Surviving The Storm

Dealing with the problems of this life.

• Today we want to take a look at an event that took place in the Apostle Paul’s life while he was being taken as a prisoner to Rome.
• Let’s get a little background on the time leading up to this morning’s story.
• Paul had been arrested in Jerusalem after being attacked by a mob in the Temple when false charges were made against him.
• He had to be rescued from the mob by the Commander of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem.
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• Initially the Commander put Paul in prison in Jerusalem.
• When a group of 40 Jewish men made a vow to kill Paul the Commander had him moved to the city of Caesarea where Felix the governor of Judea lived.
• Paul remained a prisoner for 2 years while Felix was governor.
• Festus took over as governor after Felix left.
• When Festus suggests that Paul should go back to Jerusalem and be tried by the Jews then Paul appeals to Caesar.

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• After presenting his case before Festus, King Agrippa and Bernice, Paul is sent to Rome to stand trial before Caesar.
• Let’s begin reading in Acts 27
• Ac 27:1 ¶ And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to one named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment.
• 2 So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us.
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• 3 And the next day we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him liberty to go to his friends and receive care.
• 4 When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under the shelter of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.
• 5 And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.
• 6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.

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• 7 When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under the shelter of Crete off Salmone.
• 8 Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.
• 9 Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them,
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• 10 saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives."

• 11 Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul.

• 12 ¶ And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, and winter there.
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• 13 When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete.
• 14 But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon.
• 15 So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let her drive.
• 16 And running under the shelter of an island called Claudia, we secured the skiff with difficulty.

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• 17 When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis Sands, they struck sail and so were driven.
• 18 And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next day they lightened the ship.
• 19 On the third day we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands.
• 20 Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.
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• 21 ¶ But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss.

• 22 "And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

• 23 "For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve,

• 24 "saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'

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• Ac 27:25 "Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.

• 26 "However, we must run aground on a certain island."

• 27 Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land.
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• 28 And they took soundings and found it to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found it to be fifteen fathoms.
• 29 Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come.

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• 30 And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow,
• 31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved."
• 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.
• 33 And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored them all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing."
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- 34 "Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you."
- 35 And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat.
- 36 Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.
- 37 And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship.

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- 38 So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.
- 39 When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible.
- 40 And they let go the anchors and left them in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore.
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• 41 But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

• 42 And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape.

• 43 But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land,

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• 44 and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

• In my mind that is an amazing story.

• It would probably make a good movie.

• You’ve got danger, suspense, a hopeless situation and then the unprobeable good outcome.

• Paul survived the storm!

• What we want to do now is look at some of the things Paul did in order to survive this storm.
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• Hopefully we will be able to learn some things we can use in order to survive the storms (problems) we sometimes face today.

• When I talk about us “surviving” the storms of this life, I don’t mean everything works out for us physically.

• I mean that everything has worked out for us spiritually and we are able to save our souls.

• There have been a lot of Christians who survived the storms of this life but still were executed for what they believed.

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• First of all we need to understand that storms will come!

• They come upon both the Heathen and the Christian.

• Everybody has problems.

• However, the Christian will face additional problems because he is a follower of God.

• Listen to what the Apostle Peter has to say.
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• 1Pe 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

• 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

• 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

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• 1Pe 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

• 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

• Since we know that these storms are going to come then we need to prepare ourselves mentally to face them.

• We need to be determined that we are going to obey God no matter what life throws at us!
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• Now let’s see some of the things Paul did in order to survive the storm.

• He trusted in God!

• When things looked their worst, when everyone else had given up hope, Paul still trusted in God.

• Listen to what he told the people in what seemed to be a hopeless circumstance.

• Ac 27:22 "And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

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• 23 "For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve,

• 24 "saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'

• 25 "Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.

• Paul trusted in or believed that things were going to turn out just like God said they would!
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• What about us? Do we believe things will turn out just like God has told us?
• Do we trust Him when He tells us?
• Ac 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."
• But, while we are enduring these storms (tribulations) God says:

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• Heb 13:5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
• 6 So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"
• Do we believe that the Lord is our helper? That he will never forsake us?
• God is aware of our situation and will give us the strength to endure whatever trials, temptations and storms we may face in this life, if we depend upon Him
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• 1Co 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

• Do we trust God when He says:

• Ro 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

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• Do we trust God when he promises that all of these problems we face in this life will eventually work out to my benefit if I will only love and obey Him?

• The good we will receive is a home in Heaven when this life of storms is over.

• Do we trust God when He tells us nothing can separate us from His love unless we allow it to?

• Our salvation is absolutely and positively sure as long as we do those things God has told us to do!
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• Ro 8:38 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 created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

• What a wonderful promise that is!

• Trusting in these and other promises that God has made won’t make the storms go away.

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• Even Paul still had to endure the storm.

• But, they will make these storms bearable, knowing what is waiting on us if we endure to the end.

• Mt 10:22 "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

• Knowing the outcome of our faith, we can have peace.

• Joh 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
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Dealing with the problems of this life.

