

The Snare of the South Wind

Acts 27:13-20 KJV And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed close by Crete. [14] But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. [15] And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive. [16] And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: [17] Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. [18] And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship; [19] And the third *day* we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. [20] And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

I. The Setting of Acts 27

-This is literally Paul's last journey. He has spent much of his life in the last 12 years on three missionary journeys (46-58 A.D.). Paul is not alone in this final passage. He has Luke and Aristarchus of Thessalonica with him (Acts 19:29; 20:4).

-Paul is now going to make a final appeal in Rome with the intent of appealing his cause before the Caesar. Paul is the most important of all the prisoners who are on board. This weather-beaten missionary of the Cross will have to endure one more final storm on the high-seas before he is to stand before Caesar.

-Most historians are in agreement that this ship probably originated in Alexandria, Egypt and was loaded with corn in route to Rome.

-Luke gives us an idea of the time of the year that it is with the phrase "because the fast was now already past" (Acts 27:9). This is a reference to the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The time of their sailing would be around October 1. The most dangerous time to sail this particular part of the high seas was from mid-September until mid-November.

-Imagine for a moment that you are on a wooden ship that might be 150 feet long if that and every turn or roll of the ship causes great creaking noises throughout. Imagine trying to weather a storm with waves running 10 to 20 feet high and maybe higher. This was certainly not a ride on a summer skiff.

-It would soon spell disaster for those who were involved. The course of the ship began to sail south of Crete and once the ship sailed out into the main waters a cross-wind caught them and they began to have a terrible time of it. To complicate matters, they found themselves battling a full-fledged typhoon.

-The ship began to weaken and was showing signs of damage from the buffeting of the waves. In the days of the ancient mariners, they would take cables that were already fitted into place around the ship's frame and hull and tighten them down to give the ship more support. This was a process called frapping.

-This fight with the storm went on for three days. Imagine what it must have been like to have been on that ship trying to ride out the storm. Wind howling, spray flying, the ship rolling from one side to the other, and much of this occurring in the dark or with very poor visibility.

- The first day they literally “battened down the hatches.”
- The second day they begin to get rid of the cargo.
- The third day they begin to toss equipment over the side.

-The phrase “we let her drive” is applicable, at some point, to most of our lives. There are moments in life when we are driven, no matter how difficult it may seem, it is driving us toward our destination.

-The result of this particular moment during the storm was that they could not “bear up into the wind.” This means that the ship could not look into or face the wind. Because they could not face the wind, the huge troughs created by the waves simply rolled the ship from crest to valley to crest of the wave.

-It is in moments like these that the entire ship can literally be broken into pieces. Sometimes life is exactly like that. . . . There is no way to face into the problem. It is too large. . . . It is too steep. . . . It appears that the storm literally has you by the neck.

II. The Storm Principles

-What does Paul do in this situation now? He had heard from God and had warned these men but they went ahead and did not heed his warnings. Now, because of their foolhardiness, Paul is in trouble.

-What are you supposed to do when you have to endure a storm that is not your own making? What approach to life will you take? I believe that within this story that there are four (and probably more) principles that will help us to endure storms that really are not our responsibility.

A. Another Man's Disobedience Will Not Deter Your Destiny -- Acts 27:9-14

Acts 27:9-14 KJV Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished *them*, [10] And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. [11] Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul. [12] And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there* to winter; *which is* an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west. [13] And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed close by Crete. [14] But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

-One of the most important lessons to learn in life is to always follow the experts or to believe everything that the seeming majority has to say. Paul has given them his thoughts, which we later understand to be that from God, and was trying to save the ship.

-So the choice was made by these men to take the vessel out into the high seas and press on. But there was a little storm that was not even in the horizon of their lives but it was gathering strength to overtake them.

-The problem was that they felt the blowing of the soft south wind. There is that snare of the south wind that creates problems. The snare of the south wind is always disarming to us.

- It woos us.
- It calls us.
- It encourages us.
- It pleads with us.
- It ultimately misleads us.

-This snare of the south wind misled these men.

- They had the voice of inner conviction and it was wrong.
- They had the seeming right circumstances of the south wind and it was wrong.
- They ignored the warning of the Word, spoken through an apostle and that was wrong.

1. Three Considerations In Changing Your Course

-There are three considerations that must be proved before we change our course in life and in the determination of the will of God for our lives.

