

# (Through the Bible) Acts 26-27

by Chuck Smith

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*Paul's defense strategy is to convert Agrippa to the faith in Jesus Christ by showing him the inconsistency of his concept of God.*

**Duration:** 1:10:48

**Scripture:** Matthew 25:34, Acts 26:18-19, Acts 26:23-24, Ephesians 1:11, Colossians 1:13

**Topics:** "Faith And Courage", "Gods Providence"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts the story of Paul's journey on a ship in the Book of Acts. The ship encounters a violent storm, and the crew loses hope of being saved. However, Paul encourages them to be of good cheer, assuring them that no one will lose their life. Eventually, the ship reaches land, but it gets stuck and breaks apart. The soldiers on board consider killing the prisoners to prevent them from escaping, but the centurion, who wants to save Paul, stops them. In the end, everyone on the ship safely reaches land. The speaker also briefly mentions another incident where Paul hears a voice speaking to him and is called by God.

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## Transcript

Let's open our Bibles to the 26th chapter of Acts. Paul was rescued by Lysias, the captain of the Roman guard from the mob that was attempting to beat him to death in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount. He was taken into protective custody by the Roman government, sent under special guard to Caesarea for his own protection, where he appeared before the governor, Felix, who held Paul a prisoner for two years, more or less as a political pawn.

When Festus became the governor in Felix's place, who had been replaced by the Roman Empire because of his corruption, Festus heard Paul's case and began to give Paul the runaround, saying, are you willing to go to Jerusalem and answer these charges? And Paul said, I appeal to Caesar. And being a Roman citizen, Festus was obliged to send him to Caesar. But he had a problem.

The problem was this. He could not really send him to Caesar without legitimate charges being made against him, and there were no legitimate charges. And so he explained his problem to Herod Agrippa, who came to pay a courtesy visit.

And Herod Agrippa said, well, I will hear his case. And the whole idea now of Herod Agrippa hearing Paul's case is that there might be made formal charges to send with Paul as he made his appeal unto

Caesar. And so as we get into chapter 26, we find that Herod Agrippa, who is the great grandson of Herod the Great, who ordered the murder of the children at the time of the birth of Christ, who was the grand nephew of Herod Antipas, who had ordered the death of John the Baptist, the son of Herod Agrippa I, who had put James to death and had imprisoned Peter, Herod Agrippa II.

And Paul is now standing before him there in Caesarea to declare his cause. And the idea is that they might formulate charges against him to send with him as he goes to Rome. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, after Festus announced the whole thing, Agrippa said unto Paul, you are permitted to speak for yourself.

Then Paul stretched forth his hand and answered for himself. Now we usually see portrayed in the Roman court and all, you know, friends, countrymen, you know, and all. And you usually see them with a wave of the hand.

And evidently, Paul had probably picked up this Roman custom. So now appearing before Agrippa and all, you know, I count it a privilege, Agrippa, you know. So he stretched forth his hand to answer for himself.

And he said, I am really happy, King Agrippa, to be able to explain to you today the things that I'm accused of by the Jews, especially because I know that you are an expert in all of the customs and questions which are among the Jews. Wherefore, I beseech thee to listen to me patiently. And so it was true that Herod Agrippa had become a real student of Jewish law, of Jewish custom.

And he was noted for his vast understanding of the Jewish religion. Having read the scriptures and studied the prophets, he knew them well. And so Paul said, I'm really very happy to be able to explain to you my case because I know that you have a background in these things.

He said, my manner of life from my youth, which was first among my own nation at Jerusalem, all of the Jews know. And those which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, would tell you that after the straightest sect of the religion, I was a Pharisee. And the Pharisees were indeed the most orthodox of the orthodox.

They were the radicals. They were the ones who went the second mile, in a sense, to be very exacting as far as the religious practices work and everything had to be just perfect for the Pharisee. They had their traditions and their customs.

And now he said, I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers. He is referring to the promise of the Messiah. And Paul said, it's because of the promises that were made to our fathers, because I hoped in these promises that I stand here to be judged.

Interesting. Knowing that Herod Agrippin knew the prophecies, he brings him right to these promises that God had made. Unto which promise are twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night are hoping to come.

