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**A0942 – October 18, 2009 – Acts 27:1-26 – Paul's Courage In The
Northeast**

Question: *In Acts 24:27 Paul was held in prison for two years under Felix's governorship without being convicted in a Roman court of law. Did Rome have habeas corpus?* Answer, no, habeas corpus is not clearly a part of a system of law until English common law. The first clear place it is written in law is the Magna Carta of 1215. So the background of habeas corpus in jurisprudence is English so that's where you'll need to focus your study if you're interested in that. In Paul's case he did not have writ of habeas corpus, the Roman state had the authority and the Paul's liberty as a citizen's was subject to Rome.

Now Paul has been heard in three Roman courts and found innocent in all three courts. But having appealed to Caesar, to Caesar he must go. So today we come to Acts 27: Paul's voyage to Caesar in Rome. The Lord Jesus Christ said in Acts 23:11 Paul, you will witness in Rome. And now we pick up the drama of whether Paul will make it to Rome or not. It's the drama of whether the word of God will really come to pass. Does God really control history? And by application, is the word of God really sufficient for my difficulty? Paul's difficulty is a nautical disaster that occurs during the 2,000 mile voyage from Caesarea to Rome. And so, on one hand Paul has the word of God in Acts 23:11 and on the other hand he faces this storm. And of course, because of this certain interpreters have painted this as an allegory of the storms of life. And there's no question there are the storms of life but this was a real storm that Paul faced along with 275 others.

Now, there is a lot we can learn from this detailed account but the most obvious thing is Paul's character and how he handles himself in a life-threatening situation, how he applies the faith-rest drill. So let's review the four basic steps of the faith-rest drill. In the faith-rest drill we're simply

sketching the mental processes that all the great saints of Scripture went through when they got in a jam, so this isn't something I'm inventing. Bible students have noticed for centuries that there was a certain mental process they used and so we're just trying to sketch that in four steps so we can apply it when we get in a pressure situation.

The first step is *recall*. Recall some fragment of Scripture, some verse, a story, a promise, something from the word of God. So obviously if it's called recall then it has to be something you already learned. You can't recall something you haven't already learned. So that's why we're so insistent on training in the word of God, training in the word of God, over and over and over. Simply because we are trying to deposit as much of the word of God as we can in the depths of our soul so we can have more to recall. The more Scripture you have embedded in your soul the more options you have for recall and the more successful you will be navigating difficulties. If you hit a jam today and you haven't been training, you've been goofing off, fooling around, wasting time saying I'll study the Bible later, then when you hit a jam you don't have anything to recall and now your mind is a mess, everything is going to pieces in your life, your emotions are running 24 hours a day and that is hardly the time to try to learn Bible doctrine. You can't learn when you're in a jam, you can't even think in a jam, much less learn. When some horrible thing happens in life everything goes to pieces, it's not a good learning environment, so we train in advance, train yourself to learn when your life is basically tranquil and then when the tranquility is removed we can recall the doctrine we've learned.

The second step of the faith-rest drill is to *connect*. By that we mean that you have to start seeing relationships between the problem you're facing and the Scripture you're recalling. It doesn't have to match in all the particulars but you do have to see how the believer responded in the biblical trial and how there are elements in your trial that are similar and as you do that you're connecting, you're bringing the biblical text in touch with your situation. Connecting with the text is crucial.

The third step is the *rationale*. Up to this point you have on one hand your problem, and on the other hand the Scripture you're recalling and trying to connect into. The third step is the rationale and this is where you're building reasons to believe the Scripture. Can I really believe that God is sufficient to

solve my dilemma? Yeah! He solved David's dilemma but that was David, what about my dilemma? And this is why we build a framework around the promises. This is why we spend so much time going through the events of Scripture; the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Covenant, the Call of Abraham. All this sets the larger frame and the rationale for believing. What happens if you don't have this larger biblical framework is the larger framework of the world system envelops you and you can't trust. You may be able to recall a verse but the verse just gets eaten up by the world system that you've sucked in and it's antagonistic to faith and you can't trust, you can't walk by faith and you get wiped out. I'm convinced it's basically this third step where believers today fail. The saints in Scripture all worked out of this basic historical framework we've been building in the 9:30 hour. And that's what made them great believers. They were able to focus and relax and trust the Scriptures when life got difficult because they were able to go back and reason through the Scriptures. They were able to work from the top down, starting with the BIG things God has done in history down to the little things in their life. That's how they solved the problems.