- Not only did Paul trust in God but we also see him remembering to pray and give thanks to God during this desperate time.
- They had been caught up in this storm for 14 days and nights
- Everyone had given up hope they would be saved
- They haven’t eaten for two weeks
- The sailors tried to abandon ship and save themselves
- At what may have been the most hopeless point these people faced, Paul prayed and thanked God for his food.
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• With this great storm swelling around him, surrounded by troubles Paul remembered to be thankful to God for even the little things of this life.
• Just a little to eat!
• When we are facing the storms of this life how easy is it for us to forget about all of the good things God has done for us?
• We have a tendency to focus strictly on the bad things happening to us right now.

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• If we have to endure every problem imaginable in this life but are able to save our soul, then the good will still far outweigh any bad thing we have gone thru here.
• We need to remember and focus on the good things God has done for us during the storms of this life.
• All of us are probably familiar with the song “Count your Blessings”
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Verse 1
When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

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Verse 2
Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, ev'ry doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the days go by.
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Verse 3
When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings, money cannot buy
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high.

Verse 4
So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.
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Chorus
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God hath done;
Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your many blessings, see what God hath done.

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• God has blessed all of us physically
• But the greatest blessing He has given us was His Son.
• Ro 5:6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
• 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.
• 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
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• This sin cursed world can be a difficult place with all of its death, sickness and sorrow.
• But, Christ gave His life so we don’t have to spend eternity in a place far worse than this old world.
• We desperately need to remember to be thankful to God for all He has done for us even when things are going bad.
• Because if we obey Him the storms of this life will only be temporary.

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• So far we have seen Paul:
  • Trusting in God
  • Praying and being thankful in spite of all the problems around him.
• He also set an encouraging example to those around him.
• Ac 27:33 And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored them all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing."
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• 34 "Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you."

• 35 And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat.

• 36 Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.

• Not only did Paul tell them what they needed to do, he set an example by doing it himself.

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• What type of example are we setting for those around us?

• It’s pretty easy to set a good example when things are going good but how do we act when things go bad.

• Do we:
  • Lose our temper?
  • Use language that we should not use?
  • Give up?
  • Turn to a crutch like drugs or alcohol?
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• We need to remember there are others watching us.
• They see how we react while under the stress of the storms of life.
• What kind of example are we setting for them?
• One day when our children face difficult times what will they have learned from seeing us deal with the difficult times in our lives?
• Will they have learned to hold on to God no matter what is going on in our life?

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• Will we have set an example for them to follow like:
  • Daniel
  • Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
  • Joseph
  • Stephen
  • The Apostles
• Paul set a good, encouraging example for those around him during the storm
• We need to make sure we are doing the same.
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• In surviving the storm Paul”
  • Trusted God
  • Prayed and was thankful
  • Set a good encouraging example for others
• Then he and the others did everything in their power to see that God’s will was done.
• Remember what Paul told them in vs Acts 27:34?
• Ac 27:34 "Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you."

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• God promised them thru the Apostle Paul that all of them were going to survive.
• Since that was the case, what did they do?
• Did they all set back, relax and wait on God to do everything for them?
• No! They got to work doing what they could to bring about God’s promise.
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• Ac 27:38 So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.
• 39 When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible.
• 40 And they let go the anchors and left them in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore.

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• After doing all of this the ship still ran aground before reaching shore.
• All of those on the ship including Paul had to either swim to shore or float to shore on a board.
• We need to learn a lesson from this as well.
• When we are facing the storms of this life we need to continue to work.
• Do what we can to alleviate these problems ourselves within the boundaries of God’s Word.
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• Paul had to take some steps to remove himself from a bad situation early in his life as a Christian.
• Ac 9:23 Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him.
• 24 But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him.
• 25 Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.
• Paul probably hit the ground running.

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• Sometimes we are able to do things to help alleviate our physical problems.
• But, even when we can’t, we need to be doing everything that we can to make sure we are able to get the ultimate deliverance of a home in Heaven.
• We need to be working out our own salvation.
• Php 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;
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• Nobody else can do this for us.
• We need to be busy doing the work of God no matter if things are going bad or good.
• This is what God told the great prophet Elijah to do at the lowest part of his life.
• Elijah is running for his life from the wicked queen Jezebel.
• He winds up hiding like an animal in a cave.
• God speaks to Elijah while he is in the cave.

1Ki 19:9 And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."
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• Elijah was going thru one of those storms of life.
• He feels alone and afraid.
• He had done all that God had asked of him and now they want to kill him because of it.
• Do we remember what God told him to do?
• God told him to get back to work and you are not alone.

1Ki 19:15 Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria.

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• 16 "Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.
• 17 "It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill.
• 18 "Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."
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• When we suffer in this life, especially when we suffer because we are a Christian, we need to focus on doing what we can to serve the Lord.

• Satan wants us to feel alone and afraid during these storms.

• We are not alone. God is with us if we remain faithful to Him.

• Heb 13:5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

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• We also have brothers and sisters in Christ who have dealt with problems like the storms we are facing.

• 1Pe 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

• 1Pe 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

• 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.
Conclusion

- Storms are going to come in this life
- How will we react when they come?
- We need to follow the example of Paul
  - Trust in God.
  - Pray and remember to be thankful for what God has done for us.
- Set a good encouraging example for those around us.
- Busy ourselves with doing the work of the Lord and remember we are not alone.