All of the Jews are hoping for the Messiah. For which hope sake, King Agrippa, I have been accused of the Jews. Now, why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead? Now, Paul the Apostle, I am certain, was praying and hoping that somehow, some way, he could convert King Agrippa to the faith in Jesus Christ.

I'm sure that Paul was thinking if this guy would just get turned on for the Lord, being the king over this territory, what an influence he could be. And so, Paul's whole defense has one real purpose, and that is to

convert Agrippa. And so, he begins right away drawing Agrippa in, saying, hey, why should you think it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? Most of the problems that people have today is with their concept of God.

Most of the problems that people have with Scriptures today is because of their concept of God. J.B. Phillips wrote a book, *Your God is Too Small*. And that is true of many people.

Their concept of God is too small. It's too limited. They have what they call the anthropomorphic concept of God.

Man's concepts of God, man's idea of God, or man creating God. And whenever a man creates a God, he creates him too small. There are people who are concerned today with many problems in the Bible.

The parting of the Red Sea, the preservation of Jonah in the belly of the whale, things of this nature. And they bring these up as troubling, difficult Scriptures to deal with, only because their concept of God is too small. You know, God could have actually made a triad submarine to surface and take Jonah in.

Then people wouldn't have so much of a problem with it. But surely if he could make the universe, he could make a fish large enough to house Jonah. God prepared a great fish.

It wasn't just any old shark or whale or whatever. It was a prepared fish that God had prepared. And so if your concept of God is all that it should be, why should you think it a thing incredible that God could create a fish large enough to keep Jonah for three days, you see? Why should you think it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? Difficulty must always be measured by the capacity of the agent doing the work.

Now we look at this structure in which we worship tonight and you say, oh, this must have been a hard building to make. No, it wasn't. We had skilled workmen doing the job.

We had men who knew what they were doing, skilled men on the job. It was a very easy task for them, for they had the proper skill and proper equipment. Now to look at this building and say that we hired a bunch of trained dogs to put it up, then indeed it would have been difficult because of the capacity of the agents that we've called upon to do the work.

Go grab the board, Rover, and bring it over to me. I want to nail it down here, you know. Well, you could have great difficulty because of the agent you've called upon to do the work.

But when God is the agent doing the work, any talk of difficulty is absurd. So the idea of resurrection from the dead, oh, that's hard to take, you know, that's hard to believe. And of course it was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, which was the thing that was really troubling.

It was the stumbling block. So Paul zeroes right in on that area of difficulty and he shows the inconsistency of the difficulty because God was the one who raised him from the dead. Why should you think anything incredible that God should raise the dead? The Bible begins with these words.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. If you can swallow that, you should have no problem with Jonah. If you can believe the first verse of the Bible, you should have no difficulty with the rest of it.

A God who is big enough to create the heaven and the earth is big enough to do anything and everything else that the Bible says that he did. Why should you think it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? I think that our lack of faith is always demonstrated by our great surprise when God has done something and respond to our prayers. And we so many times, even when we see the work of God, we can hardly believe it.

Our concept is so limiting. God help us and God free us from a narrow concept that we might see him in the fullness of his glory and power and majesty and abilities. Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think.

Oh, God, help us to get a correct concept of God. God free us from our narrowed, limited concepts. Now, Paul begins with his own testimony.

I really thought within myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which I also did in Jerusalem. And many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priest. And when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

Again, Paul, no doubt, was a member of the Sanhedrin. He is talking about the voice in the Sanhedrin, the vote against the Christians, putting them to death. He said he consented to the death of Stephen and those other early Christian martyrs.

Paul consented to their deaths. I gave my voice against them and I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme. Don't you know that that must have troubled Paul in his later Christian years when he thought of what a havoc he had wrecked upon the church before his conversion? I imagine he thought about those people that he had forced to blaspheme God or to blaspheme Jesus Christ.

And I imagine it just really cut Paul deeply. It is interesting how that here we have seen God do such a marvelous work, especially among those people who were drug oriented. And we have seen the glorious hand of God working in their lives, delivering them from hard drugs and setting them free from bondage and from addiction and all.

And in many cases, we have had people come to the Lord here who were once dealers. In fact, some of the major dealers in Southern California are now pastoring Calvary chapels. But it was interesting to me that so often when these fellows were converted who were dealers, we had several of them who immediately went to all of those that they were dealing drugs to, to tell them that they weren't going to be dealing anymore, but to tell them that they had something better than drugs now that they wanted to share with them.

