6/16/24 - Acts 27:1-44 - "Immortal till My Master's Work is Finished"

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Preacher: Rick Deschenes

[0:00] Please turn with me to Acts chapter 27. And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustine cohort named Julius.

And embarking in a ship of Adramidium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica.
The next day we put in at Syngdon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for. And putting out to sea from there, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us.
And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia, in Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia.
There, the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board. We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Nidus.
[1:15] And as the wind did not allow us to go further, we sailed under the lee of Crete of Salmoni. Coasting along it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fairhavens, near which was the city of Lycia.

Since much time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous because even the fast was already over, Paul advised them, saying, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo in the ship, but also of our lives.
But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.
Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete close to the shore. But soon as tempestuous wind called the northeaster struck down from the land, and when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along.
Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, We managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat. After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship.
[2:45] Then fearing that they would run aground on the Sirtis, they lowered the gear and thus they were driven along. Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo.

And on the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.
Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss.
Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship.
And he said, Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.
[3:54] So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. But we must run aground on some island.

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When the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms.
A little farther on, they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come.
And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship and had lowered the ship's boat into the sea under pretense of laying anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.
Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go. As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food having taken nothing.
[5:11] Therefore, I urge you to take some food, for it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.

And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves.
We were in all two hundred seventy-six persons in the ship. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea.
Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned, if possible, to run the ship ashore. So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the udders.
Then hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. But, striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf.
[6:19] The soldier's plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan.

He ordered those who could swim to jump aboard first and make for the land, and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.
This is the word of the Lord. Amen. Wow, that's a long story, right? It's not over yet.
There's actually more to it. It continues, I think, until verse 16 of the next chapter. But it's a lot to take in, so we have a task ahead of us. But it's an exciting story, right?
It feels a little bit out of place, I think, in the book of Acts, which has been a pretty brief look at Paul's life, covering many, perhaps decades, in just a few chapters.
[7:24] And then suddenly we get this story where everything slows down and zooms in. And it reads more like a novel than perhaps the rest of the book of Acts, right?

It's pretty unique. But nonetheless, it's exciting to be back preaching. It's been a few months now, I guess, since I've been up here.
So if you don't know me, I am Rick Deshaines. I'm one of the elders here, and I preach on occasion. Hi, Brent. It's nice to meet you all. If you haven't met me yet, and for the rest of you, it's nice to see your faces from this vantage point.
But today we're going to be looking, as we read, at Acts 27, and specifically at Paul's voyage from Caesarea to Rome.
And throughout the book of Acts, he has traveled to many, many cities. But this is perhaps the longest journey between two cities that we will see with lots of details.
[8:29] If you missed any of the previous sermons, you might be wondering how we got here. And so I want to give you just a quick overview of some of the key things that have happened in the last few weeks.

And also just to remind you why Luke set out to write this letter, right? He tells us that he wrote this letter as an orderly account, a narrative of, in his letter of Luke, Jesus' life, and then in the book of Acts, the life of the early church, the apostles' mission to bring the gospel first from Jerusalem and Judea, then to Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth.
And so in the last few weeks and months, Paul has shared the gospel throughout Asia, not the Asia that maybe we're thinking of today, but I'll show a map a little bit later and we can see which Asia. And then Macedonia during three separate missionary journeys. And then he returned to Jerusalem, even though many of the Christians didn't want him to because they knew the fate that he would face if he did.

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However, he was prepared to face whatever fate he must and even to die by returning to Jerusalem. And so as we learned a few weeks ago, he did, he went to the temple.
[9:46] He was falsely accused of profaning the temple and stirring up riots among the Jews. And so he was arrested. And then he was brought before various leaders of Judea all the way up to the governor and then the king.

