

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on May 16, 2021:**

**"Transformation of the Early Church Series on
The Book of Acts – Paul's Journey to Rome
(Acts 27-28) (Part 25)"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman on Zoom shows us how Paul boldly continued to share the gospel of Jesus with others even in Rome which gives us the example to follow today.]

Introduction:

- Today is our last sermon concerning the Book of Acts.

Overview outline of today's message:

1. Paul sails from Caesarea to Crete (27:1-12)
2. Encounter a storm at Sea (verses 13-20)
3. Paul's three admonitions (verses 21-38)
4. Shipwreck on the Island of Malta (27:39-28:10)
 - a) Bonfire on the beach (28:1-6)
 - b) Healings on the island (verses 7-10)
5. Arrival in Rome (verses 11-16)
6. The gospel for Jews and Gentiles (verses 17-31)
 - a) Paul addresses Jews (verses 17-23)
 - b) Paul turns to the Gentiles (verses 24-28)
 - c) Paul welcomes all who visit him (verses 29-31)
7. Conclusion: The Providence of God

Poetic Preview of today's message – Pastor Craig's rhyming verses:

*And now we approach the end of the Story,
28 chapters, revealing God's Glory.
Paul and his companions have spread the Word,
An incredible His-Story we have all Heard.*

*On his final voyage for Rome, Paul sets Sail,
Many cities and ports passed through windy Gale.
Winds blew hard, no food to eat, and death felt Near,
Yet God spoke to Paul through an angel – Do Not Fear.*

*Through faith in God Paul rallied his Men,
They cut the lifeboat loose, hoping the storm would End.
Paul broke bread and encouraged them to Eat,
14 days without food, 14 days without Meat.*

*The ship ran aground and was beaten by Surf,
Yet all made it ashore, on Malta, new Turf.*

*The islanders showed kindness, not the Norm,
Paul bitten by a viper, yet no swelling did Form.*

*At seeing this they declared Paul a God,
Through prayer and many healings Paul earned their Nod.
After three months, they again set Sail,
Arriving in Rome, brothers and sisters joined without Fail.*

*Paul was encouraged, giving thanks to God,
A short spell of time while not facing a Rod.
He then called Jewish leaders to share the News,
Of his arrest in Jerusalem and their objecting Views.*

*At this many gathered to hear what Paul would Say,
To persuade them about Jesus through an Old Covenant Way.
Some were convinced while others were Not,
Opening salvation to the Gentiles as Isaiah had Sought.*

*For two more years Paul continued boldly to Preach,
Without hindrance, and a rented house he was able to Reach.
At this our story now comes to an End,
But continues through us, Let's all say, Amen!*

Acts 27:1 NIV), When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. 2) We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

- Luke, the author of Acts, was also one of Paul's companions on some of his trips including here at the end of Paul's journey.
- This ship also carried other prisoners, so there was a Roman Centurion aboard with 100 soldiers, as well.
- As we'll see, Julius held Paul in his respect and supported him.

3) The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs. 4) From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. 5) When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. 6) There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board.

- Now we have two ships hauling supplies and people going to Rome.

7) We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. 8) We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. 9) Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement.

- In the fall of the year, there are storms that sweep across the Mediterranean Sea.
- This particular storm was pretty violent, which caused a lot of problems.
- What is God trying to tell us here?
- Now, let's juxtapose God's desires for us up against the American dream, which drives us to be successful and efficient in the way we accomplish things.
- We're going to see in these last 2 chapters that God is more effective than efficient in dealing with people.
- That's because God is more interested in our faithfulness than in our success.
- We know from Matthew, Jesus can calm any storm, but doesn't choose to do so this time.
- He allows them to go through 14 days of a horrendous storm which causes them to fear for their lives.
- And yet we see that God is providing His protection for all of them.
- If God were to be efficient, he would have provided blue skies and calm seas.
- But, all of these storm incidents were His tools of effectiveness in building faithfulness.
- God desires our faithfulness rather than our success, which is the message here in these chapters.
- God would rather see us fail and be faithful than to succeed and not be faithful.

So Paul warned them, 10) "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also." 11) But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. 12) Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.

- There was also financial loss for the Romans because of this storm.
- As we'll see, they threw their cargo overboard so they would stay afloat.

13) When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. 14) Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. 15) The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. 16) As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure, 17) so the men hoisted it aboard. Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Because they were afraid they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. 18)) We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. 19) On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. 20) When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

- Here is, obviously a time of great distress for all those on board the ship.
- They were in fear for their lives.
- Today, we face trials, health issues, financial difficulties, etc. but they are usually not life threatening.
- But, in this situation, all those on board didn't see much hope of making it out alive.

- In this turmoil, God speaks to Paul who is able to encourage and embolden all those on board the ship, including the prisoners.
- So, we see God taking this inefficient way of travel to the ends of His desire for effectiveness and building up the faith of those people.
- It's also a lesson for us in the trials and storms we face.
- We have eternal life today, now, despite what happens to us physically.
- But even in those times of stress even to the point of death, God does His tremendous work through us.
- And those watching us go through our times of distress are encouraged by our faithfulness.
- And so, this is how God brings about His effective ends not necessarily efficient ends.
- Pastor Craig took an Ambassador class taught by Carn Catherwood on Christian Leadership.
- He taught that Christian leadership is going to deal with us balancing tasks versus people – getting things done through people.
- With tasks, we need to be efficient, but with people, we need to be effective.
- This is still very applicable today.
- We need to realize that God deals with us effectively but not always efficiently.

