

Stay in God's Safehavens

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of staying in God's safe havens through obedience and faith, as exemplified by Paul's journey to Rome amidst trials.

Duration: 1:24:07

Scripture: Acts 27:9, Acts 27:21

Topics: "Safety"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Paul's journey on a ship and how it relates to our own journeys in life. The ship faced a violent storm for four days, causing the crew to fear for their lives. Paul, who had warned them about the dangers, reassured them that no one would die. Despite the hardships, Paul encouraged the crew to eat and have faith in God's protection. The preacher emphasizes the importance of having God with us in every aspect of our lives, not just in preaching, and encourages the audience to trust in God during their own journeys.

Transcript

Thank you, Lord, that we can be here. Please be in our midst and bless us and work in an amazing way. Amen.

We'll read from Acts chapter 27. It's a long text, so we'll just read it in Zulu, and you just follow in your own Bible, in your own language. Acts chapter 27, from the first verse.

Verse 9. Verse 10. Verse 11. Verse 12.

Verse 13. Verse 14. Verse 14.

Verse 15. Verse 16. That is up to verse 20.

Verse 21. Verse 21. Verse 22.

Verse 23. Verse 24. Verse 25.

Verse 26. Verse 27. Verse 28.

That's verse 38. I've read a long portion. If you don't have an ear to hear, and if the Holy Spirit doesn't enlighten you, you may say, but what is it all about anyway? And yet, there is so much in this portion, we

could never finish it in this service.

Paul was a prisoner. Not for stealing, not for any other reason but the gospel. That was like their way of life.

Paul spent many years in prison. But all the persecution and difficulty didn't tap them of their strength. They became stronger for it.

King Agrippa had gone to Caesarea with his wife. And spent quite some time there with Festus. And of course, over time, they eventually got onto the subject of Paul.

And Festus said, oh King, I've got a prisoner here and I wish I could actually release him. Maybe it would be good if you had listened as well to what he had to say. You and your wife and the others with you.

And Paul said, I've got a prisoner here and I wish I could actually release him. Paul was brought in and he made use of the opportunity like he always did. He didn't miss an opportunity.

Even if he was before kings or anybody, it was an opportunity for him for the gospel. And that's what he did here too. And it touched the king's heart to the point that the king said, wait a bit, Paul, stop now.

Before I become a Christian. And Paul said, I wish not only you would become a Christian, but everyone here. A group of people, a group of people in the diaspora, we are not any different from one another.

This is not just a fight. This is not just a fight. Everyone here has to be a part of it.

Everyone here has to be part of it. The king Agrippa then said to Festus that this man is not worthy of death. He is not even worthy to be a prisoner.

So he has already touched in his heart. He should be released. He said.

and that he is a free man. And he said, well we could have released this man had it not been for the reason that Paul had appealed to Caesar. Now Caesar was about 2,000 kilometers away.

He said, well that's the only reason why we can't release him because he's already appealed, because Paul wanted Caesar to hear about the treatment that he had received. And they said, well we could have released him, but we cannot anymore because he's already appealed, he wants this matter to go right to the top, to Caesar. So then they agreed that he should sail to Italy.

So they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius. He was from the Augustan battalion, his army. Now the Italian soldiers at that time were known to be tough people, tough warriors.

Michael Friedel and Collins were telling me when they were in Scotland, they saw some Scottish soldiers marching in their kilts. They also at one time fought battles here in England. They say the Boers at that time, they said well it's no problem fighting the English soldiers, we're just afraid of their wives.

They mistook the Scottish soldiers with the Kilts as their wives. They said no, it's the wives that are the most dangerous, the English are okay. And they said they were very impressed even now at the discipline of these Scotsmen.

But also there was a platoon from China and they say even they were very disciplined. They say they were just a bit disappointed with the South African presentation because there didn't seem to be much discipline. We need to really wake up, lest the other nations overtake us and maybe they already have.

Now the Roman soldiers were known for their discipline. If a man was told where to stand, he was told where to stand. They say even if a war, they say once he was told where to stand guard and be on duty, even if the wall behind him would fall on top of him and kill him, he wouldn't move a foot.

Even if a bee stung him on his nose, he wouldn't move, he'd stand firm. So, let's see. And they said But this great disciplined nation fell because of immorality.

And unfortunately, many a Christian warrior falls because of immorality. Lust of the flesh brings them to fall. And so they proceeded to arrange this ship that was to sail from Italy with other prisoners, Paul, other prisoners and the and along with them was Aristarchus.

He was a Macedonian who had also suffered quite a bit with Paul previously when Paul was there. Now he wasn't imprisoned with Paul, but when the ship left, he was there. And Luke as well, the author of this book and who wrote this information down.

They went with him. They said we want to go with Paul. He cannot go alone.

