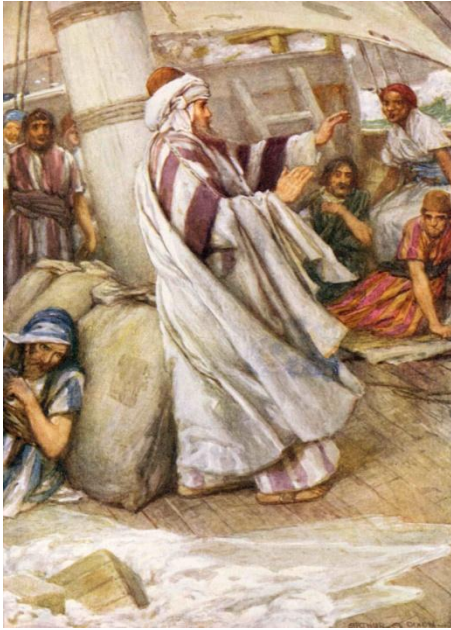


## SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

### LESSON 11



## PAUL'S WITNESS DURING SHIPWRECK

*Scripture Text: Acts 27:1-44*

King Agrippa was so impressed by Paul's testimony that he would have freed him, had Paul not already appealed to be tried in Caesar's court. Now he was being sent to Rome.

Many people can talk bravely about danger and how they will meet it when it confronts them. But when a crisis actually arrives and all other support is removed, one's trust in God or lack of it is evident. When death threatened, Paul had underlying peace and strength. He could keep calm and be of good cheer because he knew the outcome. God had told him. We live in a world of danger. You and I will meet times of crisis when the usual earthly supports we relied upon are gone. Then we will reach for the support of God. Anchor your soul in Him now so you will have Him then.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.*

—*Hebrews 3:14*

### DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**John 15:17-21; John 16:1-11, John 16:33** Encouragement from Jesus.

Tue.—**Romans 8:26-39** Persecution can't separate from Jesus.

Wed.—**2 Thessalonians 1** Trueness to God in persecution.

Thu.—**Hebrews 10:19-31** Assurance in Jesus Christ.

Fri.—**1 Peter 2:19-25** Patient suffering.

**Devotional Reading: 1 Peter 4** How to meet persecution.

### Starting the Voyage to Rome

**Acts 27:1-8** Paul, with other prisoners in the charge of Julius, a centurion, was put on a ship at Caesarea to sail toward Rome. From the use of "we" through the account, we gather that Luke, the author of Acts, was with Paul. Also, Aristarchus a Thessalonian, who had accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey and to Jerusalem more than two years before, was with them now. (See **Acts 19:29; Acts 20:4; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24.**) Julius was kind to Paul, letting him visit his friends when the ship stopped at Sidon. It would appear his trust in Paul gained his respect too. After changing ships at Myra, they met unfavorable winds, but finally reached Crete. There bad weather threatened their journey.

### Paul Gives Advice

**Acts 27:9-21** The bad weather delayed them past the season of good sailing. Paul told the sailors that he could see that the voyage would greatly endanger the ship, its cargo, and their lives. Julius, no doubt, thought it out of order for a prisoner to give sailing advice to the master of a ship. Disregarding it, they tried to change harbors from the fair havens to Phenice. Fierce storms arose and drove the ship out to sea. Trying to save it, the sailors undergirded it—they encircled or bound it with a flexible band to make secure—and cast out cargo and tackling. Only a sailor can understand all that is described here.

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Clouds hid the sun and stars for many days while the tempest blew. All hope of being saved was given up (except by Paul and possibly his two companions). **After long abstinence**—holding back, keeping still—Paul spoke. He had been tempted to do so sooner. **Ye should have hearkened unto me**—a way of saying "I told you so."

### Paul's Message From God

**Acts 27:22-34** Paul had now a better message to give. **Be of good cheer . . . no loss of . . . life . . . but of the ship. For there stood by me . . . the angel of God . . . saying . . . God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.** God promised that all on the ship would live, and Paul would reach Caesar's court. The storm was still blowing, yet Paul told them to **be of good cheer: for I believe God.** That was faith, the real kind that reaches and takes hold of God and brings strength and help down. **Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.** The message was clear and definite. The storm continued, winds drove the ship. They finally anchored in the night near land or rocks. No one escaped. They were all there. It seemed they all looked to Paul for instructions. At dawn of the fourteenth day of storm, toil, fear, despair, and fasting, Paul urged them all to eat, reminding them of God's promise. **There shall not a hair fall from the head of any**—a figure of speech signifying safety.

### All Are Encouraged

**Acts 27:35-38** Paul **took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all . . . he began to eat,** and the others, encouraged, followed his example. They drew courage from Paul's courage. Yet they still were in a storm-tossed ship from which they now had to cast out the cargo of wheat.

Paul's action is an example of faithful living for all. (1) He had been faithful every day. (2) He thanked God for his food before eating. (3) He did it where all could see, even though they were not Christians. (4) He was not ashamed and made no apology for worshiping and trusting God. Continual, daily worship of God in the ship, home, or wherever we are is the backbone of Christian living. Do not let family prayers and worship lose a place in your home.

### The Ship Is Wrecked

**Acts 27:39-44** Day came. They saw unfamiliar land. A **creek with a shore** offered possible shelter. Attempting to enter, **they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast . . . but the hinderpart was broken** by the violent waves. What of Paul's prediction now? Would God's Word through Paul prove true? Two hundred seventy-six men were at the mercy of the angry sea. Was there not yet something else?

The soldiers advised killing the prisoners to avoid blame for their escape, but Julius disagreed. Thinking of Paul, he wished to save him. Who put that thought in his mind? It was God working on him. Julius sent the swimmers first to land, and then the nonswimmers followed on pieces of the broken ship. **They escaped all safe to land,** as God had said.

The miracle-working hand of God can be seen throughout this voyage. See it in (1) the kindness of Julius, (2) the warning of Paul before the storm, (3) the message to Paul in the night, (4) the peace and faith Paul possessed, (5) bringing the ship to Melita, (6) telling Paul the shipmen must stay on the ship, (7) preserving of two hundred seventy-six lives in tempestuous waters, although some could not swim, and (8) preventing all the prisoners from attempting an escape. Why did God do all these things? A child of His was on that ship—a child who was Spirit filled, a child who listened and obeyed Him. He was fulfilling His promise of **Acts 23:11**. But the fulfilling did not require that He spare the lives of two hundred seventy-five others. That was His goodness and mercy.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.

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