The final step of faith-rest is the *rest*. This is the end, this is the goal. So while life may be in chaos your soul is relaxed because you know Who's in control, you know there's a meaning and a purpose to it all and you know in the end God works all things together for good, including the bad things. That's the greatness of our God.

Now Paul is coming into a high stress situation and as a great saint of Scripture he's going to apply the faith-rest drill and bring stability to the situation. Apparently this is Paul's fourth shipwreck. By this time he has faced near death three times in tragedies at sea. We know this from 2 Cor 11:25. But at this fourth shipwreck we get one of the most fantastic illustrations of a believer trusting the Lord in a chaotic situation. Now the storm Paul faces was known in the ancient world as the Euraquilo. Pliny the Elder spoke of the Euraquilo as "the chief plague of sailors." And so it's not a little bitty storm. Paul is on a ship with men that have sailed for decades and yet even they are falling to pieces. But Paul is not. Paul is relaxed. Only the Christian Paul can relax. The non-Christians lose hope and go to pieces. But Paul is in such a relaxed mental state that not only can he control his emotions but he is able to bring stability to the situation for everyone on board that ship. How did Paul do it? Paul believed in the sovereignty of God

working in and over and through both man and nature to bring His word to pass. So it's another example of the age old dilemma of sovereignty and human responsibility. And I hope by this time we've been through this enough times, in enough chapters, in both the OT and NT to be able to relax about the question because many Christians can't relax.

And so we begin Acts 27, which is, in its own right a classic work. It is one of the most vivid pieces of writing in all of ancient literature. It contains reminiscences of Homer's accounts of Mediterranean voyages that invariably included a storm or shipwreck. As well, it also reminiscences certain aspects of Jonah's Mediterranean voyage and the storm he and his shipmates faced. And chiefly, secular historians have assigned Luke's account as one of the chief sources on ancient seamanship for nautical study.

Now once again, in v 1 there is a comment about the Roman military. The NT is very favorable to the centurions. Invariably they are commented upon as understanding authority and securing freedom. It's the unabashed proclamation that the Roman military was an ordered system that secured freedom. So v 1 begins with a note about the military. **When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius. Julius** is one of the **centurion's** inside the order of the **Augustan cohort**. Once again, a Roman **cohort** was about 1,000 men and a **centurion** commanded approximately 100 of those men. And the **cohort** of this man was called **Augustan** which means it's an imperial **cohort** which had tremendous respect. And so Julius is a legionary centurion who is sent on imperial missions.

Now the different cohorts in the Roman Empire have different jobs to do, different functions and that dictated the kinds of missions assigned to them. Throughout the Mediterranean world they would have one cohort serving over here doing their thing and another cohort over here doing their thing and they had them spread all over and Rome is up here and so somebody would have to go around and get reports from these various cohorts and transmit the reports back to Rome and that was the particular mission assigned to this **Augustan cohort**. The significance of this will dawn upon us when we begin to study the role of **Julius** at sea.

Those of you unfamiliar with Roman history may think it looks like there's something wrong with this whole text because it looks like we've got a military officer in command over the captain of the ship. And you wonder what is going on with this centurion giving orders to the captain of the ship? The reason was that throughout the Mediterranean there were certain groups of vessels that would sail between Egypt and Rome. Egypt was the main supplier of grain to Rome, and so these ships were the lifeline of Rome. And most of these ships were privately owned and so Rome contracted out the grain shipping business to these private ship owners. When a Roman officer stepped on board he automatically assumed command.

That's the background for what we're about to read here on this ship. Verse 2, **And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica.** ³**The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care.** All right, the deal is that there are ships that stay along the coastal waters hopping from one port to the next. The departure port is Caesarea and they hop up to the port of Sidon.



This is not what we would call a large seagoing vessel. The large sea going vessel is going to come into the picture in verse 8. But this one is a coastal vessel and you'll notice the home port of this ship in v 2, it's an **Adramyttian ship**, Adramyttium is the city located in the NW corner of Asia in the little

area called Mysia. So they're going to sail up these coastal waters and they're heading to the **coast of Asia** and along for the ride are two other Christians, **Aristarchus** and **Luke**. Luke's the author and he includes himself as one of the passengers. By the end of this we're going to have 276 men on board and out of 276 only three were Christian so far as we know. But at this point we have Paul, Luke and Aristarchus.

