

**Acts 27:20-26, 33-37, 41-44 (NIV)**

<sup>20</sup>When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

<sup>21</sup>After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss.

<sup>22</sup>But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed.

<sup>23</sup>Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me

<sup>24</sup>and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.'

<sup>25</sup>So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.

<sup>26</sup>Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

<sup>33</sup>Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food--you haven't eaten anything.

<sup>34</sup>Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head."

<sup>35</sup>After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.

<sup>36</sup>They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.

<sup>37</sup>Altogether there were 276 of us on board.

<sup>41</sup>But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

<sup>42</sup>The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping.

<sup>43</sup>But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land.

<sup>44</sup>The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety.

## 44-27-01- Storm-Swept But Safely Kept

storms, dangers, fear, guidance, faith, shipwreck, encouragement, death  
Acts 27:20-26,33-37,41-44

Jesus will keep us on earth until our mission here is complete.

**INTRODUCTION:**

–I believe **HOM.idea**. *If we're still alive in these bodies, Jesus isn't yet done with us!" He's got things for us to learn and for us to do.* Before we enter Heaven, He wants to teach us new spiritual habits, to heal us of wounded memories, to mend our broken relationships. Jesus keeps working *on us, with us and in us*, because *He's not done with us.*

–*While He works, life goes on. We meet new circumstances, difficult hardships, even life-threatening storms, as in our text. Paul survived: storm-swept but safely kept (title).* *Jesus wasn't finished using him on earth. His story of facing a deadly storm was recorded for our benefit: because it can encourage us in facing our own stormy times of life.*

**I. Encouragement in the Storm– v.20**, *When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. ["we" passages in Acts show times when Luke was with Paul.]*

A. We often base "hope" on past experience: *"I got through something like this before."* (But when things don't come back to normal *"for many days"* while *"the storm continue[s] raging," we may feel hopeless.*)

B. Undergoing stormy times may not always be our own fault.

1. Paul said *"Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail,"* not as an *I-told-you-so*, but to remind them of his connection with God.

2. We're not *to flaunt our faith* but *to express* it. (People around us should know us as believers prayerfully connected with God.)

C. When God encouraged Paul in the storm, he encouraged the others with him– **v.22, 25b**. *But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed.... for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.* (God's encouragements aren't just for us but for those who are being storm-swept along with us.)

**TRANS:** *How does God encourage us in stormy times? We may get an angelic message, as Paul did. More often, God uses His Word, a hymn, a poem, a friend's words, or He speaks Himself– **John 10:27** (ESV), My sheep hear my voice...and they follow me. His encouragement to us is our*

basis for *encouraging others*, and often it's very *practical*, like taking...

**II. Nourishment During the Storm— v.34**, “*Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.*”

- A. **Jesus keeps us on earth until our mission here is complete**, but He uses practical means to do so. (*Despairing suspense had kept these 276 men from eating for 14 days: very counterproductive!*)
- B. **Fear can make people do crazy things in stormy times.** (*But for the Christian, dangers should never rob us of clear, sober thinking— 2 Tim 1:7 (ESV), for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control [self-control is a very important fruit of the Holy Spirit].)*)
- C. **By feeding ourselves on Christ's peace within, our faith** may help others return to a better *frame of mind*, especially if *stormy times* have made them *frantic* and *hopeless*— v.35-36. *After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.*

**TRANS:** When those feeding on fear see us feeding on Christ's peace, we are showing them the divine way to face life's storms— Phil 4:6-7 (NKJV), Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and **the peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, will **guard** your **hearts** and **minds** through Christ Jesus. When storms threaten to destroy us, we've nothing to fear: Jesus will keep us on earth until our mission here is complete. *He can give...*

**III. Protection from the Storm— v.44b**, *everyone reached land in safety.*

- A. The sailors tried in vain to avoid *shipwreck* by using their human wisdom and experience, applying trusted skills and emergency efforts. (*But in some situations, we must have divine intervention.*)
- B. *Self-preservation* is a built-in, God-given reflex that keeps us alive most of the time. (*But there are limits to safety and survival on this planet. [During the 2020 lockdown, I wrote a “Panic-demic” blog article. Briefly, this is the gist of it: the good news is that most who get Covid won't die; the bad news is we all will die; but God's good news for our bad news is that Jesus offers eternal life to all of us who face certain death in this world.]*).
- C. In the meantime, Christians are protected from dying prematurely.
  1. *When and how we die* are things we don't need to worry about.
  2. Our expiration date is in the wise and loving hands of the One Who knows exactly when our work on earth is finished. (*This is*

why Jesus could fall asleep in perfect trust during a *ferocious storm* that had seasoned fishermen trembling in fear.)

### **CONCLUSION:**

–It's fine to use our God-given *reflex of self-preservation*, but it's *not* where we put *our trust*. Our *trust* is in the Lord our God, the “*Maker of heaven and earth*” and the *Preserver* of all He has created. *Jesus can calm the storm, as He did* with His disciples on a boat in the Sea of Galilee, or *He can bring us safely through the storm, even if our ship goes down*, as it did in this story.

–But all 276 men on board that shipwrecked vessel “*reached land safely*,” exactly as God promised Paul. Surviving such a catastrophe was an unheard-of miracle, but it's *not surprising* if we realize that God's call on Paul's wasn't over. He had more earthly service to do. In the same way, if we are *storm-swept*, we will be *safely kept*, if it's not our time to go home. If we're still breathing earthly air, we can be sure that God has more for us to do: letters to write, people to call or visit, prayers to pray, apologies to make, testimonies to give, good deeds to do, good words to share. Jesus will keep us on earth until our mission here is complete. It's something we can count on... an absolute certainty.