It was a big ship because on the ship were 276 people. And it was a mixture of people, good and bad. There were the prisoners, some heading to Rome to be sentenced and then Paul and the others.

Paul was also going as a prisoner. Unfortunately, we can't go into detail because of time. They got to their first stop.

They hadn't sailed for very long when Julius the Centurion started taking notice of Paul and he liked him. So he treated Paul with consideration. So when they got to their first stop, Paul asked whether he could go to his friends and minister to them.

And the Centurion allowed him. It's remarkable and significant how Paul was able to do that. It's remarkable and significant how Paul was able to win the Centurion's confidence.

Maybe the Centurion had heard him when he had spoken to King Agrippa and to Festus. Maybe Paul had spoken to him on the ship. But in the short space of time, he won favor with this man to the point that he let him go on his own.

He didn't even send people to guard him or go with himself. Paul said that he had some brethren there that he wanted to visit and the Centurion allowed him. So he could go there.

They had a wonderful time together and they were all revived. When Paul got there, he didn't get there and ask for cigarettes or for some alcohol. Or speak about girls like many people do.

No, he made use of that opportunity as well. Spoke about the Lord. They strengthened each other in the Lord.

I even say, those that do that belong to the devil. To Satan. If there are some amongst us that are still living in that world, you belong to the kingdom of hell.

Get out of it. Before the sun sets today, you should repent. Confess your sin.

And if you are a slave of it, come. Be prayed for. That you are set free.

If you are a slave of it, come. Be prayed for. That you are set free.

Now just take note of this. The Centurion trusted Paul. Remember, if Paul would have just escaped there, the Centurion would have been in great trouble.

If you are a slave of it, come. Be prayed for. That you are set free.

If you are a slave of it, come. Be prayed for. That you are set free.

Paul was trustworthy. He was reliable. He was faithful.

He went there and he was like a free man. But the time came when he had strengthened the brethren, they had strengthened him, he said, Now brothers, I must go back. I must become a prisoner again.

And that Centurion could trust Paul. He was trustworthy. Not like many Christians today, who are not trustworthy in the least.

You entrust something to them, you lose it. You can't trust them. People just don't believe.

People just don't keep their word anymore. They are no longer reliable and trustworthy. They make a promise, they even sign and agree to something, whether it is verbally or written.

But they don't keep it. Such people are worthless in society. In fact, they will just be good for the worms one day when he is buried.

But of course he will also burn in hell for it. Paul kept his promise. The time that they had agreed, he was there, he was faithful.

And the Lord says, if you are not faithful in the small things, He won't entrust you with bigger things. At the right time, Paul reported back to the ship. And that Centurion saw once again that Paul was reliable, he was faithful, you could trust him.

What are you known for? The Germans have a saying, one man, one word, one woman, one dictionary. But I hope that you women here are not like that. Don't be a person who jumps from one thing to the other.

Today one decision, tomorrow another decision, day after, something else again. Be focused on what you are doing, have your goal and strive for that goal. Don't jump around and not know what you are doing.

Having all kinds of thoughts. Today it's this, tomorrow it's that. Today I get married to this girl, tomorrow you still see somebody else.

And then this, this and that. Like paper blown around in the wind, like a wave blown this way and that way. There is no steadfastness.

People go to school here. People go to school here, they write metric here. After that they go their different ways.

Then you hear later that one has gone this way, the other one is in prison and someone else has died from AIDS. It's time that we young people wake up and cry to God that he creates us anew. So they boarded the ship, set sail again, not straight for Italy, but sailing along the coastline of Asia.

But from the outset it was a difficult voyage because the wind was against them all the time. They sailed with much difficulty. In those days ships weren't driven along by big motors with propellers, but with sails that were assisted where a ship was driven along by the wind.

So they'd raise the sails and then the ship would be driven along. So as they wanted to travel there from west to east, as they set course, they noticed that they were hardly making any progress because the wind was just in the wrong direction. So they set sail along the coastline with great difficulty and they wanted to go around an island around the north of it, but they couldn't make it so they had to go around the southern tip.

So some Bibles have maps in them where you can actually follow the voyage. But this journey was very difficult. It took them a long time.

Then they sailed along until they got to a certain harbour. And in the verse 8 we see they get to a certain place called Fay Havens. When they got there, they dropped their anchors.

Then Paul spoke to the owner and the captain of the ship and also the centurion that was so good to him. And Paul said to them, he said, Men, I think we shouldn't sail from here. We should just stay over here.

If we should set sail, we will suffer great loss and much damage. So he said, Men, I think we shouldn't sail from here. We should just stay over here.

But the pilot or the owner and the captain of the ship decided that that certain harbour they were was not ideal for wintering. They said, let's just continue a bit further, get to another harbour which is far more suitable. But Paul warned them again, he said, if we sail from here, we will suffer much.