Verse 3, there's something strange about v 3, **The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care.** Now it ought to strike you as odd that the centurion would be so courteous to Paul. Paul is a Roman prisoner. And yet throughout the narrative the commander gives respect to Paul. Why? Well, for one, Luke and Aristarchus may be traveling as Paul's slaves and if that's the case Paul is a wealthy slave owner. And for two he's a Roman citizen, that explains the courtesy. So he says Paul, go see your friends, it's better to translate this "the Friends." Friends with a capital letter. We think from this expression and 3 John 15 that one of the early designations of Christians was "the Friends." And so Paul is given the courtesy of going to the Friends which would make up the local church at **Sidon**.

Now in v 4 they set out from Sidon and continue along the coast and here they run into the west winds. **From there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary.** ⁵**When we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia.** Now the difficulty here is that this time of year the winds blew out of the west so if you wanted to go west that caused problems. Unlike a modern sailboat which you can tack and go pretty much into the wind, they weren't able to do that and they had difficulty. So these coastal vessels would sail on the lee side of islands, which is to say the sheltered side. It was a standard way of sailing and they would go slowly along the coasts and the reason they could go slowly into the wind despite the fact it was blowing at them was because the current along the coast in this part of the Mediterranean moves west, still does move west. And so they could gradually make their way west just drifting in the current and finally they make it **along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia** and **landed at Myra in Lycia.** Now this coastal vessel isn't going to be able to do much more, it's going to be enough to get it around Lycia and over to Asia which is the destination and so verse 6 the **centurion** disembarks that ship

and looks for another. **There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it.** This is one of those large granary ships contracted out by Rome that came from Egypt. They were about 180 feet long and had a beam width of 50 feet. These would be making their way ultimately to Italy carrying this grain that was so important to Rome and they would make stops along the way at places like Cyprus, Myra or Crete to get supplies to help them back to Italy. So the **centurion** finds one of these vessels and they get aboard.

And here is where the storm winds begin. Up to this point they've been handling the winds by using the current along the shore, now they're coming into open waters and we'll see what happens. Verse 7, **When we had sailed slowly for a good many days, and with difficulty had arrived off Cnidus, since the wind did not permit us to go farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone;** A long agonizing trip just to **Cnidus** and you can see by the map what happened. When they took off from Myra they came out away from the land and so they no longer have the land to shield the winds, they no longer have the western current. All they have is wind blowing them head on and this presents a problem. It takes many days just to get to **Cnidus**. So now they're in a problem and they can do one of two things: they can wait it out, wait till the winds are more favorable or they can head south to **Crete**. They decide to set sail for **Crete** and this is why the course starts going this way. They can get to **Crete** and they're interested in sailing under **Crete** because the winds out here are from the northwest. As you can see on the map the arrows point to the prevailing winds this time of year and so they want to come under Crete on the lee side to avoid the winds and they come around **Salmone**, verse 8, **and with difficulty sailing past it**, all of this is to set the mood for the story, there's an imminent danger involved. **And with difficulty sailing past it we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.** So they dock in the harbor of **Fair Havens**, it's still there today, by the same name.

And then in vv 9 and 10 they have a sailors counsel. **⁹When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul began to admonish them, ¹⁰and said to them, "Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives."** Now here's the situation. There's a time notice in v 9 where Luke says

the fast was already over. That's the fast of Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement on the Jewish calendar. And we know this was the year 59AD, calculations show Yom Kippur that year was on Oct 5th. So it's after Oct 5th and they're in Fair Havens. We know from Vegetius, who is our source for this kind of thing, that the "**dangerous** time" for sailing the open seas was from Sept 14th – Nov 11th. After that the seas were closed until winter was over, early February at the very earliest. And so they're in the danger period, about mid-October, the seas are still open for a few more weeks. And here's the problem they're facing. You can say all day long let's just wait it out, we'll stay till February, but the ship is carrying the fall grain and it had to be shipped across the sea or its going to go bad. And so they have a difficult decision to face and they call a sailors counsel. Paul evidently got in on the counsel because he was an experienced traveler and besides, he'd already been in three shipwrecks, so they want Paul's perspective. **Paul began to admonish them.** Here's a crisis situation and Paul intervenes in the crisis to give some wise counsel. And over and over and over, imperfect tense Paul says don't do it, I've seen this kind of thing before and we're in a very precarious situation and in all likelihood we're going to have great economic loss and our lives are going to be in danger. So he said don't do it and he said it over and over and over and these guys should have known better, being nautical men they should have known. Here they are middle of October and they're thinking of heading out to sea to make the delivery and here they are right in the unpredictable storm season. They have Paul's warning.