And they sought to undo the evil that they had done by sharing Christ with these that before they had dealt the drugs to. Because it bothered them that they were guilty of helping to destroy lives. And I imagine such was the case with Paul.

It probably really bothered him that he had actually forced Christians to blaspheme the name of Jesus. And he said, whereupon, as I went to Damascus with the authority and commission from the chief priest at mid day, O King, I saw in the path, a light from heaven that was brighter than the brightness of the sun. It was shining all around me and those which were journeying with me.

And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me and saying in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks or the goads. In those days when they would put the yoke on a young ox, the young ox wouldn't like that yoke and often it would begin to kick. And so the fellow with the plow, if he had a single plow, would have this pole with a sharp point on it.

And every time the ox would kick, he would hold that goad there at the back of the heel of the ox. So the ox soon learned not to kick. You go ahead and object, but it's going to hurt.

And so the Lord said, it's been hard for you, Paul, to kick against the goads. The spirit of God was no doubt dealing with Paul before his conversion experience. I believe that watching Stephen's death no doubt had a tremendous effect upon Paul.

The Bible said that Stephen's face was shining like an angel. And as they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, O Father, don't lay this sin to their charge. Into thy hands I commend my spirit.

And I'm certain that this had a powerful effect. It was a goad. Paul found himself kicking against it.

But somehow there was a conviction there that, hey, I've never seen anybody quite like that. I've never felt anything quite like what I felt when he was speaking. And I said, Paul answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared unto you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness, both of these things which you have seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto you, delivering you from the people, that is, from a ministry to the Jews and from the Gentiles unto whom I will send thee. So his commission, basically from the beginning, was to go to the Gentiles. Now, his purpose or the purpose of the gospel, of the gospel itself, entailed the opening of their eyes.

That implies blindness. Paul, later writing to the Ephesian church, said, The God of this world has blinded their eyes that they cannot see. A man who does not know Jesus Christ is blind to the truth many times.

It's worse when he's not blind to the truth, but still doesn't believe. But the God of this world has blinded men's eyes that they cannot see the truth. So Paul was to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.

There are two kingdoms in the world today, two spheres of government, the government of God and the government of Satan. They are mutually exclusive and antagonistic. Every man exists in one of these two kingdoms.

You tonight are living in the kingdom of light or the kingdom of darkness. You're living under the control of Satan or under the control of God. There are only two governing spheres of the universe.

In the beginning, there was just one, the kingdom of God, all things in obedience and in subjection unto him. God created angelic beings, one special being known as Lucifer, the anointed cherub, rebelled against the authority of God and formed a second government, the government of death and darkness. Ultimately, Satan's kingdom is going to come down.

In fact, it is close to the end of Satan's reign now. When Jesus returns, and I believe it will be very soon, to establish God's kingdom upon the earth, at that time, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyssal. After

a thousand years, he will receive a short reprieve from the abyssal.

And at the end of that short period, he will then be cast into Gehenna, into outer darkness, the kingdom of darkness cast into outer darkness. How far out does space go? Well, it would seem that space probably goes to infinity. I can conceive of space just going out forever.

Now, they do say that the universe as we know it, the galactic systems, go out probably some 12,000, I mean, they go out some 12 billion light years. Now, those galaxies that are 12 billion light years away, their light is so faint that they can only be seen by the most powerful telescopes. And of course, then I think that there's just a lot of, you know, how do they know they're 12 billion light years or 10 billion light years when you get that far away? But let us say a person could travel out into space a hundred billion light years beyond the furthest galaxy, so far out into space that the light of the universe does not penetrate that far.

The Bible speaks of unto whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. There is something very foreboding about darkness. I was in the Oregon caves when I was a child, and way down there in the caves as we were deep inside the earth there, they turned off all of the lights and they said, this is total darkness.

It's the first and probably only time in my life I've been in total darkness. Total darkness is something that is very eerie. It is so dark you can almost feel it.

I know that as a child, the first thing I did is just put my hand up and wave it in front of my eyes as close as I could to see if I couldn't perceive any kind of movement at all, which I couldn't. Total darkness unto whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. The kingdom of darkness will one day end in the blackness of darkness forever, and in the universe there will be only one kingdom again, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of light and life, and all of those within it subject unto God and to his authority, and what a beautiful universe that will be.

