

Facing Life's Storms

⇒ **Text: Acts 27:21-25**

⇒ **Introduction:**

- According to our text, the ship upon which Paul was a passenger was caught in a violent storm.
 - He had exercised his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar concerning the validity of the accusations against him.
 - He had been accused of being a pest and of instigating sedition among the Jews throughout the world.
 - Annanias, the high priest, made this accusation against Paul to Felix through the orator Tertullus.
 - “For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.” **(Acts 24:5).**
 - Being thus accused, Paul believed that he would get a fairer hearing in Rome and thus appealed his case to Caesar.
 - (This would be the equivalent of having our case heard before the Supreme Court.)
 - As he traveled to Rome aboard ship, the violent storm came upon them suddenly.
 - Every effort was made to ride the storm out in safety.
 - All efforts seemed to fail, however, and the people on the ship gave up hope of being saved.
 - In this atmosphere, Paul stepped forth to reassure and comfort them.
 - He told them how they could face the storm in confidence and peace.
 - They were to put their trust in God.
 - This passage caused me to think about the storms that come to each of us in this life.
 - The folks on board the ship with Paul could have avoided the storm that they were caught in by staying in the safe harbor.
 - However we cannot avoid the storms that life brings.
 - We can avoid the storms that we bring on ourselves, but we cannot avoid the storms that life brings to us.
 - These storms such as disease, crippling accidents, death of loved ones, family problems, financial problems, emotional problems and spiritual problems cannot always be avoided.
 - Since we cannot avoid these storms, we must learn to face them.
 - There are some principles taken from this passage which will help us to face these storms with assurance and peace.
 - **We can face them** –
- ⇒ **I. WITH CONFIDENCE IN JESUS - ACTS 27:22**
- Paul's exhortation to "**be of good cheer**" means something like "take courage."
 - These words alone would not have meant much without what followed.

- Paul assured them, “**for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship**”.
 - He spoke from the position of having received divine revelation in the matter.
- We too can take courage in the face of life’s storms because of some assurances that we have by divine revelation—the Word of God.
 - We can face the storms of life with courage when our confidence is in Jesus.
- **A. The Reason For Confidence In Jesus**
 - Since Jesus is Lord of all, He is Lord of the storms of life, which come our way.
 - The Bible presents Jesus as Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and as such, He is all-powerful, all-wise, and all-present.
 - That means that nothing ever comes into our lives that He is not aware of and Lord over.
 - He taught us to anticipate the storms when He said -
 - **“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” - (John 16:33).**
 - We do not know exactly when the storms will come into our lives.
 - They usually come suddenly and violently, just like the storm at sea came upon Paul and his company.
 - These storms come when things are going smoothly.
 - Just prior to the storm, Paul and his party were enjoying smooth sailing.
 - Since we do not know when these storms will come, we must learn to have confidence in the One who is Lord over the storms.
 - When we are living with in Him, we are braced for the storms that come.
 - Someone has suggested five actions to take when you find yourself in one of life’s storms.
 - 1. Spend some time alone with God – “But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them,..”(Acts 27:21).
 - 2. Acknowledge His presence – “For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,”(Acts 27:23).
 - 3. Believe His promises – **See Acts 27:24-25.**
 - 4. Count your blessings - **See Acts 27:35.**
 - 5. Get rid of excess baggage – **See Acts 27:38.**
- **B. The Reasonableness Of Confidence In Jesus**
 - Since Jesus is Lord of all, even the storms, it is reasonable to trust Him.
 - Confidence is just another word for trust.
 - Just like Paul did, we learn to trust Jesus as we walk with Him.
 - His testimony was “For me to live is Christ,..” (**Phil. 1:21**).