But then verse 11, **But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship than by what was being said by Paul.**

¹²Because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to put out to sea from there, if somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there. Here you see the **centurion** is the one in command and he hears all the arguments but he makes the decision. He says lets move on, Fair Havens isn't a suitable harbor for wintering, which, by the way, if you go there today doesn't make much of a case. It appears to be a very safe harbor for these winds. If the winds are from the northwest all winter you'd be fairly safe on the south side of an island. But in verse 12 they're going to try to head over to **Phoenix.**

Phoenix is on the west side of the isle of Crete. Crete is mentioned in one other place in the NT, when God moved the Church west He moved it along

many of these navigational highways and Crete happens to be on one of the major highways and there was a church there in Crete. One NT book is written to Crete, it's the book of Titus. So we have references in the New Testament to the local church there.

But at the end of verse 12 there is, what apparently critics think is a mistake on Luke's part. They say Luke is obviously confused because something can't be both southwest and northwest of a position. The critics have raked Luke over the coals for verse 12, a thoroughly confused man. Well, Luke is not a confused observer; we know his precision in recording sea life. The problem is the critics are confused people. What Luke has done for us is he's pointed out a weakness and this is what was on his mind and Paul's mind; that on this west side of Crete the harbor is open to the west. And if the harbor is open to the west then the winds out of the southwest and northwest are going to blow right into that harbor and if you get your boat in that harbor you're never going to get it out during the winter season and its going to be tossed and turned all winter in that harbor, so Paul says thinks that's a stupid plan to put in over there, we're perfectly safe here in Fair Havens, under the isle of Crete. But God is sovereign, they choose to press on and give **Phoenix** a shot.

Now in verse 13 we have the second mistake of the centurion. The first mistake was not listening to Paul in the first place. **When a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had attained their purpose,** see, now our plan is confirmed, we're going to have a south wind and in a few hours we'll be to Phoenix. Therefore, **they weighed anchor and began sailing along Crete, close inshore,** meaning they were still cautious, which shows you they know they're taking a big chance, they know they're at risk. The centurion in command, however, has just made a big mistake. Storms moving across the Mediterranean, as all storms do in the northern hemisphere, have a counterclockwise circulation and when a storm is moving in from the west the winds shift out of the south. And if the wind has been previously blowing from the northwest for day after day after day, as they had, and all of a sudden you get a change in wind direction from the south, and you're in the storm season that is not the time to pull off a big stunt in navigation. And he should have known this. What deceived him is that the south wind was **moderate**. They're in a risky position.

And then it happens in verse 14. Sure enough a storm kicks up and they get hit. Now the details of what happened from this point on in the text were thoroughly studied by a man by the name of James Smith who wrote a famous book just on Acts 27. The title of the book was called *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*. That man, who was an English yachtsman, decided he was going to do a study of the details of this chapter from a seaman's perspective just to see how accurate the details were. It is really fascinating to realize that these are the kinds of biblical studies people did in the 19th century. They'd analyze navigational terms, weather patterns in the region, tremendous scrutiny and James Smith did this with Acts 27 and came out with a 336 page book just on this chapter. It just shows you the level of scholarship these men had and how intensely they scrutinized the text. So James Smith, in the mid 19th century, traveled to the Mediterranean and interviewed men who sailed these waters about the kinds of storms, about navigation during these storms, rate of travel and all kinds of details, and he wrote a book that is just remarkable in its detail as to the validity of Acts 27, including identifying at the end of the story this bay where Paul finally wound up at Malta, and they, even to this day, have the bay titled St Paul's Bay on the island of Malta at the precise distance he calculated for this kind of storm. After rigorous mathematical calculations and linguistic analysis it comes out to confirm exactly what Luke says.

