

COURAGE IN THE STORM

Acts 27:1-44

K.V.: 27:24, 25

1. **Read verses 1-12. Who was with Paul on the ship?**

Julius the Centurion, some other prisoners, most importantly Luke and Aristarchus - two fellow believers who sacrificed their freedom to follow God's mission to help Paul preach the gospel.

What was their final destination?

They were sailing to Rome.

How was God providing for Paul? (3)

The centurion out of kindness let Paul go to seek medical care from his friend. Normally authorities don't let prisoners go ashore on their own, but Julius recognized that Paul was not a criminal and afforded him some leeway. Hence God provided for Paul under Roman authority.

Describe the journey from Myra to Crete?

The journey made slow head way up the coast. When the wind did not allow them to hold their course they cut to the lee of Crete and moved down to a small place called Fair Havens in Crete.

Why did they decide not to winter in Fair Havens?

The sailors found that it was unsuitable for their needs to winter there and they decided to press on to try to reach Phoenix on the far west side of Crete. Phoenix was a big city compared to Fair Haven.

What was Paul's warning?

"Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.""

2. **Read verses 13-20. Describe the storm that struck. How did the men fight to survive in the storm?**

Initially they received the south wind and thought they had received what they were looking for. But soon the hurricane came. They took such a violent battering, that they began to throw the cargo overboard in to lighten the ship.

What was their last effort?

They threw overboard the ship's tackle (the crane and other equipment to load cargo)

How long did the storm rage and what does it mean that they gave up all hope of being saved?

It raged for many days without seeing either sun or stars. At this point the storm was beyond their physical control. At this point they lost all hope of being saved—even Luke the writer lost any hope because they looked only at the intensity of the storm. This is what Paul had warned them about.

3. **Read verses 21-26. How did Paul take charge of the ship? (21)**

"After they 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.'"

Paul proved his prophethood by reiterating his previous message about the impending disaster. Through this he tried to give a sense of order to why this disaster was happening. At this the crew listened to him now.

How did he plant hope? (22)

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

Paul now proclaimed a ray of hope in that even though the hurricane was raging and all hope seemed lost. Paul proclaimed that not one of you will be lost—but just the ship.

How could he be so confident? (23-25)

"Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me²⁴ 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.'²⁵ So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me."

Paul was not arrogant but was assured by an angel of the Lord. The angel reminded him that God's vision was for Paul to testify in Rome. Also that God had promised Paul this and that the lives of the sailors too would be saved in order to take Paul to Rome.

What did he predict? (26)

"Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

That they would run aground and lose the ship.

4. **Read verses 27-38. How long had they been driven by the winds across the Adriatic Sea?**

"On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic^d Sea..."

Battered for 14 days and nights they were fighting against the hurricane.

What did they do when they felt fear? (29)

"Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight."

Sensing that the ship might crash on the rocks at night the sailors did all they could to save the ship and prayed for daylight.

What instructions did Paul give when he found that the sailors were planning to escape? (31)

"Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved."³² So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away."

Paul told the Centurion that unless these men stay—all will be lost. This time the Centurion trusted Paul and cut the rope and let the life boat sail away. This shows faith in Paul's word that they would be saved.

How did he plant hope and courage? (33-35)

"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."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."³⁵ 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."

Paul knew that the sailors had been exasperated by fighting the storm for 14 days just trying to survive. They had not had any time to eat. Paul encouraged them to sit down and eat some food for they would need strength to swim ashore. To instill hope Paul himself sat down and gave thanks to God and eat some food. Giving them hope that not one of them will lose a single hair from their heads.

How did they prepare to abandon ship?

After eating they threw even the grain overboard and pointed the sails towards the beach and made a run for it.

5. **Read verses 39-44. What happened to the boat?**

The boat ran aground on a sandbar, the bow was stuck and the rudder crushed by the surf. The boat was stuck.

How did the centurion save Paul?

Normally the Centurion would have the prisoners killed so that they wouldn't escape. But Julius respected Paul for helping to save the ship and did not kill the prisoners but let them all live. This is God's grace protecting Paul.

How did Paul's promise (23, 34) prove true?

"Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me²⁴ 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."

God promised Paul that he would stand trial before Caesar—no matter what. Now God saved Paul and all the people on the ship were saved.

How had Paul learned and planted faith that overcomes hopelessness in a storm?

Through many hardships and trials Paul was preaching the gospel and instilling hope in others. Paul experienced God's power and that God's power is true. We need to ask ourselves do we put our faith in God's promise? In the storm we have courage in God and in Jesus and through this courage we can become shepherds for those around us.