He defended his case. It was clear that he was innocent, but there was no justice to be found because all of them were under the influence of the region of Judea.
And so he made what some might call a mistake of asking to plead his case before Caesar. He asked to appeal his case before Caesar.
And so they said he would go to Rome to appeal his case before Caesar, who being outside the influence of the region of Judea perhaps would give him the justice that he deserved.
And so that's where we end up today. He is being sent under guard from Caesarea, a city in Judea, to Rome. And over the next 44 verses, we're going to look at his journey there.
[10:52] As I mentioned a few minutes ago, the letter of Acts in Acts 27 is a captivating account of Paul's voyage to Rome. And there's a shift in narrative style, right?

It was very sharp and succinct summary of events up to this point. And then suddenly we get 44 verses telling us about a trip from one city to the next.
Perhaps he might have summarized this very briefly in a single sentence, but instead he gives us 44 verses. And he uses very vivid descriptive language. So why, right?
If we're reading our Bible and suddenly there's a shift in narrative style, we should ask why? What is the importance of this change? Maybe we could assume that he wanted to teach us about sailing and shipwrecks, but probably not.
It's not really relevant to us to learn a whole lot about sailing, unless that's a hobby that you enjoy. Sailing can be quite, I think, therapeutic, but I don't think that was his aim here.
[12:01] I think instead his use of descriptive writing is his way of painting a portrait, right? Of putting the emotion and the trauma, the reality that took place on this journey in a way that we can see and even hopefully feel it some 2,000 years later.

And so I think that was his aim. He wants us to feel what took place and to learn from these events.
Now the sea already, by itself, brings about a lot of emotions and images in our minds.
If you've ever hopefully been to the beach and stared out at the horizon, I'm sure you have felt many strong emotions based on the endlessness of the sea. And if you've been fortunate enough to sail out into the ocean beyond where you can see the shore, there's a whole other set of emotions that you might feel, particularly 2,000 years ago when there was no guarantee that ship was going to make it to the other side, right?
And I think the images and emotions brought about by the sea, they differ a lot from culture to culture. And they're very important to the Bible itself. We see the sea used to evoke emotion all the way back in Genesis 1 when God created the earth.
The sea is used to paint this picture of the formless void before creation. In the Psalms, we see the sea used frequently to demonstrate the foundations of the world upon which God created all that is created.
[13:39] And we see this throughout various Psalms, including Psalm 18 and 24. And of course, if you know the story of Jonah, hopefully from the Bible and not veggie tales, but either way, if you know the story of Jonah, you know that for him, the sea was a tomb.

It was the underworld, a place where there was no hope for return. But as we read, especially the Old Testament, we see that the sea, maybe let's say the waters, right, were in God's control.
God commanded the waters. As Proverbs 8 puts it, he set the limits of the sea where they shall not pass. And so in the biblical narrative, the sea is in God's control.
This would be in total contrast to the Romans and the Greeks who had a shared pantheon of gods. They were pantheists, and I'm sure you've seen mythology and you're aware of some of their gods. So perhaps you're aware of Neptune, who is simply the Roman name for Poseidon, the god of the sea, right? And so the Romans and Greeks would believe that the sea was ruled by this god who was somewhat ruthless and would send the four winds to shipwreck those who incurred his wrath.
[15:04] So the events of Psalm 27, or rather Acts 27, and particularly as we get into the beginning of Acts 28, we see these contrasting superstitions and beliefs about the ocean.

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And so I think that's something that perhaps Luke wants us to see as we are studying these words is the difference in the faith of the Christians versus those who believe in a pantheon of gods.
And so just to give you an idea as we look at the text, I think Acts 27 will show us the consequences of trusting in intuition and superstition rather than trusting in the word of God.
And so I've broken this into three parts. I want to look at them in some detail and provide some application, right? We're not sailors, most of us. I don't know if anyone here have experience sailing?
No one? Duffy has a little bit, maybe Gene. I knew nothing about it before this week except what I've read in the Bible. So I did a little bit of studying, but we'll get through it together.
[16:17] But I've titled this sermon Immortal Till My Master's Work on Earth is Finished. And so you'll see where this quote comes from as we look at the verses, but I've titled my first point Into the Wind.

