

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. We hope you are well and discovering new ways to relate to God and His Word.

"SHIPWRECKED, BUT STILL IN SHIPSHAPE" | ACTS 27:39 – ACTS 28:6 | PASTOR BRIAN

WARM-UP QUESTION:

Where's the best place to be stuck for 3 months and why?

"Shipwrecked, but Still in Shipshape" - (Acts 27: 39-44)

We see that on this disastrous voyage, the centurion protects Paul from the soldiers, and Paul continues to share and serve the centurion. What are ways to develop relationships and to share God's love in the middle of messy situations?

"Refuge Island: Bonfire on the Beach" - (Acts 28: 1-2)

The natives are described as giving unusual kindness to these survivors, which will lead them to hearing the gospel. How can allowing others to help us lead to deeper conversations and discussions about faith and life?

"Refuge Island: Bitten But Not Forsaken" - (Acts 28: 3-6)

After so much suffering, Paul is bitten by a snake. But he shakes it into the fire and moves forward, not dwelling on the pain or the questions of why. How do you respond to tragedy and pain?

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Paul was on a boat as a prisoner that faced violent storms and then was shipwrecked, which allowed him to serve and share with so many. Instead of focusing on his own misfortune, he saw others around him to comfort and encourage. Do you know someone else right now who is barely staying afloat or who's life has been shipwrecked? Have you asked God to use you in their life?

Shipwrecked, But Still in Shipshape

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-6 C@R. Blood. Pantry. Missions Prayer. App Video
- B. Pray: Lord, *don't let what we see around us, make us forget what You've said.*
Help us to be a beacon of light in a dark world.

II. Slide7 Intro: Shipwrecked, But Still in Shipshape

- A. We will see here, the Christians place in the world, *is an **object of divine care** and a **medium of divine blessing**.* Alexander McLaren
- B. Slide8a The bible teaches us that there are **3 kinds of storms** in our lives:
1. The storms that **we** have caused/brought on ourselves (Jonah's storm)
 2. The storms that **God** has caused (Jesus storm on the lake of Galilee)
 3. The storms that **others** have caused us (Julius persuaded by helmsman & ships owner) *For a ...*
 4. Slide8b A Jonah storm? Repent. A God storm? Persist. An *others* storm? Pray

III. Slide9 SHIPWRECKED, BUT STILL IN SHIPSHAPE (27:39-44) READ

- A. (39) **Land ho!** Preparations for **beaching the ship** were made.
1. Their plans **dashed** when it **ran aground** at her **bow**, leaving the **stern** exposed to the battering of the waves.
- B. (42) Of course they would kill the prisoners, as they were responsible for them.
- C. (43) **The centurion wanting to save Paul ... Paul wanting to save Julius.**
1. What if God, wanting to save someone close to you, needed to run you aground 1st?
 2. Paul was **shipwrecked**, **but** still in **shipshape**, not destroyed.
- D. (44) They ALL escaped safely to land.
- E. Slide10a **But why** do the storms come in our lives?

1. Sometimes **satanic opposition**. Sometimes to **deepen our maturity**. Sometimes we really have **no clue**.
 2. Slide10b BUT the bible's focus *isn't* on **who causes pain nor why it's allowed**, but on **our response to it!**
 - a) If your ship has been blown off course, *what will you do now?* That's the **important question**.
 3. Can the Lord depend on **you** to **sail by faith** when you **face the storms?** Can **others** depend on you?
- F. Debris from every kind of shipwreck is floating all around us: broken marriages, ruined relationships, shattered dreams, sudden disease, unforeseen job loss, mangled morals, twisted guilt, damaged hearts.¹
1. And the need is great for **Courageous Christians** like **Paul** who will stand faithfully in **life's uncertainty**, and proclaim the **spiritual anchors** that can hold people fast to Christ. Heb.6:18-20

IV. Slide11 REFUGE ISLAND (28:1-6) READ

A. I think sometimes we are looking for a *Fantasy Island* in our lives. Or maybe secretly we desire a *Temptation Island*. Or a *get-rich-quick* scheme on *Treasure Island*. Or just the next new experience on *Adventure Island*. Yet God knows when we need *Refuge Island*.

1. Well they made it ... hungry, seasick, soaked, shivering, and exhausted maybe, but they made it. They were probably huddled together as they watch the churning sea *slowly dismantle their ship*.
 - a) However, everyone was safe. God had brought them **ALL** through the storm. Still miles from Rome, God allows them 3 months of **R&R**, time to **heal**.

