Acts Chapter 27 Verse 20

* ***At this time all of their iPhone batteries died***…all hope was lost! HA! The stars, the sun and the moon was all they had to tell where they were!! With cloud cover and no stars, truly they were just ***lost!*** And it says here that *all hope was finally given up (Taken away, in the Greek).* What a **haunting** statement! What does that look like? Human hope and heart, **gone…** I want to remind you today that in the Lord, walking closely with Him, this is a *trench*, a *tomb* we can *(able to)* never know, and I am so thankful for that.
* There is **always** *significant, tangible, credible* hope for anyone that does or will trust in Jesus! From health to relationships, from wealth to worth…it’s **mysterious**, beyond this world and this human experience, that Colossians 1:27 says what has been given to us, the blood and heart and communing presence of God Himself in Jesus Christ, an inheritance and promise of God…that, *“we may be a display, an example of God’s glorious riches, which is Christ in you,* ***the hope of Glory.”***
* Serving and trusting the very ***God of hope*** according to Romans 15:13, knowing that He does **nothing** half way and will finish what He has begun in and with you according to Philippians 1:6, constantly being reminded by the Holy Spirit that God’s *thoughts and intentions and actions* towards us are to give us a future and a HOPE according to Jeremiah 29:11…and when that hope **activates** during even the worst of times for the sold-out Christian, Isaiah 40:31 – ***Those that hope in the Lord are renewed in strength!***
* There is never a moment that God does not love you! There is never a moment where God is not ready to restore you and ***reboot*** you if that’s what you need! To put you back upright, to brush you off like a Father does to His fallen son…and put you right back on that bike running along with you the whole way until you take off on your own…*even if it takes all day.* ***If you are short on hope today, let it be known that God has accomplished the best tomorrow for you and has it waiting there in His presence.*** Take heart…the best is yet ahead! Theodore Roosevelt said this, and I love it…, *“When you are at the end of your rope, tie a knot and hold on.”* That’s a good word for those that will trust in and remain obedient to the Lord…just as soon as you feel like you have no more rope, **He enables your grip…**
* ***Hopelessness is demonic, and it is opposite of the character and presence of God.*** ***God who is challenged by nothing can therefore be overcome by nothing***…and so hold fast Christian…it’s always too early to quit, wait and see the love of your Father! This boat however, must have resembled a character trait of hell itself…when all hope was lost…and the darkness of the clouds was thick…but that is when the Christians **glow** the brightest…watch Paul!

Acts Chapter 27 Verse 21

* To *“stand in the midst of them”* means they were all on their backsides…**don’t be so affected by the down-ness of your surroundings**…in Christ, I desire and LOVE to stand in the midst of them.

Acts Chapter 27 Verses 22 – 23

* Look at this! God has ***once again*** spoken to Paul, to secure him, to encourage him but not like before. This isn’t an appearance of Jesus like before. This time an angel from heaven is sent to Paul. I bring that up to make this point. ***The Word of God comes in different ways at different times.*** Today it may direct from the Holy Spirit…speaking to you some sort of utterance of truth as you worship. Next week you may be impacted by a point made from the pulpit. And then perhaps even later today it may be in your own time in the Word or even just something you see or hear that makes you stop and ***realize*** God is speaking to you. To the one who belongs to and serves God, you yourself may be surprised ***even*** at times at how often God speaks to you and through what medium He chooses to use.
* Also, Paul says that *he belongs to God* ***and*** *serves God.* It’s often if not constant that I seek the Lord *to guide me, to secure me, to bless me, to be with me*…and yet we see it here, ***true relationship is a two way street.*** Paul doesn’t say he heard from the God who serves him. And this is something being here on this planet stuck in this flesh that I can easily forget. So much of Christianity, following Jesus, so much of it **is** truly, ALL of it should be, **me serving God.** The word in the Greek is *“minister to, do the service of,”* that is what worship towards God really is.