How I long for that day when every rebellious act, thought is put out and God reigns supreme. So Paul's ministry was to deliver people from this kingdom of darkness and bring them into the kingdom of light, to free them from the power of Satan that they might come unto God in order that they might receive the forgiveness of their sins, which is the effect of the gospel and the inheritance among those that are set apart by faith in Jesus Christ. So we who have come to believe in Jesus Christ have a inheritance.

The Bible speaks about the inheritance of the saints in life, sons of God, if sons then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. As Jesus said, in that day I will say unto them, come ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world. And it's so easy to become a part of that kingdom just by believing in Jesus Christ, those who believe in him, who have submitted to his lordship.

It is a kingdom. You believe that Jesus is king. You bow to his authority and by that bowing to his authority, yielding yourself to the authority of Jesus, you become a subject of his kingdom.

And so Paul said, whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but I showed first unto them of Damascus and then in Jerusalem and throughout all the coasts of Judea and then unto the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God and do the works that demonstrate repentance. And so Paul was calling upon people, even as John the Baptist and even as Jesus did to

change, to turn, to turn from a life dominated by the flesh to the life dominated by the spirit. The word repent means actually to change and it isn't a true repentance unless there is a change.

There are many people who confuse sorrow with repentance. Now I would imagine that if you would take a poll at San Quentin of the inmates there and if you ask them, are you sorry for, well you just ask them, are you sorry? I'm sure that you'd get the answer yes. If they were honest, are you sorry for your crime that brought you here? I don't think that the answer would automatically be yes.

If you'd say, are you sorry you got caught? Yes. There's the difference between sorrow over what you have done and sorrow over being caught at what you have done. There are a lot of people that are sorry for their sins.

They say, I repent. No, you didn't. You haven't changed.

You're still doing the same thing. That isn't repentance. Repentance means to change and so Paul was calling on people to change from a life lived after the flesh to a life living after the spirit and for these causes the Jews caught me in the temple and they were trying to kill me.

Now having therefore obtained the help of God, I'm here today. I mean if God hadn't helped me, I wouldn't be here today but you know and it's interesting having obtained the help of God. Now God uses human instruments.

Actually it was the Roman soldiers that came and rescued Paul from that angry mob. Again we need to recognize the supernatural in the natural. God works in natural ways.

We are looking always it seems for some you know ethereal hocus-pocus kind of thing and yeah now God is you know I feel chills oh I feel you know tingling God is here but we need to recognize God more in the natural. It is a spiritually insensitive person who can only recognize God in in the violent you might say. Only if there's a great shaking or a great fire or a great movement of some kind oh God's here but you need to recognize the work of God in very natural ways.

There was the farmer who in the midst of this heavy storm was warned by the sheriff at 10 o'clock in the morning that he better leave his farm that they were expecting a flood in that area and the farmer says thank you sheriff but I've lived here for all my life and so I'll just you know stay here. I've never seen any flood come up to the house yet. It continued to rain and the river started to rise and at two o'clock in the afternoon a highway patrolman came by the water is beginning to get up close to the house and he called to the farmer and he said we're evacuating this area you better leave.

The farmer sitting there on his porch says well he said I've lived here all my life and I'm not really worried I know the river and you know I'll be all right thank you for your warning. The water continued to rise came up three feet in the house and so the farmer climbed up on the roof and the coast guard sent a helicopter over and they shined the light down on the farmer and they said we're here to evacuate you. They said no that's not necessary I've lived here all my life and I'm not worried about it you know and so the river continued to rise until the farmhouse was swept from its foundation and went tumbling down and the farmer drowned.

He said lord I don't understand I trusted you all my life why would you let me drown in a flood when I was trusting you? I don't understand that lord it seems when I trusted in you that you would have rescued me from drowning. The lord says well let me look at the record here a minute. He said according to my

records I sent the sheriff by at 10 in the morning and then I sent the highway patrol by in the afternoon and I even sent the coast guard in the evening but you see we don't recognize God in the natural things which we need to do.

We need to recognize God in the natural things. So Paul talking about the fact that the Roman soldiers actually came and rescued him from the mob he is saying that I obtained the help of God. God helped me and delivered me from them who were trying to beat me to death and thus God has sustained me to this day recognizing that God uses human instruments to accomplish his purposes in his work but seeing God in it that's our problem.

