

March 14, 2010 PM

## THE SEASONS OF CRISES

Acts 27:9-29

We have been in a series on the subject of “The Seasons Of Life.” Last week we talked about painful experiences. Tonight I want to talk about seasons of storms.

Storms are a part of the changing season.

In our text tonight we see the story of a shipwreck. Everything God put in his Bible is put there for a reason. I think that one reason that this story is in the Bible is to help us develop confidence in times of crisis. The Bible teaches us that there are three kinds of storms in life.

1. The storms we bring on ourselves. An example of that would be Samson. His own stubborn, self-willed sin brought horrible consequences to his life and reproach to God.
2. The storms God causes. For example, God sent a storm when the disciples were in a boat on the lake and Jesus said, “Peace be still.” He used it to teach faith. (Matthew 14)
3. The storms other people cause. These are the most difficult to handle. This is the case in our text. This wasn’t Paul’s fault but storms are no respecter of persons. Christians have storms in life as well.

Now when we come to our text, Paul is on a boat to Rome to preach. God spoke to Paul warning the crew not to leave port because a storm was coming. They did not heed God’s warning, got impatient, and disobeyed. That’s when we get into trouble. You get impatient and a storm is waiting for you.

1. Impatient to marry.
2. Impatient to get a job.
3. Impatient to grow up.

Life is like a voyage and often our ship encounters unexpected storms. From an actual storm that Paul faced at sea we can see an example of how to stay calm in a crisis during storm season.

***“Sirs, he said, I believe there is trouble ahead if we go on, perhaps shipwreck, loss of cargo, injuries and death.” (vs. 10, LB)***

Human nature has not changed. People still get in a mess for the same reasons these people got into trouble.

## **I. Why we experience “storms” in life.**

### **A. We listen to the wrong experts.**

***“But the officers in charge of the prisoners listened more to the ships captain and the owner than to Paul.” (vs. 11, LB)***

1. There are a lot of crazy ideas out there.
2. There are cults, philosophies, peers, etc.
3. People go around asking the experts until they find someone who agrees with them and accept that opinion. We just need the truth that is the Word of God.

### **B. We take a vote.**

***“...the majority decided that we should sail...” (vs. 12)***

1. What is the opinion of the majority?
2. The facts are that the majority is often wrong.
3. The majority of Israel wanted to return to Egypt.
4. The ten spies were a majority when they said Israel could not win in the land of Canaan.
5. The popular opinion is not always right; “Everybody is doing it,” is not a good reason to do it.

### **C. We rely on circumstances.**

***“When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted...” (vs. 13, NIV)***

1. Being out of God's will does not mean bad circumstances at first.
2. But the fact is, it is crazy to ignore what God says to do, even if circumstances tend to contradict it.
3. We do this all the time: 'It must be OK because I feel so good about it.' Sin is like using a credit card.
4. Feelings lie; they are not always honest.

***"They thought they had obtained what they wanted..."***

***"But shortly afterwards, the weather changed abruptly and a heaven wind of typhoon strength caught the ship and blew it out to sea. They tried at first to face back to shore but couldn't, so they gave up and let the ship run before the gale."***  
***(vs. 15, LB)***

## **II. How storms tend to affect our lives.**

### **A. Storms cause us to drift.**

1. In storms we let go of our values; we forget where we are headed.
2. For two weeks they could not even see the stars. There was no way to set their course.
3. They did not know what to do so they drifted.
4. We give up and start to drift in life, giving up on a certain course we know is right. We give in !

### **B. Storms cause us to discard.**

***"...they began to throw the cargo overboard..." (vs. 18-19)***

1. We attempted to throw out the most important and precious things that make life worth living.
2. We become impulsive and look for things to eliminate; we give up on our dreams, relationships.
3. We walk away from the foundational things that we have built our life upon.

### **C. Storms cause us to despair.**

***“...the terrible storm raged unabated many days, until at last all hope was gone.”  
(vs. 20, LB)***

1. In a crisis we eventually reach despair.
2. The last thing you throw out is hope.
3. Many people feel like that right now. The darkness and the tempest has beat you down.
4. There is no hope. It is an impossible situation.

**\*NOTE** They had forgotten that God is in control. They were only to do the possible. God would do the impossible. They had forgotten that God had a plan and that He could inject hope into a hopeless situation.