Men, I think we shouldn't sail from here. We should just stay over here. Eventually, the centurion was persuaded by these men and he said to Paul, But Paul, remember, you aren't a sailor.

This is the captain of a ship and the pilot or the owner, they are very familiar with these circumstances. You are just a preacher. What do you really know about it? You don't have the same experience that they have.

You don't have their knowledge either. These are learned men. They've learnt it.

They know exactly how to do it. They are professionals at their game. You just know how to preach.

You don't know about what they are doing. And then Paul just left them. Now, that particular day, Now, that particular day, when they were discussing this, it was wonderful.

The weather was just wonderful. And there was even a slight south wind blowing which would assist them along. They said, but Paul, just look at the conditions.

They are ideal. And after all, we are not going far away, just close by. Conditions were ideal.

But Paul warned them, but eventually he noticed that there is no point in arguing with people who have set their mind on something. And he just kept quiet. Remember the prophet that said, Remember that prophet, the people came and they offered him a lot of money.

They said, come and curse the children of God. Then he prayed, he said, Lord, must I go? The Lord said, no. But then they offered him money again.

They asked him again. He said, Lord, shouldn't I rather than just go? And eventually the Lord saw that he wanted to go. And he said, okay, then go.

One no of God wasn't enough. It was because his heart was pulling him there. His own heart wanted to go that way.

And then he prayed again to the Lord. Lord, is this not what you want? Then the Lord said, good, do what you want. And that is what happened on that path.

When he had prayed and God said, Lord, When God had said no, it should have been no for him. But because he was enticed by that money and that honor and so-called glory, The Lord saw that he wanted it and he said, okay, go. It was at great danger.

And now Paul records, he says, they had not traveled for very long, just a short time. And they rushed down from the land, a violent wind, a terrible storm. And so when this wind came, they quickly let down the sails and they just let the ship drift and be taken by the wind for two weeks.

These men didn't eat. They couldn't even eat. And they just didn't know what would happen next.

They were just taken by the wind. That's how God can deal with a person. I say it was thrown around like children throwing the ball that way, that way, tossed to and through by the waves.

That even the captain of the boat, of that ship, lost his appetite. And the owner as well. Day and night.

And then they took all the things and threw them away into the sea. All the treasures, a big huge ship filled with tons of things into the sea. And the poor owner, I don't think that he had insured his ship.

You can make a study of that, whether the insurance companies were in existence already at that time. So, without a compass or any other equipment, they had to rely on the sun and the stars. So, without a compass or any other equipment, they had to rely on the sun and the stars.

So, for two weeks they were driven around by the wind, they didn't know where they were, they couldn't see anything, it was overcast, it was raining, they couldn't see sun or stars. So, they didn't know where they were, they just had one fear that they would get shipwrecked. After two weeks, Paul stood up.

And Paul said, men, you should have listened to me when I spoke to you. He said to the owner of the ship, you should have followed my advice. You pilot, you captain of the ship, you should have listened.

The people of the Lord, you should have listened. You should have followed my advice. Then, God, did not determine whom to follow.

You should have listened to me. You should have listened to me. And you should have believed me.

You should have listened to me.

It's because Paul was a person who listened to him. and to the centurion as well he said you ought to have listened but the problem happened like my brother said is that people know better they say well look I know better than you what do you know anybody about this they forgot that Paul had sailed quite a lot in his lifetime already even as a child so he did know quite a bit but Paul didn't rely on his knowledge of ships he relied on God it's like just recently Peter was in Holland with many theologians they were gathered there they were together you couldn't you didn't even recognize that this was a Christian group gathering they were didn't pray for food they didn't pray even for their meetings that they had it was they just got together and got on with what they were saying and and

usually it didn't even make Paul stood up and said men you should not be afraid even though the ship's going to be destroyed completely wrecked and they had still been trying to do everything possible to keep the ship intact they had girded with girded it with cables everything that they could possibly do that it doesn't break apart what Paul said but an angel of the Lord has appeared to me and has told me that none of us will die but to the owner of the ship he said I'm very sorry sir but you're going to lose everything you've got overnight and he took food and he said to them encouraged them to eat something for two weeks they hadn't eaten because they were hanging on to the masts and to whatever they had to hold on to because the ship was being tossed to and fro with such in such a

terrible way it's like in an airplane it's always good to keep yourself your belt on because turbulence can hit at any time and then you can hit your head against the roof which has happened like someone flying from Cape Town flying and was passing Port Elizabeth I took out my Bible and I started reading in it the one the man next to me looked and he said well what are you reading there I said it's the Bible he had his own magazines about girls I asked him a bit and he said well I don't believe in God and he said to me I'm not really interested in religion but God was merciful we hadn't flown very much further than the plane started bouncing around there was such violent turbulence and it was this man who was the first one to cry out oh my god my god and I said but what about your God

