

Date: 20 September 2026

Theme: The Work of the Holy Spirit in our Sanctification and Service

Topic: Witness Courageously as Jesus' disciple

Passage: Acts 27 and 28

Key Verse: *Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me ²⁴ and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' – Acts 27:23, 24*

Introduction

Sailing through life is a journey we all take with fellow travellers. Does God intend to assign me the privilege of influencing their destiny if He says He has graciously given me the lives of all who sail with me? How many lives were saved? All 276 on board.

God had told him that he would witness for Him in Rome. Our study today (Acts 27, 28) will show how Paul optimised the opportunity to be a witness anywhere, not in Rome only, but also along the stormy and dangerous journey to be an effective witness. He didn't wait until his arrival in Rome. The opportunity is not only at the destination but also along the journey.

- In Acts 23, Jesus had commended Paul's faithfulness as His witness in Jerusalem and provided a guarantee of his protection during the mission in Rome. Therefore, no storm could thwart this God-ordained plan, regardless of how big it is.

Acts 23:11: "Take courage (Greek = tharseo or tharsei – from the root tharsos meaning inner boldness)! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

Take courage or Be courageous was a command, and Paul chose to be obedient.

- Paul, by his courage in the storm, was a testimony to the Roman soldiers, sailors and islanders. Very often our own testimony is surfaced when we face a storm or an immensely challenging situation.
- Acts 27:24,25 – Paul lived out God's deliverance in this situation.

1. The disciple demonstrates courage in trusting God's deliverance in a crisis

a. Show spiritual discernment in impending danger

In Acts 27:9–10, Paul warned of the danger ahead, but the centurion chose to listen to the pilot and ship owner instead. Their authority overruled Paul, but he was not shaken. We too must recognise that as people under authority we keep trusting that He has greater wisdom, authority and concern for our lives than those who rule over us. Man's authority cannot thwart God's purpose. God was setting the stage for a demonstration of His power.

b. Show foresight and credibility before crisis

Paul didn't deny the storm or say everything was fine. He brought **God's Word, His presence and hope** into the middle of fear. Though he had no official authority, people eventually listened because **credibility is built or earned, not given**. Spirit-led leadership comes by living faithfully before the storm comes.

c. Testify of personal faith in God

Paul openly declared, **"the God to whom I belong and whom I serve"** (Acts 27:23). His faith was rooted in God's word to him.

- Because he was courageous, he was able to speak courageous words to the panicked ship crew. *"...I urge you to keep up your courage... keep up your courage, men..."* Acts 27:22, 25
- The result of his words and actions: *"They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves."* Acts 27:36
His faith example impacted the terrified crew.

2. The disciple demonstrates commitment as Jesus' servant

a. Compassion on the weary (like Jesus in Mark 8:2)

- Practical leadership (Acts 27:33-35)
 - Compassion for fellow sufferers
 - Looking past own hardship to care for others
 - Validate their deep distress
- Direct people Godward

b. Counsel for survival

- Recognise the danger: Paul saw that the sailors' actions threatened everyone's survival (Acts 27:30-31).
- Act responsibly: God had promised their survival, but they still had to obey and do their part.

c. Personal crisis is an opportunity for witness anywhere

- See crises as opportunities: Paul's shipwreck and snake bite could have stopped him, but instead became opportunities to witness and minister.
- Paul was on his way to Rome, but God had an assignment enroute including Malta.
 - Shipwreck → Malta → Snakebite → Healing → Ministry

3. The disciple shows consistency to Jesus' mission no matter where he is located

In Rome, as a prisoner who was given house-arrest status, Paul continued to preach and teach. The gospel is unstoppable if we do not stop preaching.

Paul proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ – *with all boldness and without hindrance!* – Acts 28:31

Physical confinement, legal trials, personal limitations, even shipwrecks and a snake bite could not stop the advance of the gospel. This was provided we choose to not stop in our assignment to preach. Paul had no retirement plan. We know he served God till the day he was executed. (Hinted at in 2 Tm 4:6-8)

Takeaways

A. Don't waste the opportunities in your storm - ask God how you can use it as a witness for Jesus.

When things go wrong, our first question is often:

“God, when are You going to get me out of this?”

But perhaps we should also ask:

“God, what do You want me to do while I'm in this?”

Paul didn't wait for the storm to end before making himself useful.

He served God and people **in the storm**.

The storm	=>	My testimony	☐
The shipwreck	=>	My ministry opportunity	☐
Housebound	=>	My platform to proclaim the Kingdom	☐

B. Don't let your circumstances dictate your trust in God's promises.

God told Paul he would testify in Rome. The journey was difficult, but God was faithful. Circumstances contradict and change but God does not. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

C. Hope in God.

When everyone else on the ship lost hope, Paul didn't. When everyone had no appetite, Paul encouraged them to eat. When the sailors wanted to abandon ship, Paul acted decisively. When Paul arrived on Malta, he healed the sick. When he finally reached Rome, he preached the kingdom of God. Paul did not stop.

- When people around you are facing uncertainty, pressure or fear, what kind of influence do you bring into the room?
- Are people encouraged because of your presence?
- What would it look like for you to become more Spirit-led in that situation?

The Big Blessings to Attain

God graciously put the lives of 276 people in Paul's hands. The ship in the storm was God's platform to show His power to those facing death. In this situation, the 276 people was Paul's sphere of influence. We are not told if these men believed or not, but no one plucked from death could ever be the same. We have been tasked to *"save others by snatching them out of the fire"* – Jude 23

Paul's circumstances were constantly changing. But wherever Paul went, **he brought his faith with him**. Be the person who can say: **"I belong to God. I serve God."**

Application

Did you trust the Lord in your last crisis? Why or why not, and what would you do differently if faced with another crisis situation?

How would you handle the situation if you were given the great honour like Paul, that of saving many destined for death?