

Series: Acts

Title: The Storm of Grace

Text: Acts 27: 14-25

Scripture Reading: Psalm 107: 23-32

Date: September 9, 2010

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

"The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1: 18.) It pleased God to save, and to continue to save unto salvation, through the preaching which declares that salvation is of the Lord. It pleased God to deliver this message through earthen vessels.

To those of you who are saved--and being saved--the preaching of Christ and him crucified is the power of God. These are the words of eternal life. This message of the cross is meat for our eternal souls, more needful, more longed for than our daily bread.

Yet, men and women who perish do so because they glory in their own wisdom and understanding, rather than surrendering to Christ whose word of grace is delivered through the preaching of the gospel (1 Corinthians 1: 19.) To you who are perishing, to you who regard the preaching of Christ crucified as foolish, what will it take to make you surrender and feed upon the word of God? That is what we will try to see in God's word this hour.

Our text is the account of Paul being carried by ship on his way to Rome. But we are looking at this sea voyage to learn spiritual lessons about how God brings his children to hear the word of God.

In Acts 27: 21 we read, "But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said..." After this word, we find that the centurion and others on board begin to heed Paul's word. But at the first, this was not the case. In Acts 27: 11 we read, "Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul." So what made the centurion go from disregarding the word spoken by Paul to hearing and heeding the word Paul spoke?

#### Title: The Storm of Grace

In the tempestuous wind which arose against the sailor, we have an illustration of the gracious storm which God is able to create in the inner man in order to break each of his chosen children of mercy.

**Acts 27: 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.**

Proposition: Through the mighty hand of God, the Spirit of God always brings his children to hear his gospel. God honors his faithful servants. And God causes those whom he has everlastingly loved to trust Christ alone to save them.

The measures we are about to see these sailors take in the midst of this storm are measures any good sailor would take in such a storm. But the spiritual lesson is what is important.

All sinners are by nature like these sailors. We use natural wisdom, fleshly wisdom making every attempt to save ourselves. But God's children are saved, not by power nor by might but by his Spirit.

1 Corinthians 1:21: For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe;...2:5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

## I. HUMBLE YOURSELVES UNDER THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD.

**Acts 27: 15: And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.**

The ship was caught by the hand of God.

Psalm 135: 7: He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures....148: 8: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

Their inability to bear up--to face the wind--shows us our inability to face God. You will not win striving against God. They had no choice but to submit to the wind. So it is that you have no choice but to submit to the Lord of glory.

1 Peter 5: 5:...God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6: Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:...

## II. NO AMOUNT OF WORKING ON YOUR PART WILL SETTLE YOUR HEART FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH.

**Acts 27: 16: And running under a certain island which is called Claudi**

Remember, it is the wind driving them, that is, God is driving them. God gives them a little relief from the strong winds behind this island. What did they do? They begin to work feverishly to save themselves, to save their ship and all their goods within it.

**Acts 27: 16: And running under a certain island which is called Claudi, we had much work to come by the boat: 17: Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship;**

"The boat" is the dingy. They "used helps" meaning "All hands on deck." They undergirded the ship with chains or ropes for extra protection. The way of natural man is to always have a back up plan. Not so with salvation. Salvation is all of Gods' grace, by Christ Jesus, through faith in him with no dingy's, no helps, no undergirding. Salvation is by God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ who is able to save to the uttermost through the power of his Spirit. So then, after the "much work" was their heart at peace? No.

**Acts 27: 17:...and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.**

As long as we keep trying to save ourselves rather than submitting to God, we never do enough so that fear of perishing is gone. ONLY CHRIST FINISHED WORK FOR HIS PEPOLE WILL CAUSE HIS VESSELS OF MERCY NOT TO FEAR.

Hebrews 2: 14: Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15: And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Fear of death is driving these sailors. Fear is their only motivation. They have no rest. They have no peace. So it is with lost sinners--in religion and out--until God reveals Christ Jesus in you. Until then all is bondage. In fact, if you are indeed a child of God's mercy, the more you fight against God the stronger God's hand will be against you.

**Acts 27: 18: And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest,**

Why did the Lord give his messengers to preach the gospel of his finished, all-victorious work?

Ephesians 4:14: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Christ is the believer's Hope, the Anchor of the soul, our eternal High Priest who has entered into the very presence of God on behalf of his people in whom we have sure and stedfast, unchangeable salvation.

Hebrews 6: 19: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

**Application:** Even as we walk by faith, how sadly the believer finds ourselves leaning to our own understanding and falling under the chastening hand of our Father. Instead of simply hearing and submitting to our heavenly Father, we work hard to save ourselves. We act as if our homes, our clothing, our incomes, our business deals are our salvation. And so we sacrifice feverishly. how we do find ourselves yet suffering under the mighty hand of God! Has God brought this storm into your soul? If so then you will be sure to want to hear this next word.

**III. IT IS NOT ENOUGH FOR US TO SACRIFICE, WE MUST FIRST, GIVE OURSELVES TO GOD.**

**Acts 27: 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.**

Matthew Henry--"Any man will rather make shipwreck of his goods than of his life; but many will rather make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience than of their goods."

Man is willing to do anything, but give himself.

**The rich young ruler** was willing do whatever the Lord told him to do--EXCEPT GIVE HIMSELF. Christ revealed it by telling him to forsake all and give himself to Christ. But he had too many irons in the fire--was too important--to give himself to Christ.