- Paul had learned that Jesus is sufficient for any storm that may come.
 - He had learned also that nothing could separate a Christian for the love of Christ - **Rom. 8:35-39**.
 - And he had learned that through Christ he was strong enough to meet any test - **Phil. 4:13**.
 - **C. The Rightness Of Confidence In Jesus**
 - As we get to know Jesus, we will know that He is completely worthy of our confidence because he is faithful.
 - Oh, that we could have the hymn writer's confidence for the storms of life.
 - What have I to dread,
 - what have I to fear,
 - Leaning on the everlasting arms?
 - I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
 - Leaning on the everlasting arms.
 - Leaning, Leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;
 - Leaning, Leaning, Leaning on the everlasting arms. - Elisha Hoffman, 1887
- ⇒ **II. WITH COMMITMENT TO JESUS - ACTS 27:23**
- In order to face the storms of life successfully, we must be committed to Jesus as well as having confidence in Him.
 - Paul gives us an example of such a commitment.
 - He stood before the frightened group and related to them the vision that he had experienced.
 - He told them that the angel of the God (Jesus Christ) to whom he belonged and whom he served had appeared to him assuring him that there would be no loss of life.
 - Alexander Maclaren called this statement "a short confession of faith."
 - He wrote that these words "set forth the essence of true religion."
 - Let us note the different aspects of this confession.
 - **"Whose I am" – Acts 27:23**
 - Paul said in effect, "I belong to God."
 - What did he mean by that statement?
 - This is certainly in keeping with what he taught others.
 - He had taught the Corinthian church: "For ye are bought with a price" (**I Cor. 6:20a**).
 - He also referred to himself as "a servant of Jesus Christ" (**Rom. 1:1**).
 - The word translated "servant" is "bond slave."
 - A bond slave is not a hired servant but one who is owned by his master.
 - He has no rights of his own and his purpose for existing is to serve his master.
 - Paul intended to convey the truth that he belonged to God through redemption and calling.

- This is true of every born again believer.
 - The precious blood of Christ was the price of our redemption.
 - **See I Peter 1:18-19**
 - God's people are purchased from the slave market of sin—we belong to Him.
 - Jesus taught that the one who would follow Him must die to self.
 - That is what Paul had done.
 - His own words on the matter are: - **See Gal. 2:20.**
 - We are to understand that we are the Lord's.
 - When we understand that we belong to Him and that He is Lord of everything that comes into our lives, we will be equipped to face the storms of life.
 - **"Whom I serve" – Acts 27:23**
 - Paul's attitude was, "I belong to the Lord and I serve Him."
 - By this statement, the apostle intended to teach that his life was in submission to and devoted to the Lord.
 - It is impossible for Jesus to be Lord and for one not to serve Him.
 - In **Luke 6:46**, Jesus asked a very important question.
 - He asked – "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - This is the kind of commitment that we must have if we are going to face the storms of life victoriously.
 - We must have the attitude, "I belong to the Lord and I serve Him. Therefore, whatever He allows to come into my life is for a purpose and He is Lord over it."
- ⇒ **III. WITH CONSOLATION FROM GOD'S PROMISES - ACTS 27:24**
- Paul could face the storm in which he was caught because he had a message of assurance or consolation from God.
 - We too have promises from God concerning our storms of life. We must learn to take consolation from these promises.
 - **A. He Was Assured Of A Mission**
 - God assured him that he would bear witness to God before Caesar.
 - God's message to him was, "...**Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cesar...**"
 - In other words, death would not occur until his mission was accomplished.
 - Our times are in God's hands.
 - We should trust Him to accomplish His mission in our lives and then take us safely home.
 - **B. He Was Assured Concerning His Companions.**
 - He was given a message that those who traveled with him would be spared.
 - The angel of God said, "...**God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.**"
 - We Have Been Given A Message Of Assurance.

- The message is for every Christian.
- It is that Jesus will not forsake His own, even when they are in a violent storm.

⇒ **IV. WITH CONVICTIONS FROM GOD'S WORD - ACTS 27:25**

- Paul had a conviction based upon what God had said to him.
 - His conviction was: “**...I believe God...**”
 - Paul knew that God was trustworthy and could be counted on to do what He said that He would do.
 - On another occasion, he voiced his conviction that God's Word is true.
 - In **II Timothy 1:12**, he wrote: “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”
 - His testimony was, "I know that God is dependable."
 - Do we believe God?
 - Do we believe His Word in every instance?
 - What principles and teachings of God's Word are we most prone to put aside?
 - Are we willing for God to give us convictions based upon His reliable Word?
 - Are we able to face the storms of life, standing on the promises of God's Word?
 - When the storms of life come to us, are we motivated by faith rather than fear?
 - Do we believe God during these times or do we believe the circumstances?
 - May we ever trust God and depend upon His eternal, infallible Word when we face the storms of life.
 - Can we encourage other people in their storms of life?
 - Can we say to them that we have found God faithful and sufficient?
 - God intends that we be able to do just that.
 - In **II Corinthians 1:3-4**, He teaches us that truth – “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”
 - Let us have the conviction from God's Word that He is in control and we can rely upon Him in any storm.

⇒ **CONCLUSION:**

- The storms of life are going to come.
- We must learn to face them.
- How are we going to face them?
 - I pray that we will face them

- **With confidence in Jesus,**
- **With commitment to Jesus,**
- **With consolation from God's promises,**
- **And with convictions from God's Word.**
- If so, we will be able to face the storms victoriously, and we will be able to assure others in their storms of life.