And so as we look at verses 1 through 12, I want to point out a few things and then also to include a picture, a map.
Yeah, that's unusual for me to include visuals, but we're going to have a map today so that we can get some idea of what on earth or where on earth we're going, right? So as a reminder, King Agrippa and Governor Festus, they sent Paul to Rome and they tasked a centurion named Julius to escort him.
I'm not sure if it's common knowledge, if everyone knows a centurion, he gets his name sent from the root word meaning hundred. And so a centurion is a commander of a hundred men in the Roman Legion.
That's what centurion name comes from. However, by the first century, many scholars say that he would have really commanded maybe 80 men because the arrangement of the Legion had changed.
[17:26] And so what that tells us or informs us is that he likely had as many as 80 men with him on this voyage to make sure that Paul and the other prisoners were brought safely to Rome.

And we should also be aware that if he failed or if the prisoners escaped, then he would suffer their fate. And so this was a mission he took very seriously. It was life and death for him.
Interestingly, he was also responsible for arranging travel, right? He didn't have someone to book the flights for him. He had to find his own ships and make his own way there.
And so we'll see that as we continue through the verses. And so we see he first secures a ship of Adramitium, which was sailing to the ports in Macedonia.
And so this takes place back in the first few verses. Verse two, he embarks on a ship of Adramitium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia. And I encourage you to look along in your Bible because there's a lot of details here and it's easy to get lost.
[18:31] But if we could put the map up here, I know it's going to be a little hard to see for some of you guys, but you can at least get an image of it. So we're starting out on the east in what's labeled as Judea and then going north and then heading primarily west towards Italy.

It's important to know which way we're going because it's important to know which way the wind is blowing if you're trying to sail west. And so this first ship would be heading north into the Aegean Sea, but not to Italy.
And so we're going to have to jump ships later on and so it's important to remember that detail as well. But we're starting out down here in Caesarea and sailing north to Sidon.
This would be an 80-mile journey, which I didn't know how far a ship can go in a day. It seems like they could go about 80 miles in a day. So that should be a one-day hop from Caesarea to Sidon.
And then from there, they would be exchanging cargo, maybe offloading some cargo, unloading some new cargo, and then they would continue on their voyage.
[19:39] But it seems that Paul had found favor with Julius the centurion, and so Julius gave him a leave while they were in port to go and visit some friends there. And then, I'm sure he was guarded, but then he would return to the ship and continue on the voyage.

And then we leave Sidon and we head west. So probably due west and then maybe north into the Aegean Sea.
But, and this is where you need to know a little bit about sailing, if you want to travel west, you don't want the wind to be blowing east, and you definitely don't want the wind to be blowing directly towards the ship because you can't sail into the wind, right?

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And so, they would want, you would think, the wind to be blowing from behind the ship and pushing the ship to the west, right? But, you actually don't sail best with the wind behind you, you sail fastest in a crossed wind.
So you actually want the wind to be blowing from the south to the north, and that would allow them to travel quickly to the west, right? Kind of a pedantic detail, but it's important to know why the wind is against them, and the wind direction is mentioned many times, so now you know.
[21:02] We would prefer the wind to be blowing from the south to the north, but it's blowing, it seems, to the east, and so it is preventing them from traveling west.

Does that make sense? Kind of confusing, but hopefully it makes sense. All right? So, they leave Sidon, and the wind is blowing in the wrong direction, which slows their travel.
And if you really want to get technical, if you want to travel into the wind, that means you have to tack, which means that you would go in a zigzag pattern. So, if you imagine if you want to go one way and you have to keep zigzagging, it's going to be a very long voyage.
So, to avoid zigzagging, they instead headed north up along Cyprus, where the island of Cyprus would protect them from the wind that was blowing out of the west towards the east, and then they were able to sail under the lee of Cyprus.
This phrase shows up a few times, under the lee, it just means under the protection from the wind of that island, and so they sailed along Cyprus. And so, eventually, they made it to Myra and Lysa, which is up here on the south end of modern-day Turkey, and that was about a 480-mile leg of the journey.
[22:19] 480 miles, it should take around six days, perhaps less, but it took them much longer due to the winds blowing in the wrong direction. And then from there, the ship was going to continue up into the Aegean Sea, so they had to change ships.