We don't see God in the everyday commonplace things. God make me more conscious of him. We are prone to take so many things for granted and Paul said I've been witnessing both to the small and to the great and I've not said any other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come.

I haven't added to the scripture. I've only been preaching the scripture the things the prophets and Moses said would come that Christ should suffer. That is that the Messiah should suffer.

Now this was something that was foreign to Jewish thought. This was the thing that offended the Jews concerning Christ. They had in their minds the concept that the Messiah was going to set up a political kingdom and to run the Romans out and to establish a kingdom over the earth with Jerusalem as its center and those scriptures that prophesied the Messiah being despised and rejected.

Those scriptures that prophesied the Messiah being cut off and received nothing for himself. They spiritualized those scriptures. Now we find today a sequel in that many people spiritualized the scriptures of the coming again of Jesus Christ.

Well actually he's coming in us you see and we are to be manifested and the church in its glorified state upon the earth will be the second coming of Jesus. We are the body of Christ and they spiritualized the actual coming again of Jesus Christ. Even as the pharisees, I mean the Jews were spiritualizing those prophecies that related to his suffering and only accepting those prophecies that related to his kingdom, his glory, his power.

So Paul said I was only telling them what their scriptures told him that Christ was going to suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles. And as Paul was speaking, festus, the Roman governor broke in and he said with a loud voice, Paul, you're beside yourself. Your much learning has made you mad.

Now a man beside himself was the man who talked to himself. You know when a person gets in conversation with himself, he's usually in serious trouble. And many times this is a sign of mental incompetence when a person, you see them talking to themselves and answering themselves and arguing with themselves and all.

You're beside yourself. Your much learning has made you mad. He was probably able to observe Paul's tremendous study habits.

Paul was an avid student. Read all the time. He said, Timothy, please come and bring me the parchments when you come.

You know, he was looking for study material. But Paul said, I'm not mad, O noble festus, but I speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knows of these things of which I am speaking freely, for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him.

For this thing was not done in a corner. Now, I'm sure that King Agrippa is aware of these things. He's aware of Jesus Christ.

He's aware of the crucifixion. He's aware of the prophets, the scriptures. These things weren't done in a corner.

And now Paul turns to nail him. King Agrippa, you believe the prophets? I know you believe the prophets. This is known as the presumptive close.

You know, you show them the various colors that they can buy these towels in. We have all these lovely shades of color. Now the presumptive close, you say, now let's see, which color did you want to order? You know, you don't say, do you want to buy these towels? You presume they're going to buy and you say, which color now did you want or which color did you like? Oh, the purple.

I, you know, how many of those did you want? You know, I'm just presumptive. Paul's using this presumptive close. Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? Oh, I know you believe the prophets.

Agrippa, wait a minute, hold on, hold on, hold on. Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian. Now, just what Agrippa said is the matter of great controversy among many Bible commentators.

I don't intend to enter into the controversy. Some believe that Agrippa was saying it scornfully, such as almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian. Are you out of your head? You think you're going to persuade me? Are you trying to persuade me to become a Christian? Or did he actually say almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian? Was he close really to conversion? We don't know.

We'll have to leave that with the commentators to find out. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God that not only you, but also all that hear me this day were both almost and altogether.

Now, Paul's answer seems to indicate that he was just really saying, hey, Paul, almost thou persuadest me that there was actually a real persuasion of Agrippa. Paul said, I wish it wasn't just almost, but altogether. I wish you were just like I am, except I wouldn't wish these bonds on you.

Not almost, I wish it was altogether. I think the tragedy of Agrippa so close. I think the tragedy of many lives today so close.

You see a person who comes very close to the kingdom, almost persuaded, but just somehow they don't take that final step in. And you think, oh, how tragic to be so close to eternal life, so close to the kingdom of God, so close to freedom from sin. Oh, would to God it was not just almost, but altogether persuaded.

And so when Paul had thus spoken, the king rose up and the governor and Bernice, who had been married twice before she moved in with her brother and Bernice and King Agrippa were brother and sister. Later on, she was to become the mistress of a couple of Roman emperors. Having heard this witness in the story of Jesus Christ, they now rose up.

