

**Intro: When we go through horrific event's we tend to re-evaluate what's most important. Sometimes we may change our view, change our mind maybe even change the direction our lives are going. Due to a horrific event. And this is not always in a good direction.**

**What I'm trying to convey here is that trials, the storms of life, can either firmly establish us in Christ or cause us to give up all together. Go back to a life we had prior to Jesus. Prior to following Him, prior to serving Him.**

**Jesus gave a parable once about a man who went to sow seed in a field. He said some fell on the wayside where the birds devoured it. Some fell on stony places, where it didn't have much earth. It immediately sprang up because it didn't have much depth of earth, but when the sun came up it scorched it because it had no root. He also said some seed fell on the thorny ground where the thorns sprang up and choked it out. Still some fell on good soil.**

**What Jesus was saying was there are 4 types of soil. 4 types of people or hearts to sow the word in. Wayside; stony places; thorny places; and still yet good soil.**

**When asked to explain further Jesus went on to explain in Matt 13:18-23.**

- Vs 21 "stumble" (skan-dal-id-zo) cause to stumble. Cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey.
- When tribulation or persecution arises it causes this person to distrust and desert the one he ought to trust and obey.

**In the last 15 Chapters of the book of Acts we've had a close-up, birds eye view into the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul. I don't have to remind you just**

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how much tribulation and persecution this man has seen. We've traveled this journey together. As we come upon this last chapter and the close of this exciting and inspiring book, we see just how deep this man's roots go as he finally gets to Rome and is so set on spreading the gospel, he's never swayed. Stoning's, scourging's, storms, shipwrecks and snake bites cannot keep a God man down!

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His foundation is firm, his mind is made up. Tribulation or not he is stayed on the call of God in his life.

Though Paul had been through so much he wasn't about to make it about him at all. He's a prisoner on a ship, for which he's innocent, and headed to Rome. The ship's owner and the Centurion decide not to take Paul's advice to stay there but sail on instead. And they all suffer cause of it. As the ship hit's hurricane type whether they suffer shipwreck and barely make it alive to Malta. An island off of Sicily. It's there Paul continues to serve though he's bit by a venomous snake. He survives, and not only survives but begins praying and healing everyone with sickness on the island. Therefore continuing to spread the gospel of Christ.

v11-16 I. PAULS ARRIVAL IN ROME

v11-15 A. SOME COME TO MEET PAUL

v11 1. "After 3 months" After Paul had stayed the winter on Malta it was time to move on. But I'm sure this was a tearful departure. The people on the island had witnessed the power and love of God through Paul.

a. Imagine the change on that island.

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- b.** I will always have a special connection with the man that brought me to Christ.
- c.** Paul left that island better than when he found it. There are some people who leave a place worse off than when they found it and some contribute and make it better.
- d.** Through his pain and suffering Paul's diffusing the fragrance of Christ. **2 Cor 2:14-15** Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. **NKJV**

**v14**

2. **“where we found brethren”** The gospel message had already been spread to Rome. Paul's letter to the Romans had been given to them years prior, yet Paul had never been to Rome. He couldn't wait to visit them. (see Rom 1:8-12)

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- a.** Who brought the gospel to Rome or Italy? Believers from Pentecost? Aquila & Priscilla? We don't know exactly
- b.** The fact that we don't know is actually pretty helpful in that it doesn't take a huge heavy hitting apostle to spread the gospel.
- c.** It was Paul's calling but it's not his alone.
- d.** Someone planted, someone else watered and God caused the increase; then Paul was able to reap that awesome brother hood feeling and was invited to stay. (planting tree illst)
  - i.** We don't find that happening with any of the Jews.

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ii. Because of their appetite for the law. ( said of Jesus "Why does He eat with sinners" and heal on the Sabbath" )

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iii. **1 Tim 1:8-11** But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, 9 knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurors, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, **NKJV**

v15 3. **"they came to meet us"** News had gotten back to Rome that Paul was on his way so as far as from 50 miles away they began to make that journey to meet Paul. And it says **"when Paul saw them , he thanked God and took courage"**

a. Imagine how this must of felt for Paul after all he's gone through for the gospel's sake.

i. To have this love displayed, this faith displayed by good works.

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b. It was James who said **James 2:14-19**

What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the

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things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

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- c. 2 1/2 day's of travel , one way walking.