But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo. That word literally, in the Greek, is for a northeaster. This typhoon wind rushed right down on them from Mt Ida on Crete. And for those of you who've lived on the Atlantic coast you know what a northeaster is. A northeaster is one of the most vicious storms you can experience, including that of a hurricane. The reason for its danger, particularly at sea, is that at sea the danger to the water and therefore the danger to your vessel is not strictly a function of wind speed. It's a function of what is called fetch, which is a function of the wind speed over a length of water and how long that wind has blown over that length of water. The longer that wind blows and the faster that wind blows over a length of water the larger the waves become. And the reason is because the wind is transferring energy to the water and so it builds and it builds and it builds and the longer the wind is blowing the water the more energy is transferred and the larger waves you're building. And these are the kinds of waves that can get very, very large and can sink a ship because they've got so much

energy. So the problem here is going to be the duration of wind. Now Luke, as the astute observer, will give us in almost every other verse here the duration of that wind, so he's very careful to cite the danger to them by referring to this fetch problem.

So there arose this northeaster, like a violent typhoon, a swirling of the storm clouds caused by the meeting of two opposing air currents. And it came on very suddenly we can tell because there were preparations they didn't have time to make so this caught them by surprise. Let's watch what happened.

Verse 15, **and when the ship was caught in it and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and let ourselves be driven along.** Basically they had just given up for the time being and were waiting for a chance to get some work done. They couldn't do anything at the time, it was just too rough, so they come to verse 16, **Running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were scarcely able to get the ship's boat under control.** So here they are on the lee side of this very small island called **Clauda**, about 23 miles out, and they get somewhat of a break and they're going to take this as an opportunity to do some work and get the ship stabilized. The first thing they need to do is v 16 is get the **ship's boat under control**, that's the dinghy. All this time the thing has just been loose, banging up against the ship's hull, bang, bang and it's probably full of water by this time and so with great difficulty they finally get it hoisted up and tied down.

The second thing is in v 17; **they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship;** now the problem here is the hull might break up. That's the thing they don't want to happen so they want to reinforce the hull. To do this they used these **supporting cables** or ropes, very long ropes and they would attach it to the main mast and wrap under the ship and attach to the other side of the mast. These were big boats and all these boats came outfitted for this kind of safety measure. And what it would do is two things. It kept the mast from splintering because if they lost their mast they've lost all control, and the second thing it did is hold the hull together, because they had problems with a ship just disintegrating at sea. Josephus remarks about this and some of the other first century historians. So there are all these details and we mention this to set the stage for what's going to happen. Luke wants us to see the severity of the situation.

The third precaution at the end of verse 17 is they fear **they might run aground on the shallows of Syrtis**. The **Syrtis** shallows were a serious threat. They lay off to the southwest which is exactly where the northeaster is blowing them, so to avoid these shallows off the northern coast of Africa they **let down the sea anchor**. It's translated **the sea anchor** but it's a very general word probably referring here to all kinds of auxiliary equipment that could be tied to the ship and put overboard to slow the ship down, such as spars, sails, rigging, anchors and cables. And it's at this point that they're doing everything they can to slow the ship down and direct it to the north and west. They want to run about 45 degree angle from the direction of the wind and they can do that. To do that they'll turn the ship such that her right side is in the wind with storm sails set and so she would drift about eight degrees north of west very slowly, at the average rate of about 1½ miles per hour. Those are the kinds of calculations Smith has in his book. This would keep them north of **Syrtis Major**.

The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo; that lightens the ship, which shows you how desperate they are because that's money. There's tons of grain on that thing and they're throwing it overboard, so it is a desperate situation. **and on the third day,** (so it's been three days of this wind transferring energy to the water, the waves are getting bigger each day), so **on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands**. That's the rigging and all the tools that you need. Again, why are they doing this? Several reasons, one of which is these boats didn't have good storage bins in them and so you get these long wave lengths that develop through long wind, after you get a long time span of wind blowing at sea you don't get these choppy waves that everybody... all the artists draw in the pictures, what you get are these long mountainous things with a wave length that might be, oh, say a quarter mile long, or half a mile long.

So you can imagine the distance between trough and crest of these waves, and in a situation like this the boat is just getting tossed around like a toothpick and if they have any cargo left on board it would be sliding from side to side in the wave roll. And so the boat leans one way and the tackle slides to one side and then that throws all the weight to that side and the next wave comes along and floods it and that's the end of the boat. So that's

their concern, that's why they're throwing the **tackle** overboard, to avoid the weight shifts caused by the tackle sliding.

