

Message Series: Famous Shipwrecks

Today's Message: "Paul's Famous Shipwreck"



A SouthPointe Message

Message Study Guide

Introduction

The Book of Acts records in dramatic detail one of the most remarkable and amazing shipwrecks in history. The most famous passenger on the ship was the Apostle Paul. The event is recorded with vivid detail in Acts 27 and 28. Most people will never experience a shipwreck in their lifetime. But apparently, the Apostle Paul experienced at least 3 shipwrecks during his lifetime. In his letter to the Christians at the church in Corinth he writes: "Three times have I been beaten with rods: once I was stoned. Three times I have been aboard a ship wrecked at sea: a whole night and a day I have spent adrift on the deep." (2 Corinthians 11:25, Amplified)

Travel by sea in those days was primitive and harsh. You were literally taking your life into your own hands when you boarded a first century ship. According to 2 Corinthians, Paul was telling his fellow Christians, "Listen. Whatever you've been through, I have been through more. I know more about shipwrecks than I ever really wanted to know. While most of us will never experience a shipwreck out on the open seas, most, if not all of us have experienced some pretty rough seas in our lives. We've all had our share of hardships in life. Some more than others. Privately, we hope that all the "major" shipwrecks of difficulty and challenge are behind us and that the remainder of our lives will be clear sailing. We must never forget that "shipwrecks" (difficult times) are a natural part of the reality of life on this planet. They simply cannot be avoided. The good news is that God has promised to never lead us where His grace cannot keep us. He loves to prove the "amazingness" of His grace to us on a daily basis.

In today's message, Pastor Ron McCurry will direct our attention to life lessons that can be learned from a close examination of "Paul's Famous Shipwreck" in Acts 27 and 28. Whatever storm you may be facing in life, God has promised a safe and secure arrival for those who place their hope and confidence in Christ.

Discussion Points

Life is not always easy. In fact, life can be down right hard. Storms and shipwrecks (difficult, grievous times) are a natural part of living life everyday. We never know what a day may bring forth. Our lives serve as a mirror to ourselves and to others. Our lives either reflect God's grace is "sufficient" or God's grace is "deficient".

Discussion Questions

1. In an attempt to avoid hitting the rocks, the sailors of the ship cast out four anchors from the ship that didn't hold. What life lessons can be learned today from people who try to survive everyday storms of life with anchors that do not hold?
2. When people are going through storms, they need encouragement. What encouragement can be taken from Paul's words that "the ship will be lost, but all lives will be saved" (27:22-25; 41-44)?
3. Although not true, why do so many people believe that when trials and hard times come our way, they are proof that God has abandoned us?
4. Paul never lost hope during this entire episode. In fact, he was extremely encouraging in everything he said. What can we learn from this when ministering to others who are struggling with life issues?

Think About It

When shipwrecks (spiritual storms, trials, and difficult times) come our way, we must keep in mind that God in His sovereignty allows them not to punish us, but to improve us. Peter said it like this: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:7)

Do Something About It!

When we find ourselves caught in the middle of the storms of life, we are prone to become discouraged and wanting to give in and give up. God desires for us to emulate Paul when going through difficult times. Paul's conclusion was that "nothing was going to be able to separate him from the love of God." (Romans 8:34-39)

Be Willing To Change

"Paul said to the Centurion and the soldiers, unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." (Acts 27:32)