They couldn't stay on the first ship, and so they changed to a new ship, a Greek ship, and continued the voyage from there.
Right? So, once again, as they leave, the winds are blowing in the wrong direction. They leave on this new ship of Alexandria, and they intend to continue west, but they're unable to.
So, what do they do? They turn south and head towards the island of Crete. We hear a lot about Crete in the letter to Titus. Right? But they head down to Crete, where they are again under the lee of Crete, protected from the wind, and able to sail along the south of Crete, and they sail another hundred and ten miles along the south of Crete, and finally make it with great difficulty to a harbor called Fairhaven, which is perhaps perhaps poorly named.
Right? They make it to Fairhaven, and the fast is already over, meaning the fast of atonement. Why is that an important detail? Well, that means it's September, perhaps October, and winter is coming.
[23:51] And we don't know this, but when winter comes, the wind changes direction, and it causes storms in the sea, and it makes sailing nearly impossible.

So what do you do? You winter the ship. You find a safe harbor, and you keep the ship in the harbor for the winter. Well, Fairhaven was not a safe harbor.
As odd as that sounds with its name, the harbor was facing the predominant winds, and the ship would be broken to pieces over the course of the winter, so the owner of the ship does not want to stay in Fairhaven.
He wants to continue along to the next city, the next city being Phoenix, which is about 70 miles to the west on the south of the island of Crete.
You can see it there. The city is labeled Phoenix. So 70 miles, that should take a day, right? It should take about a day to make this final leg where we can winter the ship for the season.
[24:52] And you would think, well, then we might as well do it. Just get the ship there, and the ship will be safe. But we see that Paul warns them against it, right?

Paul doesn't think that it would be a good idea to continue because he's afraid that the journey has already been difficult, and if the winds change, then things will get far worse.
And so he warns them that they should instead stay where they are and wait. We see this in verse 12 or 11 and 12 that Paul warned them.
He specifically warned the centurion whose trust he had that they should remain where they are, but he was a prisoner. He had no sailing experience. Why would they listen to Paul, right?
The pilot and the owner had far more experience, and so he instead listened to those with experience, and they decided they were going to make for Phoenix nonetheless.

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[26:02] And so they would shortly set out to continue their journey to Phoenix, and we know what happens. We just read it, but before we continue on with these verses, I want to take a moment and ask the question, how does any of this apply to us today, right?

None of us are sailors. None of us are going to sail the Mediterranean, although if you do get a chance to go there, it is a fantastically beautiful place, and it would be well worth the visit, but how does this apply today?
And so I was thinking about it, and how often do we as Christians set out on our mission and find that the winds are blowing in the wrong direction, that the winds are impeding where we are trying to go?
Even when that mission is ordained by God, even when we are continuing the work of the gospel, we find at times that the wind is blowing against us, at least in the figurative sense, right?
Not always literally. And it's interesting, if we think back, this would be several weeks now, to Acts 23.8, we see that Paul said, or rather the Lord said to Paul, to take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome.
[27:31] This was in Acts 23.8. So Paul knows he's going to Rome. He knows that God is sending him to Rome. So why are the winds blowing against him? It's not as if they've set out against the will of the Lord like Jonah did, and the wind is against them.