**King Saul** brought back the biggest, best lambs to sacrifice to God. He was willing to sacrifice but not willing to submit himself to the LORD.

1 Samuel 15: 22: And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23: For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

**The Lord Jesus Christ** not only gave up the glory he had with the Father to come to where his people were, he not only made himself of no reputation, he not only went about doing good for sinners as the servant of God, but HE GAVE HIMSELF UNTO THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.

John 10:11: I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep....

1 Peter 2:24: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Ephesians 5:2:...Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

John 15:13: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

**Jonah.** When God sent the storm and broke Jonah's hard heart, the mariners were casting their wares into the sea, but beholding his Lord, Jonah said:

Jonah 1:12:...Take ME up, and cast ME forth into the sea;

Psalm 51: 17: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

### **The brethren in Macedonia**

2 Corinthians 8: 5:...first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

They gave themselves--entrusted the salvation of their souls to Christ, and him alone and gave themselves to serve him to the uttermost in the church of Christ. They gave themselves to be helps to the apostles.

**Luke the Physician**--God worked this grace in Luke so that he gave himself to the Lord and to Paul, when he could have prospered greatly doing other things. Yet, I can find not one place that any benefit to a sinner by Luke as a physician is recorded by the Spirit of God in the holy word, but Luke was used of God to write the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the apostles and by that the Great Physician used Luke to completely heal a multitude. Aren't you glad God brought Luke to the end of himself so we have these books!

Here is the point: Giving ourselves to Christ is the evidence that the love of God fills our hearts, not the giving of our substance while there is an absence of ourselves. Paul said,

1 Corinthians 13:3: And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

1 Peter 5: 7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

But what will it take for a sinner like me, to cease my rebelling against the word of God so that I truly have a heart in love with Christ Jesus? So that I truly am anchored--sure and steadfast, consistent and no more tossed to and fro?

**Acts 27: 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.**

#### **IV. GOR REMOVES ALL HOPE WE HAVE IN OURSELVES.**

God removes whatever vain light we think is light to save and guide us. He takes away all hope in our vain striving AND strips us of confidence in our vain treasures. Notice, they started out not only wanting to save themselves but the ship and the goods. Now they are left utterly hopeless that even their lives will be saved.

Have you ever been there? Are you kept there? Are you there now? This is where God brings his elect and keeps us so that he makes THE LIGHT, THE TREASURE, THE SALVATION--CHRIST JESUS--PRECIOUS UNTO US.

#### **V. GOD FEEDS HIS SHEEP THROUGH THE WORD OF THIS GOSPEL.**

**Acts 27: 21: But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.**

At first, Paul spoke the word. When they did not heed, he heeded his own word and waited on God. He knew the power is of God. Now, after long abstinence, he speaks and they listen.

When God brings the sinner to this extreme, hopeless estate then the preaching of the cross of Christ ceases to be the words of a man and becomes the power of God unto salvation--the words of eternal life. Listen to Paul:

2 Corinthians 5: 20: Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21: For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 6: 1: We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. 2: (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

Our gospel, our food, our hope is God's word to deliver his children of mercy.

**Acts 27: 22: And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship. 23: For there stood by me this night the angel of God,**

God stands by those he has everlastingly loved, he will not leave his own comfortless.

**Acts 27: 23;...whose I am**

Paul was not his own man. He was bought with the precious blood of Christ. He is God's own purchased possession. God revealed that to Paul when Paul wanted nothing to do with him--through a storm just like he did here among these sailors. You know what the result of God's effectual grace was and will be in each one who experiences this power of God?

**Acts 27: 23:...and whom I serve,**

Paul gave himself to Christ. He was not the prisoner of Rome but the willing-bondservant of Jesus Christ his Righteousness.

**Acts 27: 24: Saying, Fear not, Paul;**

The sure word of this gospel spoken in the heart by God Almighty is the cure for our fear--the sure word of God's grace.

**Acts 27: 24: Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou MUST be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee**

This is all my assurance--because of God's free grace--I MUST BE DELIVERED THROUGH EVERY STORM--and each and everyone whom the Father has chosen, whom the Son has purchased with his blood, shall be born of the Spirit of God and given faith to cast their whole selves on Christ--these are a gift given of God.

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

Do you believe God, RIGHT HERE IN THE MIDST OF THE STORM, do you believe God that it SHALL BE even as God says it SHALL BE!

**EFFECTUAL RESULTS OF THE GOSPEL**--We will focus more at this next time, but we have some illustrations of what you will do if you really do believe God.

1. They dropped anchor and waited for the Daystar (Acts 27: 29.)
2. They cut the ropes on the dingy and abode in the ship (Acts 27: 31, 32.) Christ said, "Abide in me." Salvation is all of Christ or you can not be saved.
3. All their working to provide for themselves, to save themselves had caused them to stop eating--yours has caused you to miss out on this Bread from heaven--the Lord said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6: 53.) It pleased God to deliver this food to his needy children through the foolishness of preaching. And so we find that at God's word spoken to them through Paul, with thanksgiving to God, they ceased from their labors and sat down and ate meat with Paul. (Acts 27: 34-36.)

May God bring you to the end of yourself, to the end of your wisdom and strength and vain hope. May he give you an earnest appetite to feed upon the word of this gospel that you might eat Christ and live and not perish! As I give you the word of this Bread from heaven that is my prayer to God for all of you in this ship!

Amen!