And when they were gone aside, they talked among themselves saying, this man has done nothing worthy of death or of imprisonment. And Agrippa said to Festus, this man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar. You know, you could have set him free.

God had plans though for Paul in Rome. And so to Rome we go. When it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus's band.

So Julius is another Roman centurion were introduced to. And interestingly enough in the scriptures, we are introduced to several centurions and all of them were very commendable men. The Bible really speaks in a very favorable way of each of the centurions.

There was a centurion who came to Jesus for the healing of his servant. And Jesus said, I will come to your house. And he said, oh no, Lord, I understand what authority is about because I'm under authority and I have under me men.

And I can say to this one, go. And he goes, I can say that one, come. And he comes and I understand what authority is about.

And I'm not worthy. You should come to my house, but you just speak the word and my servant will be healed. I understand authority and I understand your authority.

You just speak the word. And Jesus said, I haven't found this much faith in all of Israel. The centurion at the cross at the death of Jesus said, truly, this was the son of God.

Cornelius, a Roman centurion was the first Gentile converted in the church. And it was upon his household that the Holy Spirit was poured forth. Now, Julius is a very commendable man.

He takes an interest and a liking to Paul and he shows all special favors and he actually spares Paul's life on this journey. So they entered into a ship and they launched intending to sail by the coast of Asia. And Aristarchus from Macedonia was with them.

Luke was with him also. The next day, we touched at Sidon, that area that you hear so much about today in Southern Lebanon. And Julius treated Paul courteously and allowed him the freedom to go to his friends in order that he might refresh himself when they were there at Sidon.

And when we had launched from there, we sailed under Cyprus because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. And there the centurion found one of the ships from Alexandria.

It was a corn ship, which were about the largest ships in the sea at that time. And it was sailing to Italy and so he put us on it. And when we had sailed slowly for many days and were barely come over against Cnidus, the wind not allowing us, we sailed under Crete and over against Salmoni.

And hardly passing it, they came to the place that is called the Fair Havens, which is in about the middle of the island of Crete, which is south and slightly east from the tip of Greece. Now, when a long time was spent, the sailing was getting dangerous because we were coming into the month of October. Now, it was dangerous to sail on the Mediterranean much after October because of the winter storms and all that would whip up the Mediterranean Sea.

So Paul admonished them and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with great hurt and a lot of damage, not only to your cargo, but also to our lives. Nevertheless, the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship more than those things which were spoken by Paul. As they were harbored there in Fair Haven, Paul said, hey, fellas, I don't think we ought to sail.

I perceive that there's going to be a bad voyage. We're going to lose the cargo and we could lose lives. But the captain and the owner of the ship said, oh, I've been on the Mediterranean for years.

What does this guy know, you know? And, you know, we can do it. You know, I've got a good ship and all of this. And because it wasn't a very large city, it wasn't really commodious to winter in.

There wasn't enough entertainment for the sailors through the three months of the wintertime. The most of them advised them to depart in order that they might get to a larger city in Crete, the city of Phenis, which is on the western end of the island of Crete, that they might winter there where there was all kinds of entertainment for the sailors. And so when the south wind was blowing softly, they figured, ah, this is perfect, you know, we'll just let out and we'll head up to Phenis there at the northwest point of the island of Crete.

But not long after they had set sail, there arose against it a tempestuous wind called the Eurocleidon. It's like our Santana. And when the ship was caught and could not bear up into the wind, they just let her drive.

And running under a certain island, which is called Clotta, we had much work to come by the boat, which when they had taken up, they used the helps and the undergirding of the ship, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksand. They strayed sail and were so driven, they pulled in the sail and just let the storm drive them. But they would gird up the boats, they would put these big undergirdings, these ropes, and they would tie the boat together so the thing wouldn't break apart in the heavy surf.

And so these big rope type things that they would put under the ship and then they would tighten them with a winch to hold the thing together. And so they were doing everything they could physically to survive this furious storm. And we being exceedingly tossed with the storm, the next day they lightened the ship.

And the third day, Luke is talking, we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship, the ropes and the tackling and all. And so Luke was involved in throwing overboard the tackling. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, of course, they lost their bearings without the sun or the stars.

They couldn't, they really couldn't tell where they were. And no small storm lay on us. All hope that we should be saved was taken away.