Why would it be against them? I think as Christians, evangelical Christians, there's probably three answers that we might come to, right?
I think many Christians would be like, perhaps it's Satan, right? Perhaps Satan is sending the winds to impede Paul's journey. Perhaps it's the enemy, the old devil, who is using the wind to impede his journey, right?
But how would that be any different than blaming Poseidon? It's just a superstition, right? Does the devil really have command over the winds?
perhaps the wind blows where it wishes. Maybe it's just the results of chaotic physical systems of a bit of thermodynamics and some math and the wind blows where it wishes and we shouldn't think more about it.
[28:49] Or perhaps the Lord allowed the winds to hinder their progress because he had something to teach. Maybe not Paul, but those who were with him and us to this day.

Another question, do you think the Christian life will always be accompanied by a favorable crosswind and smooth sailing? If you have any experience as a Christian, you'd probably agree with me that no, usually isn't, right?
And so, when the wind does blow against us, what must we do? how should we respond? I think we can learn from Paul that we must remain focused on the Lord's promises.
And remember that while the wind may slow our mission, test our patience, and test our faith, it will also shipwreck those who are without faith.
And so, our focus, it can't be inward. We can't be focused on ourself and how the wind is blowing us and frustrating us and making the journey difficult.
[30:01] Our focus must instead be on the mission, must be on the continued work of the gospel, and it must be on the destination, on where we're heading. And in this, we can find strength to persevere.

We must also remember that sometimes we're there like Paul to help the others that are there with us. we're not just there for our own good, right? The wind may be refining someone else's faith or perhaps opening their eyes to the reality of God's presence for the first time.
So I would say don't curse the wind and don't give glory to Satan for that which is not in his control. Job 37, 11, Elihu, my Bible hero.
You may think I like Paul or I like David, but truly my Bible hero, besides Jesus himself, would be Elihu. He says when correcting Job's theology, the Lord loads the thick clouds with moisture.
The clouds scatter his lightning. They turn around and around by his guidance to accomplish all that he commands them on the face of the habitable world.
[31:13] whether for correction or for his land or for love. The wind belongs to God. He commands it. When it blows against us, there's a reason.

The next time, perhaps you're stuck in a hospital bed when you think you should be out serving the food pantry or the mission. Maybe you're stuck in a hospital room praying with one of your loved ones when you'd rather be with your church.

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maybe work, life, family are overwhelming you. Just stop. Take a breath. Remember, you can't sail into the wind.
It's not possible. God is sovereign over the wind, both literally and figuratively. The Lord will at times test us. He will refine us.
He will refine our faith so that it is more precious than gold and so that it may be found to bring glory and praise and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
[32:19] Practically speaking, when the wind is against you, when you feel like everything is impeding the mission, check yourself. Turn to God's word and try to discern what is his will, what is good and acceptable and pleasing to him.

And then when necessary, change your heading. Maybe you need to tack instead of heading directly into the wind. Maybe you need to change something about the way that you are proceeding. And then also check those around you. Is there someone around you who you can encourage? Someone else who's fighting against the wind? Someone who doesn't know the way? Someone whose faith is being tested?
Warn them, like Paul, of the injury and loss they will face if they continue trying to sail into the wind and bring them back on course so that maybe even their soul would be saved from death, as James said in 519 of his letter.
Unfortunately for Paul, Julius wouldn't listen. The centurion wouldn't listen. And so his crusade against the wind is not yet over. So as we move into my second point, we're going to look at verses 13 through 38, and I've titled this point Into the Storm.
[33:35] We see as we pick up in verse 13 that the south wind blew gently. So, without giving you too much details about sailing, if the south wind is blowing north, that's a perfect cross wind and you can make great speed sailing to the west.

And so with a gentle south wind, they would be able to make it to Phoenix in less than a day. Seeing that the wind was blowing gently, they believed that they had their purpose and so they set out.
They weighed anchor and sailed along Crete close to the shore. But it didn't last long. They'd hardly made it out of port when a tempestuous wind called the Northeaster struck down from the land and they were caught and could not face the wind.
The Northeaster is this powerful wind that would blow from the south towards the northeast and being that it was north-northeast, it would blow more towards, sorry, get my bearings, more towards the east and so they wouldn't be able to face this wind to continue west and it would drive them along.
This wind would be far too powerful for them to sail, for them to control the ship and so they had no choice but to be driven along. And so, I'm sure you've all seen movies where a ship enters a storm.
[35:06] For sailing ships, it's much more intense than it is for modern powered ships but those who had a lot of sailing experience knew what to do and so they would prepare the ship for rough waters.

