**Prayers, Plans and the Providence of God**

Acts 27 & Romans 1:8-13

May 3, 2020

**Good morning, on this our first Sunday back together since March 15, 2020! It’s the longest most of us have ever gone without gathering together for corporate worship. In these days, I have learned this: plans, as wonderful as they are, must always be made with an understanding that they will come to pass only if God wills them. Even the plans that we bathe in prayer do not always come to fruition as we may hope, but God is still at work.**

**Exhibit A – The Apostle Paul and his journey to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_! (Romans 1:8-13)** When the Apostle Paul picked up his pen to write a letter to the church at Rome, he began the letter by expressing his heart’s desire to come visit them, a desire that he prayed about often!

**I wonder what Paul had in mind when he asked God for a “prosperous journey.”**

**Listen to this passage and you decide: (Acts 27:14-26) And then after suffering ship wreck listen to these words: (Acts 28: 1-6).** Falsely accused, plots of assignation against him, arrested and bound as a prisoner, placed on a ship headed to Rome at the wrong time to sail, many days in a storm before suffering ship wreck, landing on an island only to be bitten by a deadly viper! **Does this sound like a prosperous/successful journey?**

* **God reassures Paul in the midst of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 27:21-24)** Paul began the journey as a prisoner; by the end of the journey, he was giving encouragement to all on the ship.
* **God used the storm to demonstrate His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the sailors.** These professional sailors cast everything into the sea! God brought them to the end of themselves; they had nothing left to lean upon!
* **God delivered them to an island, so Paul could \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the gospel. (Acts 28:1-6)** When Paul and the other 275 survivors arrived on shore, God placed caring people there waiting to give aid.
* **God delivered Paul safely to Rome and used his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for the glory of God. (Acts 28:28-31)** Satan may have thought that by having Paul sequestered away in prison, God could not use him, but God used that experience to inspire Paul to write Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Can you imagine not having these treasures?

**Application Points:**  **Things to do during the storms of life:**

* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Your Relationship with Christ. (v. 23)** Even though the storm was so dark that they could not see the stars at night, God was watching over His servant. When times of crisis and trouble come, don’t forget that God is still in control. Faith is the main anchor during storms: “sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God.” (v. 25)
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Yourself in God’s Word. (v. 34)** They had gone many days without anything to eat (v. 21), then Paul instructed everyone to “take some meat.” (v. 34). During times of storms, be sure to nourish your soul in God’s Word! God’s Word is the source of our spiritual strength.
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to Give Thanks. (v. 35**) Regardless of the situation and the severity of the storm, you can always find something for which to be thankful. Focus on the positive and good things in your life.
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Your Priorities. (v. 38)** They threw off everything unnecessary to lighten the load. When you face a storm, you may need to realign your priorities and lighten your load. “A multitude of little burdens can overload even the strongest ox.”
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Your Plans to the will of God.** Often, we are so focused upon our desired goal or plan that we leave the Lord completely out! Allow the Lord to direct your steps, He alone knows best.