## v16 B. PAULS PRISONER CLASSIFICATION

Now they finally got to their destination. That nice little chained up bus ride is over ..... now classification – a bedroll – and there's your cell , for everyone else but Paul. Paul, Im sure because of the letters given to Justus about him and or his integrity and the favor of God given him by the Romans; was allowed to live in his own rented house.

### v16b 1. **“with the soldier who guarded him”** The Lord works in many ways.

You know the soldiers who took shifts guarding Paul would've been chained to him? Look at vs 30.

- a. Whether these men were believers or not they would've been exposed to the truth constantly. Chained to the gospel.
- b. They would've been there in his house, hearing him minister to the broken, praying for the sick, preparing his sermons or letters.
  - i. Paul wrote Phil, Eph, Col, and Philemon during this time.
  - ii. God had plans for Paul, everywhere Paul was at. To minister to everyone. And Paul knew it.
- c. **Go to Phil 1:12-13** (expound)
- d. **Phil 1:14** (expound) What would you do if suddenly Pastor Bushawn and I were arrested? I believe the men & women in this fellowship would be emboldened to step up.
- e. Look what's tucked away in the end of Phil 4:22 **“Caesars house-hold”**

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- f. Paul seen that what happened to him was a blessing. Can we find the good in our trials? The blessing for others?

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## **v17-31 II. PAUL'S MINISERS IN ROME**

### **v17-20 A. ADDRESSING THE LEADERS OF THE JEWS**

What Paul's doing here is trying to get a clear path of communication going with the Jewish leaders there in Rome. He's explaining to them what's gone on up to this point. He says "though I've done nothing against our people or customs" yet I've been delivered into the hands of the Romans by our own people in Jerusalem. Now though I've appealed to Caesar it's not because I have something of which to accuse my nation. It's because though the Romans examined me ( and that word means to investigate, examine, scrutinize, and sift ) they found "no cause for putting me to death". Matter of fact it's for "the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain".

- 1. Basically "Im not here to accuse you or the Jews in front of Caesar, Im here in these chains because of my hope in the Messiah". It was something they were putting their hope in too.
- 2. We see Paul still trying to minister to his people in such a loving way. He want's so bad for the Jews to receive Jesus their Messiah. This rejection broke Jesus' heart and it breaks his heart too.
  - a. I like that song Hosannah " break my heart for what breaks yours, Everything I am for your kingdoms cause. As I walk from earth into eternity"

### **v21-22 B. THE LEADERS RESPONSE**

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v21

1. **"we neither received letters nor anyone spoken evil"** We don't have an opinion either way on this matter concerning you.
  - a. One of two things could've happened here. (1) Either the Jews in Jerusalem knew their case was bogus and knew it would look that way to Caesar so didn't send anything before him. Or (2) All documents relating to his arrest would've been destroyed in the shipwreck.
  - b. Either way Paul now had a clear shot of ministering to these people.
    - i. Without someone's else's pre-made opinions of him.

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- c. The fact that no one spoke **"evil of him"** was a testimony of what had happened on that ship.
  - i. Think about that. Paul had a clear shot now to minister to someone and the storm & shipwreck played a big role in that.
  - ii. It opened doors to open hearts.
2. **"we desire to hear from you, what you think"**
  - a. Paul's the great Pharisee. A very educated man.
  - b. They heard rumor of Christianity, now they could hear from someone who actually seen the risen Lord.

v23-29 C. **PAUL EXPLAINS AND TESTIFIES**

This seems to be very sad. That Paul would go through so much and get there and pour his heart out and share all that concerns life and truth and

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the love of God. Only to have them reject it and begin fighting amongst themselves.

That's what happens when you go out to spread seed. Some falls along the wayside. Where birds come and snatch away that seed sown before it has a chance to take root.

Just like Isa. says which Paul quoted (read vs 27). The seed keeps getting sown but they keep rejecting and getting harder everytime.

1. But Paul keeps sowing seed because some "**were persuaded by the things which were spoken of**".
  - a. Paul "**persuaded them**" from the word. Vs 23
  - b. We should continue to sow the word and let the seed fall where it falls. We don't know men's hearts. We just are to sow.
  - c. Notice how the book of Acts never closes. Read vs 30-31

#### **v30-31 D. PAUL CONTINUES THE WORK FROM HOME**

The book of Acts is a continuance of the Gospel of Luke. An account of all that Jesus began to do and teach and now through the Holy Spirit & His apostles, and it never closes. It doesn't end.