The boat, I don't want to get confused, the ship and the boat, the boat is used to get from the ship to the land. It's a smaller vessel that they could paddle to land and it would be held by cables off of the side of the ship and in the rough waters it would be smashing against the ship so the first thing they would do is haul it up onto the deck and chain it down to keep it in place.
This is a big boat, a boat that could hold maybe 50 people so a very big boat and they hauled it up into the ship and then they undergirded the ship. This is an interesting practice where they would actually throw cables under the hull of the ship and pull them all the way around and then pull them tight with some type of crank so that it would actually hold the ship together otherwise it would just break apart in the waves.
So they undergirded the ship to strengthen the hull and to keep it from breaking apart and then because they knew that just to the north of Africa where you see this Sirtis Major and Sirtis Minor there are sand quicksands sandbars that move with the waves and if they got too close they would get stuck in one of these sandbars the ship would break apart and they would all die so instead they hoisted the sail to catch whatever wind they could and to be driven along to the west out into the open sea where they had no control of where they were going but it was certain death if they fought against the waves now this storm continued into a second day and they were being violently tossed by the storm and so to save the ship you've seen it in the movies they start throwing everything overboard right they throw whatever's not nailed down and some stuff that is nailed down into the

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water they only kept the wheat they needed food everything else that could go went and it says they threw the tackle overboard which means even the crane and the rigging that would be used to hoist cargo on and off the ship it all went it took a lot of people but they threw it off the ship why to lighten the ship so it floats higher on the water they're less likely to strike ground and also the waves won't rock the ship as much if they're going across the top of the water instead of being driven about by the waves and so why all the details well I think Luke wants us to know that the situation is dire things are hopeless there's been many days without the sun or the stars you can't navigate without the sun or the stars so there's no compasses at this point that I know of they didn't know where they were they're just being driven out across the open sea too far to see the shore to know where they are and so they are giving up hope but Paul for him this is just another shipwreck number four on his list right for him he's probably just sitting there taking it all in but when he sees that all hope is lost he stands up to encourage them if possible remember he's in chains right why would you listen to some random guy in chains but he was a rock right he wasn't being shaken by this and so they listened right he saw that they were hopeless and so he stood up because he had a message of salvation for those who were in desperation he reminds them that they should have listened from the start

I think all of us would immediately think oh he's just saying I told you so but I don't really think that's very Paul like to say I told you so perhaps I didn't know him personally but I don't think that was his point I think what he's saying is this could have been avoided if you had exercised wisdom and listened to me in the first place and more importantly I was right so now you really ought to listen to me I know what I'm talking about because I have an inside source of knowledge and then he told them that he had received a vision from the Lord and he urged them to hear this message to take heart and to be encouraged for there will be no loss of life on this ship and then he quoted what the Lord said to him do not be afraid Paul you must stand before Caesar and behold God has granted you all those who are sailing with you and so he encouraged them because he had faith that God will do exactly as he said he will deliver them moreover that he told them that this is the [40:14] God to whom he belongs and the God to whom he worships he introduced them to God and he shared the message that God had to encourage them that they would in fact be saved but he also told them there's only one way out of this and that is to run the ship aground right what we might call today a hail mary right there's no other hope we're gonna run the ship aground we're gonna lose the ship which this was many people's livelihood it was no small vessel it was no simple loss but it was either that or their lives and so it was an all or nothing attempt to save the crew before we get to those details though we see a few more things take place in the verses before they are actually able to run the ship aground and we see that