But after a long abstinence, that is the time of fasting, Paul stood forth in the midst of them and said, Sirs, you should have listened to me. Don't you love that? Don't you love to hear that? Oh, I hate that. You should have listened to me.

The first church that I pastored was in Prescott, Arizona. We had a boulder pile beside the church that I decided to move a bit so that the church would have a better view coming up the street. And so I got the pry bars and the hydraulic jacks and all and I was rolling those boulders down and I was having a great time rolling these huge old boulders.

And so they had this one boulder and I've been prying and I got the jack under it and started to jack it up and have it ready to go. And my wife came along and said, Honey, you better be careful. I wouldn't roll that boulder down there.

It's apt to go through the church. I said, No, no way. I said, It's going to slide right down and it's going to lock right down there between those two boulders.

And I've got it all figured out. Honey, you better not do that. And I said, No, no.

So I was jacking the thing up and got it to that point of balance. Honey, you better not. And the thing started over and started tumbling down and landed right where I figured it would, right between those two boulders.

But then the inertia within it carried it over once more and right through the wall of the church and wiped out three pews inside. Guess what my wife said to me? You should have listened to me. So Paul said, You should have listened to me and never loosed from Crete.

You would not have gained this harm or loss. But now I exhort you to be a good cheer. Hey, this guy's really flipped, you know, 14 days.

We haven't seen the sun. The wind is still raging. The waves are still beating against us.

We're being driven. We don't know where we are. We've given up hope of really being saved.

And this guy is saying, Be a good cheer for there shall not be the loss of any man's life among you. We're only going to lose this ship for there stood by me this night, the angel of God. Who's I am and whom I serve.

Jesus, you remember, came to Paul when he was discouraged in Jerusalem, in the prison there and said, Paul, be a good cheer. Even as you have borne witness of me here in Jerusalem, so shall you bear witness of me in Rome. Now, Jesus stood by Paul during the night when they had given up hope of ever getting to Rome.

Now, I mean, you know, we've had it. We're going to die out here in the Mediterranean. We're going to be part of the statistics.

And the Lord stood by Paul assuring him, Hey, I told you, you're going to get to Rome, Paul, you'll make it to Rome yet. And so Paul in the morning stands up and says, Hey, fellas, be a good cheer last night. The angel of the Lord, the word angel, there is messenger of the Lord, whose I am and who I serve.

Jesus Christ stood by me. And he said, Fear not, Paul, for you must be brought before Caesar. And lo, God has given to you all of them that sail with you.

You know, it's great to travel with a godly man every once in a while on the airplane. I have people come up to me. Oh, I'm so glad to see you get on the plane.

This is my first flight and I've been so scared. And oh, you don't know what it did when I saw you get on board, you know, I don't know. I would hate to be on a plane that it was the pilot's time to go.

But for Paul's sake, I've given the, all of them that are sailing with you. Wherefore, Paul said, sirs, be of good cheer for I believe God great testimony that it shall be even as it was told to me. Cheer up, fellas, because I believe God it's going to be just like that.

But now notice he said, Jesus actually stood by me and talked to me. Now he's saying, I believe God now somewhere in geometry, equal sides and equal angles mean equal, you know, something else. I forgot my geometry, but we had some kind of a theorem of that, you know? And so if he says, Jesus talked to me and then he says, I believe God, you put it together and that puts Jesus as God.

How be it, he said, we will be cast on a certain island. But when the 14th night was come and we were driven up and down in Adria about midnight, the shipmen realized that they were drawing near to some land. They probably heard the surf pounding.

And so they sounded and found that it was 20 fathoms. And then when they went a little further, they sounded again and it was 15 fathoms. And so they realized that they were reaching some land.

And so fearing less, they would have fallen upon the rocks. They cast out four anchors from the stern and they waited for the day. And some of the sailors were about to flee out of the ship for they had let down a little boat into the sea, but they were acting as though they would have cast out some anchors from the four ship.

But Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, unless those men abide in the ship, you cannot be saved. Notice how Paul's taken over here. He's now giving the orders.

The captain's probably, you know, down in the hold, someplace of the ship, probably in chains at this point for his advice to sail. But Paul has taken over. He's giving the commands and the orders now.