21) After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss.

- This probably encouraged the Centurion to respect Paul even more deeply.

22) But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. 23) 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.' 25) So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. 26) Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

- God doesn't allow us to go through scary circumstances without also reaching out and encouraging us.
- Today, we don't hear too many stories where an angel appears and gives the person a special message.
- Rather, God delivers His message to us through scripture, through our experiences, through our friends and family members who often encourages us with a Godly message.
- Our eternal life has been given to us, so we should live without fear, shame, guilt or doubt.

27) On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. 28) They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. 29) Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. 30) In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the

lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. 31) Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.” 32) So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away.

- Paul was telling the leadership that God, whom he had faith in, was going to protect all of them – that was all of them together.
- So they heeded what Paul had said and changed their course of action.

33) Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. “For the last fourteen days,” he said, “you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food – you haven’t eaten anything.

- How many of us have not eaten anything for 14 days?

34) Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.” 35) After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.

- Jesus is a God of provision and protection.

36) They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. 37) Altogether there were 276 of us on board. 38) When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

- They made their passage through the storm safer by doing this.

39) When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. 40) Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. 41) But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

42) The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping.

- If the soldiers let any prisoner escape while under their custody, it was on their heads.
- They would be executed.

43) But the centurion wanted to spare Paul’s life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. 44) The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely.

- So how many plans and plots have we seen against Paul’s life?
- But God was constantly thwarting them and saving Paul’s life each and every time.

Acts 28:1 (NIV), Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. 2) The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us

all because it was raining and cold. 3) Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. 4) When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, “This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live.”

- This was how fickle the people were.
- Even though they provided hospitality, they wrongly assumed that Paul was a murderer.

5) But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. 6) The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

- People then went to one extreme to the other.
- Paul is now made out to be a god.

7) There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. 8) His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. 9) When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. 10) They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

- Healing was a distinct gift of the Holy Spirit for all the apostolic leaders at that time.
- This helps us to understand that God is a healing God.
- Today, God heals differently.
- He often heals through doctors, doctor’s assistants, nurses and through the whole medical staff.
- God always provides us with encouragement, faith and peace and love to go through the trials we go through.
- We can’t look at scripture and think because God did this then, He should do the same now.
- That would be a jump in logic.
- But God is always there to comfort us and take us through the situation we are facing.

11) After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island – it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. 12) We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. 13) From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. 14) There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. 15) The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged. 16) When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

17) Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and

handed over to the Romans. 18) They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. 19) The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people. 20) For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”

21) They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. 22) But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect (Nazarene).” 23) They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus.

- In trying to persuade the Jews, Paul relied upon the law and the prophets, as he usually did.

24) Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. 25) They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

26) “Go to this people and say, “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.” 27) For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’ 28) “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!”

- This was part of God’s plan to share the gospel of Jesus universally to all.
- Now, if the Jewish people because of their character and hardness of heart stepped back, it doesn’t mean that they won’t have an opportunity in the future to accept the gospel, as Paul tells us in Romans 11:25-27.

30) For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. 31) He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ – with all boldness and without hindrance!

- If we use Paul, as a model, we will boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus as the Holy Spirit moves us to do so.
- This is how the Book of Acts ends – and we need to continue to do what Paul did.

Poetic Summary of last week’s and today’s message: (Let’s say this together):

*And now we approach the end of the Story,
28 chapters, revealing God’s Glory.
Paul and his companions have spread the Word,
An incredible His-Story we have all Heard.*

*On his final voyage for Rome, Paul sets Sail,
 Many cities and ports passed through windy Gale.
 Winds blew hard, no food to eat, and death felt Near,
 Yet God spoke to Paul through an angel – Do Not Fear.*

*Through faith in God Paul rallied his Men,
 They cut the lifeboat loose, hoping the storm would End.
 Paul broke bread and encouraged them to Eat,
 14 days without food, 14 days without Meat.*

*The ship ran aground and was beaten by Surf,
 Yet all made it ashore, on Malta, new Turf.
 The islanders showed kindness, not the Norm,
 Paul bitten by a viper, yet no swelling did Form.*

*At seeing this they declared Paul a God,
 Through prayer and many healings Paul earned their Nod.
 After three months, they again set Sail,
 Arriving in Rome, brothers and sisters joined without Fail.*

*Paul was encouraged, giving thanks to God,
 A short spell of time while not facing a Rod.
 He then called Jewish leaders to share the News,
 Of his arrest in Jerusalem and their objecting Views.*

*At this many gathered to hear what Paul would Say,
 To persuade them about Jesus through an Old Covenant Way.
 Some were convinced while others were Not,
 Opening salvation to the Gentiles as Isaiah had Sought.*

*For two more years Paul continued boldly to Preach,
 Without hindrance, and a rented house he was able to Reach.
 At this our story now comes to an End,
 But continues through us, Let's all say, Amen!*

Closing prayer