Paul decides after 14 nights at sea that people are getting hungry that they need something to eat and so he decides to to lead them in eating something right it seems that they hadn't eaten in 14 days I'm sure being driven by the waves they were probably worried and probably seasick so eating probably wouldn't be that helpful anyways but you would have no strength after 14 days without eating so if there was any hope of running the ship aground or in necessity swimming to shore you would need to have eaten something and so he tells them that they must eat he urged them to take food and so Paul some of the wheat they must have had a cook they were able to make bread from the wheat he took the bread he gave thanks to

God before all of them and he broke the bread and gave some to everyone on board so that they would be strengthened and encouraged right last thing I did before I came up here to preach was eat a muffin one because they're really good and two because it's strengthened and encouraged me and calmed my nerves right it works it worked in the bible and it worked for them thank you Bethany the muffins were very good but with their strength renewed they lightened the ship further by throwing the remaining wheat overboard so that the ship would sail as high on the water as possible and they could hopefully coast right over the reef onto the beach up into the sand and then they would be safe but before we see what happens I want to see once again what we today can learn from these verses how can we apply them to our life once again it's unlikely that any of us have been shipwrecked anyone out there been shipwrecked hopefully not right but as I said this is Paul's fourth shipwreck right he's been through this a few times so he had resolute faith he was not shaken but everyone around him was hopeless what can we learn from this experience well first and I think most importantly

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Paul's faith wasn't abstract it wasn't in this God that exists somewhere without a face without a name it was founded upon a real God that he really belonged to that he really worshipped and that had a promise upon which Paul could trust Paul knew that he must testify in Rome he knew that he must stand before Caesar and so as the 19th century evangelist and missionary John Patton put it Paul was immortal till his master's work through him was done he walked around as though he were immortal because in truth at this point he was he knew his mission could not fail because he knew his God could not fail second thing we must be reminded is that we have no need to be superstitious we're not pantheists who believe that every storm is punishment for sin and that there's no point in over spiritualizing every time that the wind blows right but there are times when we set sail as Paul did in the right direction but in the wrong season and we find ourselves in stormy waters other times we're simply headed in the wrong direction like Jonah and we find ourselves in stormy waters the truth is when we don't listen carefully to the voice of wisdom or the word of God there are consequences to be expected calamities will come right not adversity or hardship but true disaster there will be losses there will be setbacks we see this not only in our lives but in the life of the church at times when unresolved sin or leadership failures in Paul's own day and ours today false teaching and more often than not apathy bring about disaster from within the church sometimes natural disaster or disease persecution and the ever shifting morals of the culture around us they bring disaster upon the church from outside sometimes these calamities they are avoidable if we listen and change course but other times as was
Paul's case they're beyond our control drawing from Paul's own experience we know too that when calamity strikes us some are often tempted to abandon hope to leave the church or even tragically to depart from the faith the church may split and some may be led astray not saying this is when we should stand up but if they weren't listening then now is the time to stand up when hope is lost and abandoned we must stand up and like Paul urged those around us to take heart we must feed them like Paul from the bread of God's word to strengthen and encourage those around us for what lies ahead there's no hope to be found by continuing into the storm it's time for drastic measures if sin was the issue it's beyond time for repentance it's time to cut away all the unnecessary distractions to go back to the basics to prayer to the word of
[47:49] God God God alone can deliver us from these calamities these disasters these storms and so we must turn to him with prayer and thanksgiving and we must have resolute faith in his promises so that we can encourage those around us to take heart to hear the word of God and to trust in him through the storm continuing Paul's voyage in Acts 27 we finally get to the shipwreck, the inevitable shipwreck. As we move into the third point, which I've titled simply the shipwreck, let's look at verses 39 through 44.