The Inner Voice of Conviction -- There is an “inner” voice that we all have. It is assisted by the normal reasoning process. We look at the facts, we talk with trusted friends and counselors, and we give a lot of room for our conscience to speak to us.

The Outer Voice of Circumstance -- This is an important aspect also because God can open and shut doors but the difficulty in this is that Satan can also. Just because there appears to be a door opened to a golden opportunity does not necessarily mean that it is the will of God. Make decisions based on what is going to be tomorrow or next week or next year or in the next decade. The important factor is always time. . . Satan always will push and God never does. Satan always says, “It’s now or never” and God never says that. Far too many have rushed

through open doors only to realize after they had gone in that direction that they wished they could change things.

The Word of God -- The deciding factor in changing your course in life is the Word of God. You cannot just flip open the Bible and scan the first few verses your eyes fall on to determine the direction of your life. The fact of the principles that come from the Word will help us to make proper decisions. That is why it is crucial that you attend church and read your Bible. It is my belief that if you attend three services that in one of those services, the issues that you are having in life will be addressed and you will have the answers that you need. Any move that is made that goes opposite of what the Book stipulates is wrong (i.e. -- not to lie, steal, commit adultery, be unequally yoked with unbelievers) is out of the will of God. That is why we need a steady diet of preaching, teaching, and reading of the Word of God.

-One might ask the question: Why did they have to leave so early? It was a question of comfort. Verse 12 is a dead giveaway. It was not a comfortable place to spend the winter. Because we are a generation that is driven by our own comfort level, *we sometimes forsake the important (the ship) for the expedient (a comfortable winter).*

-Do you realize that sometimes you will (not maybe) have to endure some hardships and some winters? The problem with too many is that they spend too much time running from winters and sailing headlong into hurricanes. . .

-Paul was trying to tell them that a winter would be better than a hurricane but no one was listening. So they took the vessel and scurried off toward Rome to their own loss of the ship and the goods.

-But the disobedience of one or two was not going to stop Paul from making it to his ultimate destiny in Rome. That is a key piece of knowledge that the devil wants to keep from you. . . . Another's Disobedience Is Not Going To Stop Your Destiny!!!

- Abraham's disobedience did not keep Sarah from having Isaac.
- Moses' disobedience did not keep the children of Israel out of the Promised Land.

- Balaam's disobedience in going to Balak did not stop God from blessing Israel.
- Jonah's disobedience in going to Tarshish did not stop God from saving Nineveh.
- Ahab's disobedience in worshiping Baal did not stop God from answering with fire for Elijah.

-The implicit understanding is this. . . the principle is this. . . It does not matter who is trying to stop your progress in the Kingdom, if God has ordained you to get into the Promised Land, to go to Rome, or to make it to Heaven. . . . You ought to rise to the occasion as say that your destiny has been determined by God and not the foolish choices of other men.

B. Circumstances of the Storm Will Not Compromise the Goal -- Acts 27:14-20

Acts 27:14-20 KJV But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. [15] And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive. [16] And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: [17] Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. [18] And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship; [19] And the third *day* we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. [20] And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

-One might say that this is a little overlapping of the previous point and while to a certain extent that might be so, the first dealt with a man who is disobedient but now the second principle deals with the circumstances around the storm.

-These are the physical things that are creating havoc in your life. Things like:

- Tempestuous winds -- v. 14
- Ships that are caught in prevailing winds -- v. 15
- Ships that cannot face into the winds and waves -- v. 15
- Ships that are driven -- v. 15

- Much work in fighting the storm -- v. 16
- Quicksands -- v. 17
- Having to toss things overboard to lighten the ship -- v. 18
- A prevailing sense of darkness, no sun or stars that do not appear for many days. -- v. 20

-The phrase, “much work to come by the boat” literally means that with huge difficulty they finally were able to become masters of the boat. It was a fight with the elements. Sometimes the fights will be with men, but now the fight is with the elements.

-The storms seem to steal our energy and never let up.

-Elements like:

- The finer details of life that are beyond our own control.
- Changes on your job.
- Depression and “blue days.”
- Bills that will not let up.
- Poor financial choices that choke us.
- School pressures with grades, projects, and assignments.
- Schedules that seem to literally sift the life out of us.
- Financial Struggles and Setbacks.
- Regrets for the time we lost our temper, or our control, or our priorities, or even our pride.
- Health Problems.
- Job Pressures.