just a while ago you said you weren't interested don't be concerned about mockers and scoffers who laugh at you don't be concerned that and then you are under peer pressure don't be concerned about that you carry on it won't take long and they will be in trouble and then you it's your turn to laugh number two three minutes oh my god and today we're laughing about this Jewish man who had just said he doesn't he's not interested in God and two or three minutes later he's calling out to him and here Paul says my God whom I serve it's wonderful to read about men like Paul the gospel is wonderful that you can stand up and say my God whom I serve mind you say there's some and they with their efforts still tried to save the ship they were dropping the anchors and doing all sorts of things and

Paul said give it up don't even worry about the you it won't help just cut off all the cables and the anchors and let and God just let drove the ship to an appropriate place and from there they could all get to land safely even though the ship broke up and was destroyed totally the kept the owner lost everything he said if you carry on with what you are doing not one life will be saved but listen to what I tell you and everyone will be saved cut those ropes and let God be in control and God brought them to that island and everyone was saved and Paul said and Paul could say God to whom I belong and God whom I serve see many people talk about God but they don't serve him they don't really belong to him but Paul could say it in truth and you can't say I belong to him when you don't serve him

those things go together you're a liar if you say you belong to him and you don't serve him the price of disobedience may I say it again I've said it over and over is 10,000 times more expensive than that of

obedience and Paul said if you would have only obeyed me if you would have only listened but you were stiff-necked and you thought you know better God had told me but you were led by your own mind your own hearts desire and by the beautiful day and you started out within a short time things turned and the tornado was they was a cocky none in Kuluga be a pin to our friends we're not in the chip we're not with Paul I see the good and the bad on the chip a sequel escape in I'm Sanja a sequel up for no Paul and I love a Barbie Navas escapee but you're in a boat right now what a jenga

magic who call them kumbis war on the sea of this world all along stop if you don't obey God who had day it will be you'll find yourself in a storm like those it will be pitch black you won't know whether you're coming or whether you're going you will have no idea where you are and woe to you if you haven't got someone will be an angel to you to direct your parts my ego a umar look fake a little sugoon and now moon to on Jane Engle or gay laws go away or the commission jail love about 80 my daughter massingham yes Salela when Paul said men let us not set sail let us stay here oh my son but you'll shine on angles we go we'll suffer great loss but for time they had a vote he did he lucky a crime and when they put it to the vote the majority said let's go what is what the immaturity is wrong

the Lord Jesus said the majority is wrong there are only a few that are on the narrow way so they all stood on the side of the owner of the ship and the captain bonk above my voomelana no me no escape no captain escape even Caesar's office it is your name do not guess our trusted those two men more than and when they thought the ship is sinking they said let's kill all the prisoners that no one will escape love of a born to go to skepticism we love us a bit I guess Mooma Zonghi Bosha was a who was a zing about a zing up on you got to leave what I woman boulala Zonghi Bosha no power lose or lose a blower what my daughter as no me mood to then Paul then Julius realized the centurion that Paul would also be killed so I said no we will kill nobody and then all of them were saved because of

you not one will die because of Paul no one will die Paul you will still go and stand before Caesar that the gospel will be preached there too don't part company with Paul or God's children because it was because of Paul that they were saved eventually how marvelous how interesting the Word of God the gospel now there's still so much more we could speak about about like Coline said maybe we I don't give you as much as those people got but maybe it's also because you get tired and you need to get home and feed your cats and dogs and maybe some people even need honorary to get home to look at TV or do other things yes a month and caught so that the now we've heard about this ship's journey this journey on a ship but remember wherever you are whatever you do be it at home at cooking or at

work whatever it is even your your job that you've got remember everything is a journey and the best thing you can do for that journey is to take God along as you go on it and if you want to serve the Lord it's not only in preaching in these earthly things a car a pickup a boat whatever it is be with God let him lead you and guide you even in these material things as a housewife whoever you are wherever you are whatever you do in school writing learning homework wherever you are in your work be in direct contact with God and let him lead you then you're a blessed man or woman and other lives can be saved because of you if not you'll perish and end in darkness shall we rise and pray you are the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob we're not ashamed today to say Lord you're also the God of Paul

you stood by him even though people had taken him prisoner they bound him put him into prison but you were with him they tried to kill him they spoke evil about him but you stood by your servant who belonged to you and who served you raise up polls in our midst Lord among the men and women and even among the young people raise up such people who will be recognized to be people who are like Paul that your

gospel can be spread and that many who on the shadow of death can be saved Lord continue to work in every heart through your Holy Spirit Lord help your people be merciful to them be gracious amen

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