Finally, at last, a 14-day storm, the sun rose, and they saw a beach. This would be something that would certainly bring joy even in the midst of the storm. They didn't recognize the land, but they planned, if at all possible, to run the ship up onto the beach. A desperate final attempt, and so they cut free the anchors from the ship. They loosed the ropes from the rudder.
They hoisted the mainsail, and they prayed their Hail Mary prayer, right? They made for the beach and hoped for the best, and as if things couldn't get worse, what do they do? They strike a reef. This reef would be submerged in water, and so the ship was still some ways off of the beach. The bow, the front of the ship, gets stuck in the reef. The waves are crashing and hitting the stern, the rear of the ship, and they break the ship into pieces. They crush the ship into pieces, and some people are on one part of the ship, and other people on the other part of the ship, and the prisoners in the chaos perhaps could escape. The soldiers don't want to be punished if the prisoners escape, so they decide to kill the prisoners. After all, it was hopeless, but once again, Paul had favor with Julius the centurion, and so the centurion spoke up. He ordered everyone overboard, jump overboard, swim for the shore if you can, or find yourself a piece of the ship to float on, and paddle your way to shore, and fortunately, Rose was not on board, so everyone made it to shore safely. Sorry if you don't get that Titanic reference, but fortunately, everyone made it to shore safely. Being serious again, just as God promised to Paul, all those aboard made it safely to land. Thinking about this experience, it must have been quite traumatic for all of those on board. You can imagine in the midst of the trauma, seeing Paul's faith, seeing that both times he was correct. He was correct that they were going to run into a storm, and he was correct that everyone on board was going to be saved.

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[50:47] It wouldn't be that unusual in the book of Acts for them to assume he was some type of prophet, or some type of God, even. But Paul was careful.

When he laid out the promises, he laid them out as the word of God. He gave all of the glory to God, that everyone on board would know it was God alone who delivered them.
By crediting God for bringing them safely to land, he made sure everyone knew that the God to whom he belonged and the God to whom he worshipped was a faithful God who does exactly what he promises to do.
I think this is equally important today. Luke could have put the emphasis on Paul. Seems like Paul was something of a hero to him. He could have put the emphasis on Paul's composure in the storm or his faith, rather than on the centrality of God's deliverance, but he was careful to keep the focus where it belonged, on God alone.
In the church today, there's no doubt that leadership and guidance are important, especially in the storm, that we may continue the mission of the church. But what we don't need is prophets or apostles or miracle workers or performers who can draw a crowd with signs and wonders only to lose people when the emotions wear thin and the sailing gets difficult.
[52:21] What we need instead are faithful Christians who will speak the truth of God's word as both warning and encouragement to keep people from sailing into the wind or losing hope in the storm.

This month, I've been reminded again and again that we live in a post-Christian culture where people take pride in sin and give approval to those who practice immorality.
And this disease spreads further and further into the churches. The world may not listen, but we have a message they need to hear.
We must speak up because injury and loss lie ahead. Sexual immorality, which includes homosexuality and all forms of unrighteousness are celebrated in our culture today.
And so we must warn them of the impending wrath of God against ungodliness and unrighteousness. That being said, we have no place to judge as Paul reminds us.
[53:25] Indeed, we all at one time practiced immorality and unrighteousness. We all have sinned and fallen short of God's perfect law. And so with the warning, we must also give the encouragement, the good news of Jesus Christ, the righteousness of God, to be made righteous by God through faith in Jesus Christ.

To all who believe that Christ died for our sins, that he was buried and that on the third day he rose from the dead were justified by God's grace as a free gift through the redemption in Jesus Christ. The one who God sent as a propitiation by his blood and to be received in faith. We must also warn them that there is no salvation to be found in any other name.
Like the sailors who tried to steal the boat and make their own way to shore, those who try to find their own way to salvation will surely be smashed by the waves.
Instead, we must simply trust in Jesus who grants us righteousness as a gift of grace to be received in faith. One final thought as we close.
[54:43] The Lord promised that he will build his church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. He promised the gospel will go from Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria and the ends of the earth.

And he promised that nothing in heaven or on earth or anything else in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. So I urge you to take heart. The church will prevail.
The mission of the gospel will prevail. You will, by faith, prevail. Let's pray.

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