And so the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat and let it fall off. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them to take meat, saying, this is the 14th day that you've tarried and you've continued fasting, having taking in nothing. They're probably so seasick they couldn't with all of that storm.

Wherefore, I pray you to eat some meat for this is for your health. Paul recognized again the natural and the supernatural, but a man needs strength. And so Paul is saying, now this is for your health.

You better eat something for you're not going to not a hair of your head is going to perish. And so when he had thus spoken, he took bread and he gave thanks. And so we have a custom, and I think it's a beautiful custom of giving thanks to God for our food before we partake to just give God thanks for his provision.

And he gave thanks to God in the presence of them all. And I like to see people in a restaurant, bow their heads and, and ask God's blessing upon their food. It actually gives you a great opportunity to witness when we're out with the family, we bow our heads in the restaurant and we ask God's blessing upon the food.

And it, and a lot of times it opens up the doors of opportunity to witness. People will come over and say, oh, that was such a beautiful thing to see you and your children praying. There's not enough of that today and all.

And we can then say, well, are you a Christian, you know, and it gives opportunity to share. And so in the presence of them all, when my wife and I were going together, there was a crowd that we were running it

with. And we used to often go to Vandy camps out in Glendale in the evening for, you know, the evening hamburgers and, and, and stuff.

And it was a popular place. And there was usually quite a few of us and they had some kind of a little rule that when the food was served, everybody would put up their finger like this. And the last one to put up their finger was the one that had to pray.

And I was busy talking. And my wife, this I think was just our second date or so. She didn't know me very well at the time.

And I think I was busy looking at her and, and talking to her. And when I looked back at the table, everyone had their finger up, you know. And so I knew that I was stuck with the task of praying.

But, you know, I like to pray, but I don't like to be stuck with the task of praying. So I thought, well, all right, you know, you want me to pray, I'll do that. So I stood up, lifted up my hand.

I'll never forget the expression on Kay's face when she was wondering, what am I going with? I decided to play the Pharisee. And so when he had broken the bread, he began to eat. And they were all of good cheer.

And they also took some meat. And there were about 276 people in the ship, plus the load of corn that they were bringing from Egypt, because Egypt was really the breadbasket for Rome. And most of the grain was and all came from Egypt.

And they had many of these cargo ships, but they also carried passengers. 276. So it was a pretty good size ship.

And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and they cast the wheat that they were carrying into the sea. And when it was day, they did not know what land it was, but they discovered a certain little creek with a shore. And they were hoping, if possible, to steer the ship on into this creek to get close to shore.

And so when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves to the sea. They loosed the rudder bands and they hoisted up the mainsail to the wind. And they began to move toward the shore.

And they fell into a place where the two seas met and they ran the ship aground. And the fore part of the ship stuck fast and remained unmovable. But the back part of the ship was broken up with the violence of the waves.

And the soldier's counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. But the Centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose. Again, the Centurion, a very honorable person.

And he kept them from their purpose because he wanted to save Paul. And he commanded that those which could swim should dive in first and get to land. And the rest of them, some hanging on the board, some under the broken pieces of the ship, floated on into land.

And so it came to pass that they all escaped safe to land. We'll finish the book of Acts next Sunday night. Next Sunday night, when we finish the book of Acts, in as much as we just have one chapter, I'll try to bring to you a brief account from history of what happened to Paul after the close of the book of Acts.

Not only from history, but from some of the epistles, we get a little further insight of the things that took place in Paul's life after the end of the book of Acts. And so we'll give a sort of a little history of Paul the Apostle next Sunday night after we have taken the 28th chapter of Acts to carry it on up to the year 67, when Paul was beheaded by Nero. And so we'll sort of complete the life of Paul in history form next Sunday night.

You'll find, I think, very interesting, this guy, Paul. I just really desire to meet him, to spend time with him. I have such great admiration for this man, for his courage, for his strength, for his dedication, the commitment.

He's just one of a kind, really. And I love him because of his great love for my Lord. Eternity, the kingdom of God is going to be just a wonderful place because we're going to be able to spend time with so many wonderful people there in the kingdom.

I hope to spend time with Paul. I hope to spend time with David. I hope to spend time with John.

I hope to spend time with you when we get there. And man, we've got all eternity, so why not, you know? And it's just going to be great when we come into God's glorious eternal kingdom.

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