Verse 20, **Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us**, so this has gone on, maybe for a week, they can't tell how many days it's been because they can't calculate based on the sun and stars and so the size of this northeaster was great and **from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned**. Now this is a period of desperation and here you have a major crisis, and into that major crisis steps a believer with assets, a believer with his act together, a believer who can relax, a believer who is stable, a believer who is calm and Paul, not the centurion, is at this point basically going to take command.

When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss. Now that's Paul saying what we always want to say in this kind of a situation, "I told you so." If you'd just listened to me we could have avoided all this. He's not being a jerk about it, he's just saying, I know what I'm talking about and if you'd taken my advice you would have avoided all this loss.

Now, up to this point Paul himself is applying the principles of the faith-rest drill. He has recalled a promise of the word of God Acts 23:11. The Lord Jesus Christ said, Paul, you will witness in Rome. So Paul has the sovereign declaration of God. He recalls the word of God. In the midst of the storm he begins to connect. I've seen other people in nautical danger. I've seen Noah, I've seen Jonah, and I've seen Peter. We all faced dangers at sea, so now I'm connecting, I've got the promise, and third, I know this is all true because I've bracketed the whole thing by the biblical framework. We know Paul was thoroughly thinking in terms of the larger framework all the time. And so the result is he has been able to walk by faith while everyone else is hopeless. Now up to this point Paul himself has been the only person who has any specific promise related to the situation. Nobody else had an Acts 23:11 written to them. So nobody else has any assurance that they're going to survive. And that brings us to v 22, **"Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship.** ²³**"For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, ²⁴saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you**

must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.’ ²⁵“**Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.**” ²⁶“**But we must run aground on a certain island.”**

All right, so now the promise to Paul is extended to all on the ship. Now they have some content to believe in the form of a promise. Notice it’s a promise to a pagan group of people. This is not addressed to fellow Christians other than Luke and Aristarchus. The major body God made this promise to is pagan. It’s not evangelistic, yet, it’s just a promise of survival. You can believe it or not believe it but this is what God says. Now, you’ll notice in verse 23, even though he’s addressing pagans he doesn’t say now let me give you five reasons why God exists. He just assumes they know God exists and says God’s word controls history and God’s word is you will all be saved. Implication? God controls the ship, God controls the winds, God controls the waves, God controls whatsoever comes to pass. Therefore on the basis of God’s word Paul says, v 25, **keep up your courage**. Relax, we’re in a jam but the God who controls the jam is going to get us out of the jam, so take courage. So that’s a Christian stepping into a crisis with the word of God and applying it to the situation to bring stability, to bring hope, to bring a relaxed mental attitude so the situation doesn’t spin out of control.

And the other thing to note in his address to these pagans is the word **granted** in verse 24, it’s the word *charizomai*, which is the word from which we get *charis* or “grace.” And the idea is that God, because He has a sovereign plan for Paul, see the first part of verse 24, **Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar;** all right, there’s the sovereign plan for Paul, these guys are with him and look what God’s grace does. Just the fact they are associated with Paul brings blessing. They get blessed because of association. If Paul’s not there, they’re all dead. But here you’ve got pagans getting blessed by God because of their association with a Christian. And that goes on and on in societies. Gentile kingdoms get blessed by their association with believers. Whose house in Egypt was blessed because of Joseph’s presence? Potiphar’s house. And Potiphar recognized it. That’s blessing by association. On the other side of this: if a believer is under divine discipline then pagans suffer by association and that’s the sea story of the OT. That’s Jonah. Every pagan on that ship was asking, who is the cause of this, what’s going on here? What was going on was Jonah was in rebellion and God was

disciplining Jonah and therefore everyone suffered because of association with Jonah. So there's blessing and cursing by association with believers. It works both ways; pagans suffer by association with rebellious believers, but they're also blessed by association with obedient believers. And this is a case where we see the blessing. 273 pagans are saved because they're associated with one believer who God promised to get to Rome. That's grace. So as long as they stay associated with Paul they enjoy grace. And finally Paul concluded, **we must run aground on a certain** island, he doesn't know which one it is, the angel didn't tell him that yet, so it is **a certain island**, it's just unrevealed. So another example of the faith-rest drill in action. We'll continue this next week. Let's close with a word of prayer.

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