity was His own son. You seek before God gave me my son; He gave me His own Son.
- Humanities shipwreck was beyond hope! Humanities shipwreck revealed...

1. The heart of man was sinful
2. The mark of the serpent was pride
3. The need of Humanity is forgiveness

Jesus shipwrecked his own life by becoming sin for us and died upon a cruel cross and suffered the woes of death in so that his shipwrecked life could become a work of His Grace to humanity.

The Son of God became the son of man in so that the sons and daughters of man might become the sons and daughters of God.
Will you receive the work of His salvation this morning to deliver you from your shipwrecked life?