Acts Chapter 27 Verses 24 – 26

* I love this! Notice Paul doesn’t say that he believes **IN** God. Paul says, *“I believe God,”* which is quite different, incredibly different, than *“I believe* ***in*** *God.”* *(This is the essence of what it means to place your faith in God and His Word.)* ***Demons believe in God but they do not believe God.*** *(Don’t drink the demonade!! If you’re out of shape in your faith, exorcise a little bit!!)* The blessing of a saving faith and confidence in this life is not believing **in** God…***it’s in believing God!***
* People say, *“I believe in God!”* What does that mean? Link said to me the other day, *“How born was I? No really, how many!?”* I’m like, what does that mean!! Do you believe God…how you live answers that question! Paul’s unshakable confidence in God made him a leader among the people, even though he was a prisoner of the people…isn’t that interesting? Why? ***He believed God and stepped that way…***

Acts Chapter 27 Verses 27 – 32

* Notice, God had already promised that there would be no loss of life, but now Paul says, *“Unless you stay on the ship, you won’t make it.”* **What’s going on here?** I want you to see this…***there is a condition attached to God’s promise.*** God’s love is unconditional but God’s blessing and approval on your life…bringing about His will in your life…is **entirely conditional** to you walking with Him.
* In the parable of the *sower*, all four scenarios, the Word is received…only one does it prosper. In the parable of the *builder*, both houses are built but the one not built on the rock, the one built on the shifting sands **falls.** And Jesus describes the rock, the one who builds ***well and wisely*** in Matthew 7:24 as, *“Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rains descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.”*
* Are you **standing firm**, upright and victorious even in the storms of life? Or are you **sinking constantly** through each wave of trial that comes? ***The problem is that you’re not applying God’s Word.*** Apply God’s Word…that’s where the strength is **prepared**. Faith is less of an action and more like a ***muscle***…it’s built over time…and constant sinking, losing it and handling things poorly, those are symptoms not of a hard life…but of a lack of application of God’s Word.
* Paul is the commander now. Even in the midst of a storm, he is not overcome, he is the commander…why? ***Because he is a believer of God. A hearer and an applier.*** His faith is strong and he needs it now. ***The storm doesn’t make you, it reveals you.*** His terrible situation was real but God was more real to Paul than the storm. How does that happen? The power of positive thought? The will of the mind? **NO WAY!** Only faith does this…application of God’s Word in His life. And so they cut away the ropes and allow the skiff to fall.

Acts Chapter 27 Verses 33 – 34

* Talk about a powerful statement!! Two weeks they haven’t eaten, probably *sick* from the seas and probably *working constantly* and *worrying constantly* and Paul says, *“Not even the smallest part of you will be harmed!”* For anyone that believed Paul, this was an absolute game changer…HOPE not only activated but ultimate! But to anyone that didn’t believe him, ***this moment has no benefit at all…***

Acts Chapter 27 Verses 35 – 38

* I just want to point something out quickly here. *(Which is pastor code for God help me not be long winded, HA)* Paul told them earlier to ***take heart***…its late in the year, its cold, conditions are poor, the storm is great, things are hard…and **Paul brings hope.** Then he puts ***gratitude on display*** (he thanked God before eating). And now they are all…all 276 of them…they are all **encouraged.** This is a great example of a bunch of non-Christians benefiting from the presence of the Christian. This is the way it ought to be.
* Even if they don’t embrace Jesus…as sad and tragic as that may be…are those around you being built up, encouraged, seeing what a person that is grateful looks like? Truly, ***what you bring to the atmosphere…sets it***…what do you bring?
* They would want the boat as high out of water as possible so as not to run aground. That’s why they are lighting the boat. It’s interesting how when you are faced with a life or death situation you begin to lighten your life…things that you cared so much about, money, retirement, cars, the house…they all become very unimportant and what is truly important finally is appreciated… How are you doing on your load? Are you heavy…? Perhaps a trial may be of benefit…

Acts Chapter 27 Verses 39 – 44

* Hope has arrived, the hearts of the men were strengthened, they were all encouraged ***because of the presence of one man that believes God***…and now they are all saved. They all have escaped safely. This is why ***I will listen to no man who has not listened to God.*** This is why, as a man that loves the Lord, I know that it is crazy important that I apply the Word of God constantly in my life…because let’s just **flip this scene** the other way…
* Paul, the carnal Christian, the believer and lover of God but the struggler in God’s ways. The one who cannot find the faith to believe God and yet believes completely in God. He ***fears*** the storm. He worries and focuses on **what will happen to him primarily.**  Many men were lost in the skiff…the others were disheartened after being abandoned by their shipmates.
* The Centurion killed all of the prisoners as the boat was going down…and the Centurion and the rest of the 276 souls were lost. Total loss…***do you see how different the story ends if Paul had not been prepared by faith***…the believing and application of God’s Word? I pray that today you would find the path where there is no loss of life…not even the smallest part of you is stolen away and ripped off by the enemy…the path is hard and narrow, but the yoke of Jesus…***He will do the work***…it makes even the hard and narrow path, *easy and light.* Like the strength of a muscle under the familiar test of the struggle.