-But can I let you in on a great secret?

- If God would get Paul out of Damascus in a basket.
- If God can save Paul from the rocks in Lystra.
- If God can keep Paul from the wild beasts in the mountains.
- If God can pull Paul out of Philippian jail cells.
- If God can help Paul trump sorcerers (Simon) and astrologers.
- If God can bring Paul around phony prophets (Elymas).

- If God can shield Paul from the harmful effects of a viperous beast.

Then God can help you get through your current set of circumstances that you are facing right now.

-High waves, strong winds, bolts of lightning, and loud thunderclaps were all circumstances that would not keep Paul out of Rome.

-Someone might ask. Do you have any Book for all of that? It sounds real good but I just don't know if I can believe it. As a matter of fact, we have enough of the Book to last us for the rest of the night. I may as well start with this one:

Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Psalms 125:1-2 KJV <A Song of degrees.> They that trust in the LORD *shall be* as mount Zion, *which* cannot be removed, *but* abideth for ever. [2] As the mountains *are* round about Jerusalem, so the LORD *is* round about his people from henceforth even for ever.

Psalms 27:1-3 KJV <A Psalm of David.> The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? [2] When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. [3] Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will I be* confident.

Psalms 27:5-6 KJV For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. [6] And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

Psalms 32:7 KJV Thou *art* my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

Romans 8:38-39 KJV 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.

-Somewhere along the way. . . there has to be an understanding. . . the circumstances will never compromise the goal. Somewhere in your storm, you are going to have to encourage yourself.

- We're going to Rome.
- We're going to Heaven.
- We're going to reach this city.
- We're going to build a church.
- We're going to have victory.
- We're going to have deliverance.

C. The Voice of God Still Prevails Over the Storm -- Acts 27:23-26

-Another concept that you must understand (Review: Another's Disobedience Will Not Stop Your Destiny, The Circumstances Cannot Compromise the Goal) is that the Voice of God still prevails over the storm.

Acts 27:23-26 KJV For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, [24] Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. [25] Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. [26] Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

- **Fear not**, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward. Genesis 15:1.
- And the LORD said unto Joshua, **Fear not**, neither be thou dismayed. Joshua 8:1.
- And the LORD said unto Joshua, **Fear them not**: for I have delivered them into thine hand. Joshua 10:8.
- And Joshua said unto them, **Fear not**, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage. Joshua 10:25.

- And Elijah said unto her, **Fear not**; go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. 1 Kings 17:13.
- **Therefore will not we fear**, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Psalm 46:2.
- **Fear not**: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. Isaiah 43:5.
- **Fear ye not therefore**, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Matthew 10:31.

But when Jesus heard *it*, he answered him, saying, **Fear not**: believe only, and she shall be made whole. Luke 8:50.

-The voice of God will still prevail in every aspect of our storm.

- Jacob did not have an easy chair at Bethel but he dreamed of angels.
- Peter did not have a Sealy Posture-Pedic in his prison but at midnight an angel came.

-The trick to understanding this process comes from “there stood by me this night the angel of God, *whose I am*. . .

-If you belong to God, then you can hear His voice over the cacophony of sounds that are permeating this society and sometimes even in the Church.

- If you belong to God, it will keep you from backsliding.
- If you belong to God, it will help you overcome temptation.
- If you belong to God, it will give you an anointing for His mission.
- If you belong to God, it will prepare you for the hardest job that God may allow you to take.
- If you belong to God, it will help you to know your place in this world.

-The storm does not stop God’s voice. . . . in fact, it is my experience that it is during the storm that God’s voice and directions are the loudest and the clearest. We must keep marching on to the voice of God.

D. The Snare of the Storm Cannot Hold You Hostage Forever -- Acts 27:43-44

-You must remember:

- Another Man's Disobedience Will Not Deter Your Destiny
- The Circumstances of the Storm Will Not Compromise the Goal
- The Voice of God Still Prevails Over the Storm

-And lastly, The Snare of the Storm Cannot Hold You Forever!

Acts 27:43-44 KJV But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast *themselves* first *into the sea*, and get to land: **[44]** And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

-How long the night?

Psalms 30:5 KJV . . . weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

-Your job is to hang on to your bit of the boat. Keep swimming because this storm cannot and will not last forever.