

“Peace in the Midst of the Storm”
Acts 27
(Preached at Trinity, January 7, 2009)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. These final chapters in Acts cover Paul's experience as a captive in Caesarea and his journey to Rome. There are no particular points of theology in these chapters but there are several observations we can make to our profit.
2. In **Chapter 21** Paul arrived in Jerusalem and the Jews created such a stir that Paul was arrested and taken into the Roman custody. We've witnessed God's providence in powerfully preserving Paul's life and overshadowing every detail that would direct bring Paul to Rome.
3. Over the past couple chapters we observed the three Roman officials that Paul stood before and how they responded to Paul's message of salvation.
 - A. In **Chapter 24** Paul stood before Governor Felix. His response was that of delay.
Acts 24:25 – “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”
 - B. In **Chapter 26** we saw that the response of Festus was one of absolute unbelief. He accused Paul of being insane.
Acts 26:24 – “And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.”
 - C. Finally we saw that King Agrippa was almost persuaded, almost converted.
Acts 26:28 – “Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”
Almost saved is to be totally lost.
4. As Festus and Agrippa conferred with one another both agreed that there was nothing of which they could condemn Paul. They might have thought he was crazy but he had broken no Roman laws. They would have released him if he hadn't appealed to Caesar.
Acts 26:32 – “Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.”
5. As we come to **Chapter 27** we find Paul being loaded on a ship bound for Rome. Luke is also present once again and gives us an eyewitness account of their journey. After changing ships at Myra they once again set sail but soon found themselves in a terrible storm that pounded day after day. Soon most had given up hope of survival.
See Verses 18-20.
6. The Bible often uses the storm as a metaphor of the difficulties of life.
Psalms 107:28-30 – “Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. ²⁹ He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. ³⁰ Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.”

Isaiah 25:3-4 – “Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee. ⁴ For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones *is* as a storm *against* the wall.”

7. It is the subject of our hymns
*O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
 Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.*

*When darkness seems to hide His face, I rest on His unchanging grace;
 In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds with-in the veil.
 On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand . . .*

8. While trying to avoid needless cliché tonight I want us to look to Paul as he weathered the storm. God’s protection of His people is a common theme throughout Scripture but I trust it will be fresh and new as we look at it once again tonight.

- I. Paul knew that God’s presence was with Him – See **Verses 21-25**

Acts 27:23 – “For there stood by me this night the angel of God. . .”

- A. As the winds blew and the ship was tossed Paul knew there was something solid about the presence of God.
1. The word here is **παρίστημι** which literally means to “stand beside.”
 2. God was beside Paul through this entire ordeal. It lasted for several days, yet Paul knew that he was never alone.
- B. This should be a great source of confidence for us
1. Life is full of these storms
 - a. You lose a job
 - b. One of your children becomes seriously ill or your wife or husband
 - c. Your house is flooded or burns down
 - d. You’re having difficulty with another person
 2. What is your source of comfort when every other confidence is taken away? We stand upon Christ. Those who trust in Christ continue to stand through every storm.
Matthew 7:24-25 – “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”
- C. There is a great peace and comfort in Christ being with us
1. He has promised His abiding presence.
 2. We are never alone.
Isaiah 43:2 – “When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”
Psalms 46:1-2 – “God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ² Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;”

- II. Paul knew that God was his God – that he belonged to God.
Acts 27:23 – “For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,”
- A. Paul knew that he belonged to the most powerful being in the universe
1. Jesus came to him supernaturally – he called him by name
 2. Paul knew that God loved him deeply
 3. God is able to take care of that which belongs to Him.
- B. God looks upon us as His little children
1. He cares for us, He keeps us, He preserves us
 2. He will never allow anything to destroy us. Nothing shall ever separate us from His loving care. Nothing will be able to touch God’s people beyond what He permits.
Isaiah 54:17 – “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.”
Romans 8:38-39 – “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 3. **1689 Confession - Chapter 17: Of The Perseverance of the Saints**
 “Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence he still begets and nourisheth in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon.”
- C. In Christ we are the people of God – His own children
Leviticus 26:12 – “And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.”
1. We are people of privilege
 - a. We have all of His divine care and protection
 - b. We have access to His throne of grace
 - c. We have a new heart which enables us to bear His image
 2. We are the children of God.
 Would any of you not come to the aid of your children. How much more does God provide for us?
 Jerry Bridges – “If God loved me enough to give His Son to die for me when I was His enemy, surely He loves me enough to care for me now that I am His child. Having loved me to the ultimate extent at the Cross, He cannot possibly fail to love me in my time of adversity.”
 3. We are the bride of Christ
 Men, would you knowingly allow anyone to harm your bride? Would you not come swiftly to her defense.
 Will not Christ protect His bride?

III. Paul knew that He was in God's service

Acts 27:23 – “For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve”

- A. There is great comfort in knowing you are in the purpose of God
1. Paul never forgot his Divine calling
1 Timothy 1:12 – “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;”
 2. Paul knew that he was commissioned by God and would be kept by God until the end.
2 Timothy 1:11-12 – “Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. ¹² For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”
 3. He also remembered the most recent words of God
Acts 23:11 – “And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.”
- B. Do you feel a sense of God's calling upon your life?
1. Do you see your life as being overshadowed by purpose?
 2. The reason for so much idleness in our generation is there is no sense of direction
 - a. No one sees a sense of Divine appointment
This is why people spend 5-6 hours a day watching TV
This is why our nation has become addicted to sports football, baseball, basketball, golf, stock car racing
 - b. This was the problem of the faithless widow
Timothy 5:13 – “And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.”
 3. When we see our life as given over to fulfilling God's calling upon our life we are able to march forth with confidence
 4. We are serving the King of the universe. We are marching in His army.
2 Timothy 2:3-4 – “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”
 5. We also have the absolute assurance that we are going to win. With this confidence we can face every trial.

IV. Paul trusted God in every circumstance.

Acts 27:25 – “Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.”

A. While everyone else was trembling and despairing of life Paul was absolutely confident.

1. Why was Paul confident? Because he trusted God. “For I believe God”
2. Where was Jesus in the midst of the storm?

Matthew 8:24 – “And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.”

- a. Did He fear? No because He was God and knew the power of God
- b. Is God any less with us?
- c. What were the disciples doing?

Matthew 8:25 – “And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.”

- d. And what was our Lord’s condemnation of His disciples?

Matthew 8:26 – “And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.”

B. What storm are you going through today?

1. It really doesn’t matter. Christ is faithful.
2. Do you believe that God has ordained your every trial? Can you trust Him to do what’s right with that which belongs to Him?
3. Do you think anything can happen to you that He hasn’t ordained?

C. All of the world is under the absolute rule of Divine Providence

1. Creation moves at His command

Psalms 33:6-9 – “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. ⁷ He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. ⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. ⁹ For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast.

2. We must always remember that no man has the power to do anything unless God grants it. No force has any power unless God grants it. Satan cannot touch us unless God grants it.

Conclusion:

1. We must remember that God sends the storms of life. He is strengthening us. He is building our faith.
2. All of God’s plans are working for our benefit – He is using His infinite resources for our good. He is conforming us more and more to Christ.
3. And He continues to protect us. He continually tells us “Fear not.”

These were His words to Paul.

Acts 27:24 – “Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.”