### **III. An example of one who faced the storms.**

All people have storms come and being a believer does not exempt you from them. In a crisis we ask some hard questions and learn some important lessons. The first man of faith was Abraham and he learned faith by walking through them. Storms reveal themselves through:

#### **A. A major change: We ask where?**

***“By faith Abraham, when called to go...obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.” (Hebrews 11:8, NIV)***

1. The test of a real believer is that they will follow God’s leading without knowing where.
2. God’s leading is often like headlights on the car. You can only see just so far. That’s because God wants you to trust Him.
3. When you don’t know what to do, do what you know to do.

#### **B. A delayed promise: We ask when?**

***“By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the promise for he was looking forward...” (Hebrews 11:9-10, NIV)***

1. The mark of a real believer is if they will wait for God's timing without knowing when.
2. God's timing is perfect. It is never late, but it is not early either.
3. God is wanting to build trust in our lives.

**C. An impossible problem: We ask how?**

1. The mark of a real believer is if they will expect a miracle without knowing how.
2. God's ways are not our ways. They are beyond our comprehension; therefore we can live a life of expectancy.
3. God is wanting to build our dependence upon Him.

**D. A tragedy: We ask why?**

***“By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice...even though God had said to him, it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” (Hebrews 11:17, NIV)***

1. The mark of a real believer is they will trust God's purpose without knowing why.
2. Even in contradictions in life.
3. There is nothing wrong with asking: when, where, how, and why.
4. The important issue is how do you respond.
5. God never gave an explanation to Abraham but he did bring him through to victory. Abraham was never alone.

**IV. What to hold on to in a storm.**

When you look at this story the sailors are in panic and despair, but Paul had an inward calm. They don't know what to do: they are discouraged, they are down, they are without hope. But Paul had a confident courage and calm. How do we maintain a calm in crises that goes against our human nature? The test of a person's relationship is how do I handle a crisis. Character is not made in a crisis, but it is revealed there.

***“At this rate they knew they would soon be driven ashore; and fearing rocks along the coast, they threw out four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight.” (Acts 27:29, LB)***

**A. Anchor in God's presence.**

***“For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me... (vs. 23, LB)***

1. Hope is the anchor of the soul.
2. When we know we have God's presence we can face anything.
3. Storms cannot hide the face of God.
4. You may not see Him but He sees you.
5. You may think He is one million miles away, but God is giving us reminders that He is with us.

***“Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the age. I will never leave you or forsake you.”***

6. Over and over the scripture says wherever you are, God is there.

**B. Anchor in God's purpose.**

***“Don't be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What's more, God has granted your request and will save the lives of all those sailing with you.” (vs. 24-25, LB)***

1. God said, “Paul, I have a plan and purpose for your life that is greater than your temporary storm.”
2. Paul you may get wet but you are going to Rome.
3. If you are a believer you have a destiny.
4. Storms cannot change God's plan for your life as long as you say, “God, I want to do your will.”
5. We can reject God's plan, but outside forces cannot alter God's plan.
6. It's dangerous when you start focusing more on your problems than upon purpose.

- a. You will drift.
- b. You will discard.
- c. You will despair.

### **C. Anchor in God's promise.**

***“So take courage! For I believe God! It will be just as He said,” (vs. 26, LB)***

1. God always keeps His promises.
2. Storms cannot destroy the child of God.
3. You may lose the cargo, the tackle of the ship, and you may even get wet, but if you are a child of God's, He will keep His promise.

**\*NOTE** Everybody in the boat was saved because of Paul. What does that say to me? “The safest place to be is around a godly man.” God told Abraham, “If you can find five godly people I will spare Sodom.” What do I do while I wait for God's promise? Pray for daylight! ***“...they threw out the four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight.” (vs. 29, LB)***

4. What was the result? Morning came, they saw land and all reached the land in safety. “It came to pass!”
5. For believers we have a promise of a happy ending.
6. Do you have the promise of a heavenly shore? Is your life out of control? Will it end in a happy ending?
  - a. You are drifting – you're confused.
  - b. You have discarded things – “If I just get rid of this I will be happy.”
  - c. Some are despairing. You have given up.
7. God said, I am with you. Let the storm turn your heart toward me.
  - a. Storms can hide the face of God (Matthew 14). You may not see Him but He is there.
  - b. Storms cannot change God's plan and purpose.

c. Storms cannot destroy the child of God.

Life was falling apart, but Paul wasn't. He had confidence that God's presence was with him. Do you have that promise? Are you a child of God? Do you have a personal relationship with God? You can only get hope from Jesus Christ.