Acts Chapter 27 Verses 1 – 2

* ***Aristarchus*** is mentioned in the Bible a total of 5 times. He is apparently a long time friend of Paul. He was with him according to Acts 19 when Paul was in Ephesus (if you remember the whole *“Great is Diana of the Ephesians”* scene – well Aristarchus was there), and as Paul continued his missionary journeys, Aristarchus remains with him. In addition, according to Colossians 4:10, Aristarchus is not only Paul’s friend, but he is also a ***fellow prisoner***, presumably for the same reason as Paul…for the sake of the Gospel.
* And then in Philemon 1:24, Paul mentions Aristarchus as a ***fellow laborer.*** This man must have been a great friend to Paul. ***With him*** in his ministry. ***With him*** in his laboring, and ***with him*** in his imprisonment. And ***the unique thing about him is that he is a gentile.*** It is amazing…for the first 30+ years of Paul’s life, all through his upbringing, the **last thing** he would ever want to do or be is numbered and counted close to a gentile. And yet here is Aristarchus…a friend that sticks closer to a brother….and it’s awesome. With him in his time of laboring, with him in his time of trial…
* Just this past week I saw an article that Scientists have concluded that all men and women on earth come from one common pair of parents. **DUH!** HA!! And yet there are so many that have such problems with folks because of their blood, or how they look or where they’re from. Let me tell you, in Christ all of that doesn’t matter at all…and things like this relationship, ***this blessing of a friend***…this happens! I wonder what powerful friendships, closer than a brother or a sister, you may be missing out on because of some sort of superficial issue.

Acts Chapter 27 Verse 3

* Now that’s interesting. This ***battle hardened, blood proven*** soldier of soldiers, a centurion, treated Paul kindly and gave him liberty. The phrase in the Greek actually lends itself to ***service***…as if Julius had a heart to ***serve Paul***…and I have to wonder why…but this is what I have found true in my own life. ***Paul was innocent. He wasn’t defensive, cruel, self-seeking or aloof***…he had an **openness** and with that, **an innocence about him**…and ***he upheld Godly character***. He loved the Lord, he genuinely loved those around him…and he controlled his own conducting…he managed himself in such a way that brought honor to the name of the God whom he served.
* Both of these qualities…this is what I have found to be so very true…*in church, in the professional world, at home with April, in the marketplaces of the world*…both of these qualities…***to be a person of innocence and Godly character will gain you almost immediate favor with most folks.*** Innocence…this one is important…its that *graceful levity* about you…which you and I cannot have if we are running games on God in the dark corners of our lives…and so if folks just naturally don’t like you (and I’ll say ***most*** folks because ***some*** people just don’t count – HA) then perhaps you aren’t maintaining innocence with God and subsequently them and perhaps you’re not managing yourself with Godly character. Love never fails…it’s not going to begin failing with you…
* Jesus is the Mark. He was absolutely innocent…completely without sin…Godly character was who He is…and people loved Him! ***From hardened fishermen and tax collectors to children on the streets***….He grew, the Bible says in Luke 2:52, *“He grew in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and men.”* What’s interesting about having favor in the eyes of others, truly brought about by being a person of simplicity, innocence, consistency and Godly character (just as Paul was), is that it’s cyclical.
* Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, *“The art of acceptance is the art of making someone who has just done you a small favor wish that he might have done you a greater one.”* Psalm 5:12, *“Surely, LORD, You bless the righteous; You surround them with Your favor as with a shield.”* The righteous? Those filled with the Spirit of God…and ***what you are filled with, shows itself in your life.*** If God, Godly character…innocence, levity, joy…***and the cycle cycles***…just as it was with Paul.

Acts Chapter 27 Verses 4 – 6

* This was most likely what was called a ***grain freighter*** taking Egyptian grown grain to the Italian market. A typical grain freighter was about 140 feet long and 36 feet wide. Single mast and the design of this ship was no rudder but rather it had these oar-like devices on each side of the back of the ship. Made it very hard to sail into the wind. In fact, this specific ship was recently repaired after some of the planks had begun ***sagging.*** It’s recorded they used **BOAT-TOX!** HA!! Ok that last part, just kidding!

Acts Chapter 27 Verses 7 – 10

* This fast here was most likely connected with the observance of the Day of Atonement which would have been early October. After this date, sailing would become much more dangerous as winter approached.

Acts Chapter 27 Verse 11

* Just a quick note here…***sometimes the wisdom of a Godly person may be contrary to conventional wisdom***…the wisdom of the world…the practical solution for the circumstance or situation. I have learned to tread very carefully in those situations. Psalm 118:8-9 tells us we ought to give the weight, the default position ought to be the Word and wisdom of God. ***God deals with each of us in light of eternity…many times, most of the time, I think in terms of only today…***

Acts Chapter 27 Verses 12 – 19

* It’s interesting as we watch them do just about everything they can think of to save the ship. They’ve wrapped it with cables, they’ve secured the skiff, they’ve lowered the sail, they’ve lighted the ship and finally they’ve thrown their means of fishing overboard. ***Have you ever seen someone doing this to their life?*** Perhaps that sounds odd, but I have. Hard times, hard marriages, hard situations at work, tough ministry…and folks just start to throw the baby out with the bath water, if you will.
* Church attendance is usually the first thing to go. **The first overboard.** And really, that’s the ***worst*** thing to go. Rarely (if any at all) have I ever seen someone easily picked off and ripped off by the devil who is faithful in prioritizing gathering with the saints. Worshipping God corporately and sitting under the teaching of God’s Word. According to Hebrews 10:24-25, gathering with the church, like we are today, ***stirs us in the spirit towards love and greatness!*** According to Colossians 3:16, ***we teach one another wisdom and we are encouraged to thankfulness***…realizing the blessings of God! Man things are tough, hard…schedules are pressing, I know…but 1 Timothy 3:15 says that ***the church is a pillar and place of ground truth.*** The last thing we ought to do when life gets crazy is cut off corporate worship…but many do.
* That’s one example, not the whole. I have seen folks throw away so much of what God has for them in their lives because their ship is sinking…but notice here…Paul warned them. A man of God was given to them, sent to them, and his admonition, his direction…***don’t sail.***  Now, all but life will be lost. A submissive spirit is a spirit of wisdom. It’s one like Christ’s who in all ways was submitted to the Father…but so so so few are…truly.
* As we close today, I want to ask you, for you to hear this in your ears and minds…**have you submitted yourself to God?** All of the truths of the Word of God, all of God’s promises, all the tidbits of great wisdom, ***none of these things will catch in your life, take root…if you haven’t yet submitted yourself to God.*** I love this quote, Max Lucado wrote, *“When grace happens, we receive not a nice compliment from God but a new heart. Give your heart to Christ…and He will return the favor.”* ***The heart of the Lord in your life begins with you giving yours to Him***…have you done that yet…or are you just having to let your ship drive…lost in the winds…