

Acts 28:1-10 (NIV)

- ¹Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta.
- ²The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold.
- ³Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.
- ⁴When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live."
- ⁵But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects.
- ⁶The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.
- ⁷There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably.
- ⁸His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him.
- ⁹When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.
- ¹⁰They honored us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

44-28-01-Act Supernaturally

deliverance, miracles, Kingdom living, discipleship,
Acts 28:1-10

Living supernaturally in Christ is living the normal Christian life.

INTRODUCTION: (text as Scripture Reading)

–**Title:** [**Johnny Russell** wrote a song that became Buck Owens’s 1st #1 country hit in 1963: “Act Naturally.”: “They’re gonna put me in the movies / They’re gonna make a big star out of me / We’ll make a film about a man that’s sad and lonely / And all I gotta do is **act naturally**.” For my message’s **title**, I gave that old song new words: “God’s gonna put me in His story. / He’s gonna get some glory out of me / Even though I’ve never walked on water / I follow Jesus supernaturally.”]

–**We may not feel supernatural**, but **God tells us we are!** We’ve become *new creatures in Christ*; we’re His *born-again children and temples of the Holy Spirit*, forever *indwelt by Jesus Christ, the King of creation*. That’s *our identity*, our *Christian reality*, and **HOM.idea**. That’s how Paul lived his life, as exemplified in our **text**. He demonstrated...

- I. The Natural Way to Act Supernaturally– v.3**, Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.
- A. Though all 276 shipwrecked men were “safely on shore” by Paul’s *supernatural guidance*, he claimed no special status but joined the others in building a fire. (Jesus had a new definition for *greatness and an elevated status*– **Mark 9:35**, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.”)
- B. The snake-bite incident allows us to review some bad theology:
- v.4**, When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, “This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.” [**Job’s 3 friends** had this view, saying Job’s suffering was God’s punishment for his sins.] (The truth is, in this *fallen world*, bad things can and do happen to good people.)
 - In **v.6**, after... seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. (The truth is, *success, prosperity, and great health* tell us nothing about a person’s *relationship* with God, because (**Mat 5:45**) God “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”)

TRANS: Can we *act supernaturally natural*, when just bitten by a

deadly viper (or maybe by a *terminal illness* diagnosis?)— v.5, *But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. That's the key:* not letting the world's anxieties about death get to us, but *shaking them off* because of who we are: *supernatural people* whom death cannot kill. Jesus said in John 11:25-26, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" *If we "believe this," we begin supernaturally living the normal Christian life by Jesus living within us... and then...*

II. Supernatural Life Goes Wherever We Go— v.7, *There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably.*

A. In His *Great Commission*, Jesus said, "I am with you always."

1. Whether *working* or *relaxing*, Jesus remains "with" us: within us.
2. As "a royal priesthood," we're all commissioned as *ministers*. (So, wherever we are, we need to listen to Jesus within for direction.)

B. After Paul enjoyed "three days" of hospitality, Jesus showed him the ministry need of his host— v.8, *His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him.* (It says that Paul "healed him" for a reason!)

1. The *incarnational truth* is that Jesus united us to Himself, just as, in His humanity, He was united with His Father.
2. Jesus did only His Father's works, and that made them His own. (So, Paul "healed him" by his *incarnational union* with Jesus, and we're called to listen to and obey our Lord just as Paul did.)

TRANS: We are *ministers* [*servants*], living supernaturally in Christ, the *greatest Servant*. That's **the normal Christian life!** We don't control *how we're to serve*. We just need to listen to the inner voice of Jesus and to follow Him. Remember! *Our indwelling Lord isn't done yet, not with us and not with this world around us!* "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" *isn't optional!* It's the *24/7 incarnational reality* of our King reigning within us wherever we go. And *because He's not done...*

III. Christ's Supernatural Mission Continues in Us— v.9, *When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.*

A. This verse reminds us of Christ's healing ministry in Palestine— Luke 6:19, and the people all tried to touch him, because **power was coming**

from him and healing them all. (Jesus in Paul was continuing to heal!)

B. Let's not forget *who we are: supernatural people* "born from above": "citizens" of a *heavenly Kingdom* whose "power" is as operative now in us as when Jesus manifested that same "power" in Palestine.

1. Jesus told us— John 14:12, I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father [*that the Spirit could fill us as it did Him!*].
2. Jesus was God's Son, but His *supernatural works* were from His Father— Luke 5:17b, And the power of the Lord was present for him [Jesus] to heal the sick. (His example made His "Follow Me" very practical!)

CONCLUSION:

—**The normal Christian response to illness** is to offer to pray, because *prayer* is part of *supernatural living*. But, if we believe Christ's words about *who we are* and *what we'll* do after He left, we should **WWJD** (**Watch What Jesus Does**) and follow Him. Seeing and following Him might mean *laying hands on the sick*, as Paul did in this case, not at all worried that people might think we're acting too supernaturally.

—Ever since Jesus ascended so that He and His Father could indwell us by the coming of the Holy Spirit, *Jesus has not finished doing His work on earth*, and He's doing it through us. So, let's keep our spiritual eyes open and **WWJD**, so we can follow Him in **living supernaturally**. It's *not* something exceptional or out of the ordinary. It's merely our calling as believers: **living in Christ... the normal Christian life.**