B. BONFIRE ON THE BEACH (1,2)

¹ Chuck Swindoll; Acts 27; pg.142

- C. **Slide12a** (1) **Malta** - small island [18m. long; 8 m. wide]. 58m south of **Sicily**, which is just south of *the toe* of Italy's boot.
1. **Slide12b See St.Paul's Bay** - today the **Maltese** attribute Paul's landing here as *laying the foundation of Christianity* on the island.
Slide13a [motto:*in Christo Renati Sumus, Born again in Christ*] StPaul Shipwreck Church?
- D. In Paul's day it was called *Melita*, a Canaanite word for **Refuge**.
1. F.F.Bruce suggested that Luke meant, *then we knew that island was called Melita as we recognized that it was well-named*.
 2. It was going to be their *island of refuge*. But it wouldn't be overnight.
 3. They'll actually will stay here **3 months** (prob do to weather). But we'll see next week that *he wasn't just sipping coconut juice under a palm tree, but will use this as an opportunity to experience God's presence in new and refreshing ways* to minister to the Islanders. (adapted, Chuck Swindoll)
- E. (2) How warm that fire must have felt, **emotionally** as well as **physically**.
1. **The native people** - *barbarous* people (didn't speak the language or share the customs of either *Greeks or Romans*).
 2. **They kindled a fire** - these waterlogged sailors had just ridden a roller coaster for two weeks, **now** it's raining & freezing, **but the Maltese healing process had begun**. [**Slide13b** found @ archeological dig: **Smore's!** :)]
- F. **Slide14a BITTEN BUT NOT FORSAKEN** (3-6)
- G. (3) Paul, you just helped save 276 people from drowning, **what are you doing picking up sticks? What a servant!**
- H. **Slide14b** (4) **Justice** - In Greek mythology **Dikē**, **Justice** was a goddess. The daughter of Zeus and Themis, she was believed to work *circumstantially* in establishing people's **fate**. [**Themis** (ruled over *divine* justice). **Dikē** (over *human* justice)]
- I. (4) **No doubt this man is a murderer** - prevalent in Greek mythology that *the fates* align against people who commit **evil**.

- J. Slide14c (3) A viper fastened on his hand - *Come on God, haven't I suffered enough?* Traveling as a prisoner on a wheat ship. Our ship floating for 2 weeks aimlessly in the pitch black Mediterranean. Finally ate something after 14 days of no food. Just survived a terrible shipwreck. Swam hard barely making it to shore. And now this **snake** stuck to my hand? [Nope, that wasn't Paul's attitude]
- Slide14d Anything that **bites you** in life...*Shake it into the Fire!*
 - Pornography...*shake it into the fire*. Abusing pain med's...*shake it into the fire*. Selfishness...*shake it into the fire*. Bursts of anger...*shake it into the fire*. Body insecurities...*shake it into the fire*. Too much time on Social Media...*shake it into the fire*.
- K. Slide15a What becomes important to them here is **WHY** he was bitten.
- Was he a **murderer** who was being punished by the gods for his evil deeds? Then **fear** turns to **awe**...*Maybe he's a god?* So fickle
 - Interesting in **Lystra**, Paul was first worshiped, then stoned.
While on **Malta**, he was first called a murderer, then a god.
 - Maybe this is an example of what Jesus meant when he said, *they will take up serpents...and it will by no means hurt them*. Mk.16:15-18
 - Yet** in all this Paul doesn't say a word. **Just goes about resting & healing**.
- L. Slide15b What a **strange** but very **popular** view many people hold, as to how they think God works [i.e. Paul's snakebite = divine retribution]
- That's exactly what Job's counselors assumed. **Job your problem could only be a result of unconfessed sin**.
 - Slide15c Some of you might remember when we had the *former baseball pitcher Dave Dravecky* here? [Padres/Giants in the 80's] (we had him out late 90's or early 2000's)
 - (1) He got cancer in his pitching arm. Had surgery, removing 1/2 his deltoid muscle. Made a comeback, **then** during a game his humerus snapped in the middle of a pitch.

(2) Dave said, *I was in Grand Rapids, Michigan, speaking at a chapel service when I was approached by a man in his 20's. He told me I had cancer because there was sin in my life. He told me that the Holy Spirit revealed to him that God had a special plan for me - to be a preacher - but 1st I had to get rid of the sin.* When You Can't Come Back

b) Slide15d What a terrible theology - *Snakebites don't prove wrong-doing, anymore than hard times always imply hidden sin.*

(1) Dave went on to say in his book, The issue is not **our** character but the character of God. *Is God the kind of God who gives people tumors when they sin? Does he dole out diseases when we fail him? Say, maybe, cataracts when we lust or hardening of the arteries when we hate?*

(2) This is **Pharisee theology**. When they came across a blind man they asked Jesus, *who sinned this man or his parents?* Jesus said, *neither*, & then proceeded to heal the man. (Jn.9)

c) Slide16 Let's hear from another **David**, Ps.103:10-14, *He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. 11 For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. 12 He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. 13 The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. 14 For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust.*

M. Slide17 Why are there **shipwrecks** when we're going in the **right direction**?

1. What if God was simply using this crisis to draw **Julius** to Himself?

a) Looking back on ch.27, just focus in on the highlights of Paul's interaction with **Julius the centurion**.²

b) Julius took custody of Paul as a prisoner (1). Within 1 day Paul had Julius' **trust**, and was allowed to go ashore in Sidon to see his friends (3). When the

² Charles Swindoll, Acts, pg.143

dispute arose on where to winter in Fair Haven's **or** press on to Phoenix, the centurion respected Paul's judgment enough to allow him, a prisoner, to give us opinion (9-11). At the crisis point, when all hope of survival was given up, Julius allows Paul to stand and encourage the ships company with the assurance of God's protective care (21-26). When the sailors tried to abandon ship Paul told Julius that it would jeopardize the ships safety, the centurion listened and immediately had them brought back on board (31-32). Julius gained encouragement from Paul and ate (33-36). Finally, when the soldiers plan to kill the prisoners, it was Julius who intervene and stop them, specifically because he wanted Paul brought safely through (42,43).

- N. Do you know someone whose life has been **recently shipwrecked**?
- O. Do you know someone run aground on some **intense suffering**?
- P. Know of somebody trying to **stay afloat** because of some *moral failure*?
1. Maybe God will lovingly place you right there in their boat to paddle with them? Would you see that as God being mean to you **or** wanting to use you to show His incredible love for them in a tangible way.
- Q. Keywords: shipwrecked, shipshape, storms, 3 storms, Malta, Paul, Julius, Dike, Justice, Viper, Dave Dravecky.